Inventory crashers: how 3 top agents get listings in dry markets

Low inventory has been a major limiting factor in real estate markets across the U.S. for months. In fact, real estate agents listed low inventory as the No. 1 challenge they face in a March NAR survey.

In light of this, we at Discover Publications interviewed three successful top producers in low inventory markets to learn how they crush it despite the inventory headwinds.

We spoke with Jo-Anne Labuda, owner of Columbus, Ohio-based Keller Williams Capital Partners Realty, who consistently ranks in the top 1 percent of Realtors nationwide; Joe Karcie, an agent with Prescott, Arizona-based Re/Max Mountain Properties, who has been one of Arizona's top agents since 2002; and Russell Shaw, a Phoenix-based agent team leader who consistently ranks in the top 30 nationally for most homes sold as recognized by NAR.

See the top takeaways from our conversations with these "Inventory Crashers" below.

When markets shift, the core marketing channels of top agents don't

Labuda, Karcie and Shaw have one thing in common: a well-defined marketing plan they consistently execute regardless of market conditions. Before asking them about their low-inventory strategies, we researched how they won listings before inventory tightened.

Notably, not one discontinued any marketing in response to the inventory squeeze – instead, they tweaked the messaging of their ongoing marketing, added more channels, or both.

We analyzed their processes from the past several years as well as those of other top producers to determine the commonalities that emerged, regardless of market conditions. We found these four

central practices:

- **Referral-generating system.** These agents don't wait for referrals; they cultivate them. They have a process for earning, asking for, reminding, and rewarding referral behavior. As Karcie said, "Awareness is key. I really engage with past clients for top of mind awareness to get referrals."
- **Social media marketing.** These agents have active social media presences. On their Facebook pages, we found videos, posts about the housing market, curated updates, local articles, fun photos, promotional offers, recent listings, client testimonials and more. They don't just post, they engage. LaBuda, for example, has a 100 percent response rate on Facebook. We live in a social media world, and successful agents are dialed in to it.
- **Geographic farming.** The agents we interviewed have precisely mapped sales territories. They aggressively market to these "farms" with a mix of direct mail, in person contact, phone calls and event marketing. All three agents send direct mail "newspaper-style" publications to thousands of homeowners four to 10 months out of the year. They use Ohio-based Discover Publications to design, print, address, sort, mail, and produce content for their publications.
- **Email marketing.** These agents maintain an up-to-date database of past clients, partners, and prospects, and use online lead capture tools to grow their lists and use email marketing to engage their sphere.

How top agents generate listings when inventory is low

We asked our Inventory Crashers to share how they get listings when the pickings are slim. We learned the effective methods today are similar (and in some cases, identical) to what worked in more inventory-abundant times.

They continue to win listings by maintaining their core marketing plans and prospecting more aggressively than ever, as well as adjusting their messages and adding new communication channels. See our Q&A with them below.

What are the top 3 strategies you use to get listings in low inventory markets?

Labuda

- Daily lead generation, including calls, direct mail, social media and emails.
- Gary Keller's 33 Touch program. This is a commitment to 33 "touches" for each past client, friend and affiliate in a 12-month program. Touches include direct mail, social media, phone calls, one appreciation event and emails.
- Farming with a quarterly custom publication to 7,700 homes and postcards sent out every one to two months.

Karcie

- Staying the course and continuing to push current marketing, including a custom publication mailed every one to two months to 8,500 homes.
- Really engaging past clients to maintain top-of-mind awareness to drive referrals.
- Hitting FSBO's and expired listings harder. Inventory is low and new listings should sell quickly.

Shaw

- Hosting local real estate seminars for buyers and sellers.
- Marketing with five different editions of a custom publication (each directed at a different neighborhood) to over 40,000 homes for 10 months each year.
- Using social media and email to engage prospects and promote events.

What content in your direct mail publication receives the best feedback or response when inventory is down?

Labuda

- Reasons not to sell FSBO.
  How and why to buy in a seller's market.
  Why not to wait to put your house on the market, even with low inventory.

JOE KARCIE'S
REAL ESTATE UPDATE

www.PrescottValleyToday.com

Features that Make Your Home Stand Out

www.JoeKarcie.com
joe@JoeKarcie.com

RE/MAX Mountain Properties

(928) 776-7701

Prescott Valley Real Estate Market Report

INSIDE: JUNE 2017

Karcie

On the front of his bimonthly publication, Karcie publishes market statistics and local stories. Inside, he includes a page with a crossword puzzle, Sudoku game, and word search. “The articles are good, but most of the feedback I receive is from customers saying they like the puzzles,” Karcie said. At a time when many prospects aren’t considering a sale, Karcie’s entertaining content gets homeowners to open and engage with his publications.

Shaw

85022 news

Russell Shaw – The Valley's Leading Agent — Wendy Shaw

Russell Shaw Group
Realty ONE Group
Phone: 602-957-7777
www.nohassslisting.com

How To Get Less Money When You Sell Your House

Our Mission

WE BUY HOUSES

July 2017

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Shaw mails five different editions of a local publication 10 times per year, each of them named after the ZIP code they target. Shaw writes articles designed to brand him as the local housing market expert. He said he gets a lot of positive feedback from his market articles. His paper has comedic elements, which his readers have told him they appreciate. A former comedian, Shaw includes jokes in his articles.

How have you adjusted your marketing to adapt to low inventory?

Labuda

“We have focused 90% of our attention on the 33 Touch program by Gary Keller,” Labuda said. “We make 33 touches per recipient in a 12-month period, with a focus on our key past clients, friends, affiliates,” she added.

Karcie

“We added a texting program to engage our past clients who prefer to communicate via text. It’s a great way to drop a line and ask for referrals,” Karcie said. “Top-of-mind awareness is key for

referrals."

Shaw

In short, Shaw says one of his biggest marketing assets is that he makes a point to really know his market. He hasn't changed his strategy "because there's nothing to change. Inventory is down in the Phoenix area for homes priced below $500,000, where 93 percent of all sales here occur." But homes above $500,000 comprise 30 percent of the market's inventory, he said. "Low inventory is not an across-the-board thing," Shaw added. "Our message is that we know the market. That's all we've changed. We really push that we know the market."

Consistent marketing wins listings when inventory is low

The big takeaway? When inventory is down, keep your marketing up.

The unfortunate truth is that when inventory dips, the cost of acquiring new leads rises. For the same marketing budget, you might acquire fewer listings than in previous years.

That doesn't discourage the top producers we interviewed, however. As long as their marketing efforts remain profitable and continue to meet their branding objectives, they push forward, regardless of the channel's past performance.

While you may be struggling to get listings, keep in mind that your competition is, too. Top producers know that agents are quick to scale back during periods of scarcity and understand that less competition means more room in mailboxes. The key to winning in today's low-inventory market is threefold: continue your marketing plan, increase your prospecting and sales activities, and add new channels.

The Inventory Crashers are beating the odds, and you can, too. Emulate the strategies of these agents to blow past the retreating competitors in your low-inventory market.

Discover Publications *helps agents become dominant forces, regardless of market conditions. Keller Williams Mega Agents, Re/Max Platinum agents and those ranked in the Wall Street Journal 1000 report 150 to over 400 percent ROI with Discover's territory-exclusive, turn-key direct mail publication and digital marketing program. For more information, call 877-872-3080.*

Source: click here