Low-cost, high-impact marketing with video

“What do Christmas decorations have to do with real estate?” asked Chrissie Wright.

“Connection and engagement,” she said, answering her own question. “And it has everything to do with letting our community get to know us and trust us.”

Wright is one of the owners of CENTURY 21 Wright-Pace Real Estate in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and she was talking about a video her brokerage made in which her agents shared their own holiday decorating traditions.

It was such a hit that video has become the most effective marketing channel for the Wright-Pace brokerage.

Small budget. Big ideas.

Wright is a native of Jonesboro, and her community is where she lives and works. Before she created the Christmas decoration video, she was looking for an inexpensive way to market her brokerage — something that would help them stand out.

“We wanted something that would offer a glance into our lives and get people to want to work with us,” added Wright. “And everybody loves reality TV. We want people to connect with us and get to know us, so we decided to create videos that would resonate with the people we wanted to work with.”

The price was certainly right: the team used their iPhones to shoot, the iMovie app to edit, and Facebook for distribution. Simply by asking friends to share the videos, their reach was far greater than they anticipated. Then Wright started getting requests for more.

Approachable. Relatable. Professional.

The Wright-Pace team continued to make videos, taking part in such viral social trends as the Ice Bucket Challenge and the Mannequin Challenge. More importantly, they created unique stories around holidays such as Mother’s Day, in which each agent shared personal videos and photos that the community embraced wholeheartedly.

The video is a simple collage of images set to music, but the intimacy and authenticity of it struck a chord.

“Humility and humanity are critical for us to differentiate,” said Wright. “The old ‘suit and tie brokerage’ isn’t right for the current generation of buyers.”

At first, agents at the CENTURY 21 Wright-Pace team were hesitant to get on camera, but Wright never made it mandatory. Over time, her agents realized the power and reach that a video has, and how valuable the opportunity is for them to grow.

“All my agents get free advertising because the brokerage pays for the video,” she explained. “We have twelve spots each month, and I e-mail our agents with the times and dates of the taping. The first agents who respond get to be in it. I don’t tell them the topic until they start shooting because I want it to be genuine and unrehearsed.”

A recent idea for a video was inspired by an insurance commercial. So Wright sat with three of her agents to talk about ‘She Sheds,’ and how each one would decorate her own.

The videos have also provided a welcome opportunity for the agents of the brokerage to bond. The team is diverse in age, gender, and culture, and they’ve learned to embrace it internally and celebrate that diversity externally.

You can be more polished. But still personal.

Today, Wright invests in a production company to create and edit her videos. The videos help the community recognize something of themselves in the Wright-Pace team.

“We created a video about investment properties with a variety of our agents, including an agent in his 20’s,” she added. “A client who is also in his 20’s saw it and reached out to us. He always wanted to explore the world of real estate investment but had never reached out to an agent until he saw our video. He saw our investment video on Facebook, and felt comfortable because he knew our agent could relate as a young investor and help him move forward.”

Her guidance to any brokerage that is looking to use video for marketing is this: think about what you would want to watch and then think about what sets you apart. Then make a video about it.

“Start a conversation,” she suggested. “You don’t always have to push your listings. The public knows how to find a listing. Be educational and entertaining and pull the consumer in — and they’ll come to you their real estate needs.”

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