It’s time to think like a CEO

For decades, agents have been misclassified as salespeople. But agents aren’t just selling a product or closing a deal; they’re budgeting, hiring, managing people and teams, building a brand, making longer-term strategic plans… Everything a traditional business leader would do.

While the real estate industry has long leaned on coaching–a valuable tool for personal growth in any industry–there’s a larger opportunity to provide agents a more holistic approach to learning and development. Coaching plays an important role, and should be supplemented with additional programming and perspectives to help agents grow their business.

This becomes especially important as more agents are growing teams that resemble small companies operating within a brokerage. At Compass, for example, we’ve seen an increasing demand for new kinds of development programs that meet these needs, which led to the development of our Agent as a CEO program.

Are you an agent thinking of taking on a similar kind of development program to round out your

business skills? Here are four questions to ask before you do:

1. **What is your goal?** Is your goal to maximize your strengths through new techniques or are you looking to build foundational knowledge in a new area? Be clear about your goals and expectations.
2. **Is the program designed for businesses like yours?** Do you have a team of two or a team of twenty? The difference matters. Make sure the program is designed to meet the needs of businesses at your growth stage.
3. **Who are you learning from?** Are you learning marketing, finance, and team building all from the same individual, or are you able to benefit from a diverse range of professionals with deep functional expertise? Are they leveraging case studies from inside the real estate industry, or bringing in outside examples? Fresh, diverse perspectives keep you forward-thinking and ahead of the curve.
4. **Are you ready to commit?** The best development programs are continuous and build your skills gradually over time. It’s like going to the gym: regular exercise over time delivers lasting results. While the multi-day, once-a-year conference is great for inspiration and networking, it can operate like a juice cleanse in terms of results.

I often say that real estate agents are some of the most interesting people in the world. They come from diverse backgrounds, achieve success in a multitude of different professions, and are forced to reinvent themselves over and over again.

With that understanding, their learning program should offer just as much dimension as their past lives. They are self-made entrepreneurs that have been forced to be self-taught professionals and business leaders. No other industry has expected this of their leaders. Times have changed, and it’s cause for celebration.

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