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Master the Art of the Sound Bite

First in a two part series



Raise your profile by becoming a media maven. With these tips from the experts, you'll be the one reporters call for the scoop on real estate.

As she stepped into the glare of the news camera and turned to face the reporter, Simone Williams, chic in a black blazer, looked ready for her close-up. Only her constantly twining hands and nervous laugh betrayed the truth. "I was scared to death," she admits.

That day, at least, Williams, a sales associate in Westerville, Ohio, had nothing to fear. Although the camera was real, the "reporter" was Bill Zucker, managing director of media practice in Chicago.

He'd come to Columbus to train 14 members of the Columbus Board of REALTORS® on how to work more effectively with the media.

Media training is standard fare for most business executives today. And now many realtors® are turning to public relations companies, media training companies, and even former reporters to acquire the skills needed to more effectively get their side of the story across when confronted with negative press about the real estate market.

Media Training Has Big Payoff

The primary goal for the Columbus program was to help the group become better ambassadors for the board's new consumer education campaign, "The Grass Is Greener Here."

Williams, who has been in the business just three years, had another, longer-term goal: to hone her presentation skills for both public and client presentations. "I think this training will help me promote my business. Bill taught us to stay focused on your subject and not to allow distractions to interfere with your message. That's important in talking with clients, too," she says.

While good media training can be pricey — \$3,000 a day for a trainer and much more if you add in a camera crew—it's a great way for agents to develop good presentation skills.

Using those skills to give media interviews is something few people relish. However, with preparation and practice, it can get easier and yield better results.

How to Prepare for the Interview

"One of the most important parts of any interview is preparation," says Zucker. Before you agree to an interview, ask the reporter what the focus will be. That way you can anticipate what you'll be asked and research statistics that support your answers.

Preparation also involves deciding on a few concise key messages, or themes, you want to convey during the interview.

When asked about a real estate downturn, the Columbus students focused on the health and stability of the central Ohio market—rated as the third most stable in the country by Forbes—and on why low interest rates and a large inventory make it a great time to buy.



To come up with key messages about yourself or your company, begin by deciding on the two or three most important ideas that describe your business and what makes it distinctive, writes Sally Stewart in *Media Training 101* (Wiley, 2004).

"Keep your list of key message points short because the fewer points you have to make, the more likely the story will reflect what you want to communicate," she says. The former *USA Today* reporter suggests no more than five and preferably fewer key messages.

Look for Part II in next month's issue.

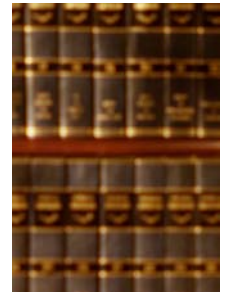
Source: REALTOR.org

Continuing Education – October 30, 2008

The Ann Arbor Area Board of REALTORS® is hosting a continuing education class at the UAW Local 892 Hall, 601 Woodland Dr., Saline on October 30, 2008.

The class is approved for 6-hours of continuing education, including the state mandated 2-hour legal update and the NAR required Code of Ethics training.

Watch www.AAABoR.com for additional details and registration information coming soon (subscribe to [AAABoR's RSS feed](#)).



Helping Buyers Through Tough Terrain

In the new financing landscape, buyers need more support from you. Get a crash course in financing to learn how you can ensure buyers can come up with the money to buy the home they've chosen.



As credit standards tighten and financial markets struggle to find the bottom, home buyers' ability to get an affordable mortgage has never been a more critical component in the real estate transaction.

The easy mortgage money is long gone. Today, most lenders require at least 10 percent to 15 percent down for conventional loans, along with a good credit record and proof of the buyer's income before making a loan. The challenge is especially great for first-time buyers who don't have the equity cushion of long-time owners.

Many REALTORS® rely heavily on mortgage specialists to handle financing from start to finish, but David Fialk, CRB®, CRS®, in Iselin, N.J., advocates that you do more—for both the buyers' benefit and your own. "I go through a half-hour review session with all the buyers I meet for the first time," he explains.

After a preliminary information exchange, Fialk gets frank with the buyers. "Depending upon their price range and down payment, I calculate their monthly mortgage payment based on the average interest rate in our area and ask if they're comfortable with that big a payment each month," he says. "Then I ask their income to make sure it warrants a payment like the one we've just discussed. I also make sure they contact a mortgage rep so that I get a preapproval letter in hand."

Let's face it, unless your buyer clients can get financing, you waste your time and theirs in helping them find the perfect home. As a listing salesperson, you lose valuable selling time on the market while a buyer negotiates with a lender, only to have the loan fall through.

What should you do to ensure that buyers could come up with the money to buy the home they've chosen? We're here to help with a crash course in financing. We've also provided some mortgage calculation pointers to assist you in helping the borrower understand the costs of mortgages and homeownership.

Please use the link below to read the rest of the story, including:

- The four steps to smooth financing
- Low-cost ways to rescue a deal
- Quick tips clients will appreciate
- Mortgage math made easy

[The rest of the story...](#)

Source: REALTOR.org

At Home with Diversity



AAABoR is hosting this course Thursday, November 20, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (1-hour lunch) at the Home builders Association of Washtenaw County, 179 Little Lake Drive, Ann Arbor.

As America becomes more diverse, the top goal of immigrants is to own their own home. REALTORS® can help buyers of any cultural background achieve the American dream of homeownership. Knowing how to work effectively with diverse populations can help you build business success in today's multicultural real estate market.

AAABoR member cost is \$55 for [online registration](#) ([registration instructions](#)).

Non-AAABoR member cost is \$85 ([registration form](#)).

This course is approved for six hours of continuing education, including the 2-hour legal update mandated by the State of Michigan. (K85 and K5176).

[Register now!](#)

Reduce the Risk of Identity Theft

The FBI reports that identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the U.S. with more than 10 million victims a year. If you haven't taken identity theft seriously yet, it's time to start; it's estimated that this crime costs Americans in excess of \$50 million a year.

A day will come when almost everyone knows somebody who has been affected by this crime. Even newborn babies, children, and teens are being affected by identity theft. Their credit is being ruined before they even buy their first candy bar.

These days, it is almost impossible to be in business and not collect or hold personally identifying information — names and addresses, Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, or other account numbers — about your customers, employees, business partners, students, or patients. If this information falls into the wrong hands, it could put these individuals at risk for identity theft.

Fortunately, the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) website](#) has many resources to assist you in protecting your identity and that of your clients.

- The [Deter, Detect and Defend brochure](#) is one for you to download and print as a handout to your clients and a handy reference for yourself.
- The [Protecting Personal Information \(A Guide for Business\)](#) is a great reference containing checklists to see how your practices measure up — and to see if any changes are necessary.
- The [FTC Facts for Business](#) provides information that can help you in the case of information compromise and the risk of identity theft. This guide for your business is one to print and keep handy for future reference.



Now that you're ready to better protect yourselves and your clients, here is your final exam — a [quiz](#) to test your knowledge.

A final thought:

When shopping online, be sure that the website address (usually containing numbers, letters, and symbols and begins with "http...") starts with "https://...". This will let you know that you are on a secure site you're your information (like credit card numbers) is encrypted, reducing your risk of identity theft.

Source: FTC.gov

MAR Convention & Expo

MAR Convention & Expo Early Bird Rates End September 5!

There's still time to save on your Convention & Expo registration. The 2008 MAR Convention & Expo is happening September 17-19 at the Marriott Detroit at the Renaissance Center.



First time attendees register by September 5 and pay only \$139/person! Returning attendees pay only \$199/person. Once again, MAR's annual Convention & Expo will highlight several noted speakers. This year's lineup includes John Alston, Gee Dunsten, James Spellos, and Terry Watson among others. The 2008 convention will also host a wide variety of exhibitors, networking opportunities and the chance to earn several continuing education credits.

The 2008 MAR Convention & Expo is coming to Detroit! MAR's Convention & Expo is the premier educational and trade show event for real estate professionals. The event is being held September 17-19 at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. Be sure to attend the largest real estate event in Michigan!

For more information and to register, visit www.mirealtors.com

New Members

New REALTOR® Members July 2008

Lucille Castro	Keller Williams – Ypsilanti
Steven McMurtrie	Trillium Real Estate
Remigius Obi	Edward Surovell, REALTORS®
Megan Slattery	The Charles Reinhart Company
Chunyu Wan	Edward Surovell, REALTORS®

REALTOR® Member Transfers June 2008

Member	Transferred To:
Patricia Anderson	The Charles Reinhart Company
Michael Bassett	The Charles Reinhart Company
Effelina Jones	Weichert, REALTORS® - Elite Professionals
Sharon Mueller	The Charles Reinhart Company
Claudia Springgay	The Charles Reinhart Company

Calendar

To see what's happening this month, visit the following: <http://aaabor.com/events>.