

# 12 TIPS

## TO IMPROVE YOUR PROSPECTING SKILLS

- SO YOU CAN GENERATE MORE INSTRUCTIONS -





We live in a digital age where technology has become an essential tool for the successful estate agency. However, whilst this has changed the way we buy and sell property, underneath it all, people are still the same and fundamentals such as honesty, integrity and professionalism are just as relevant today as they ever were.

This is certainly true for prospecting, as agents should always be on the lookout for fresh stock and often building good relationships is all about the personal touch.

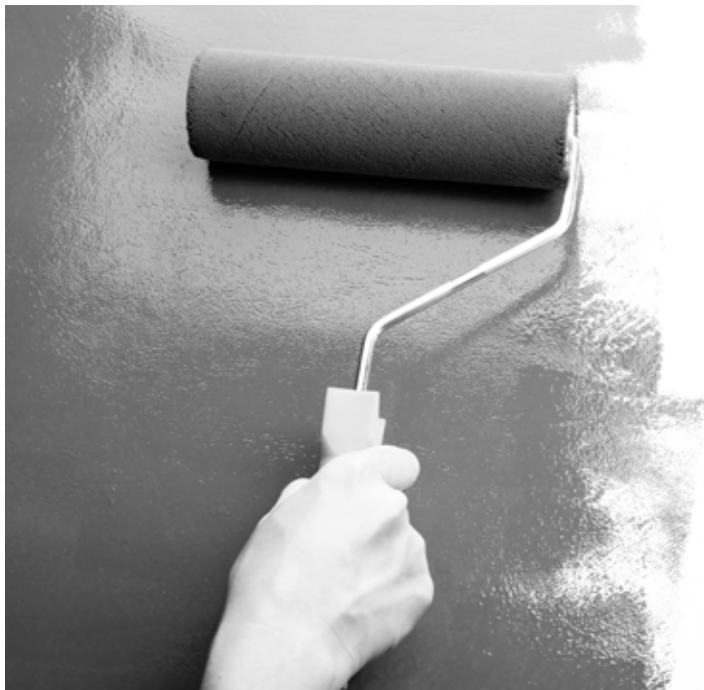
So, if you are prospecting for instructions and looking for fresh ideas to help find them, here are [12 prospecting tips](#) based on tried and tested traditional business practices, that used in conjunction with modern technology could help you find gold in the mine:

# 1 SMARTEN UP

Agents often advise sellers to give the place a lick of paint and tidy up, do the same yourselves. You would be surprised to hear how tatty walls, the odd broken light bulb and dead plant on a desk can give the wrong impression about an agency and deter a potential vendor.

Make sure your offices look smart and efficient. Stand at your doorway and review what a visitor to your branch would see. Do the same from outside and check your window displays.

And for those of you using video conferencing tools like Zoom or Skype to talk to new clients, make sure your background looks just as professional.



# 2 FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Last year you made a lot of people very happy by helping them buy a new home. They may not need to move yet, but they might have friends or family who do. Contact them and see how they are settling into the area. Offer them an update on the property value, even though they may not be planning to move yet and then promise a further update in a year's time.

Offer incentives to anyone they recommend or present them with small thank you gifts. Wine and chocolates might not seem like much, but people remember these things for many years to come.



## 3 PEOPLE BUY PEOPLE



*'People buy people'* – it is the oldest saying in the book, but it is also certainly true. Fees and services are important to most potential clients but ultimately, it is you they are buying into.

However, fake friendliness and you are on a dangerous path – if they spot it you will lose them forever. No flashy presentation tools and impressive claims and promises will work if you are not honest and straight with people and they see through it.

Be genuinely friendly and professional with everyone you meet, and you will win more business.

## 4 SPOT THE PORTFOLIO



When booking a Market Appraisal, it is always worth asking if there are any other properties that need pricing. It is a great ice-breaker question with many vendors, and you would be surprised how often this one property is part of a larger portfolio.

Always ask – it costs nothing but every so often you might be pleasantly surprised.



## 5 CLOSE THE DEAL

How often have you sat with the owners of a potential instruction, telling them how wonderful their house is and what an amazing service your business provides, but secretly dreading asking them for instructions? You are in good company if you do – your competitors do this time after time.

Be courageous and always make sure you ask for the business. Keep it simple, something like, “Please may I sell your home?” It really does work.

Many years ago I met a guy, new to agency, who had put five deals together in his first week on the job. How did he do this? At the end of every viewing, he asked “What would you like to offer?” True story – it was really was that simple!

## 6 PROMISES, PROMISES

Overpricing to gain instructions and then diarising calls to the client to get prices back down to where they should be, is a common example of over-promising that can backfire, as agents that do this often develop a local reputation for overpriced properties.

Do not promise the impossible, it will return to haunt you! Be enthusiastic but realistic, it will pay off in the end. People will respect honesty, even if it is not what they want to hear.

It is very simple. Be honest and straight with everyone you meet, give friendly, professional advice and people will respect you and recommend you.

## 7 CRITICAL MISTAKE

Criticising the competition is unprofessional, but it is also very dangerous and could easily backfire on you. Always remember that the owner may have had a good reason for choosing a competitor, perhaps they were a recommendation from a friend or family member, or maybe they even know someone who works there.

Always demonstrate that you are the obvious choice by showing them how good you are, not how badly you think of others.



## 8 LOST AND FOUND

It is always worth calling any vendor who withdrew their property from the market in the last few years if you would like them to try again with you. Their situation may have changed.

But do pick up the phone and call them, do not just email, an actual conversation is worth the effort.





## 9 HAPPY MONDAY

Prospecting on a Monday works and, in our experience, outperforms prospecting on other days in the week. Why? Because, if the property is with another agent and has had few or no viewings over the weekend, the owners might be considering a fresh approach on the Monday – a perfect time for a conversation.

So, if you are planning on contacting failed Market Appraisals that were lost to other agents, try calling on a Monday – you might find it more successful.

## 10 LITTLE AND OFTEN

If you are considering leaflet dropping, the trick is to concentrate on hitting precise areas frequently, rather than blanket-dropping occasionally. It takes time and repetition to establish a brand and a message.

Leaflet dropping still works if it is done well, even today. It just needs to be a smart and professional campaign, delivered correctly and not just stuffed and crumpled through every local letter box.

Select a street where you think you can sell in, identify the house numbers that you think you want and then create a campaign which is frequent, but not annoying.

A friend once complained to me that a particular local agent kept leaflet dropping his home. "I just put them straight in the bin" he said. I asked him how many local agents he could name. "Just the one – that one!" he replied. "Would you ask them for a valuation if you were thinking of selling?" I asked. He said yes.

## 11 STAND FIRM

It is easy to get instructions, just drop your fees. But it really does not work that way. Cheap fees can often imply cheap service.

There is an old saying, *'be reassuringly expensive'* – think about the last TV, tablet, or computer you bought, were you put off the cheapest one, even though on paper it had everything you wanted?

Write down why your business is better than the competition and commit it to memory. Be proud of the service your company offers and where possible stand firm on fees – you are worth it.



## 12 BE DIFFERENT

Finally, be creative and different – do not do the obvious.

For example, try and target the properties that other agents ignore. It is easy to pay a company to just leaflet drop a development, but the return rate is often not that high. Few agents will bother to spend time refining the process, walking the streets themselves and cherry-picking potential instructions with hand-signed letters.

An agent I know once had balloons printed with his logo, hired a canister of helium and then gave them to every child that walked past his office, each Saturday for a month. For several hours each weekend, that town centre was awash with kids, advertising his brand, and the business won a number of valuable instructions.

Brainstorm with your team as to how you can be different and stand out from the competition. Remember the old saying:

**“ If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always win what you’ve always won. ”**



## Get in touch for more information on our Masterclasses

We hope you've enjoyed this and found it useful. If you would like to contact us regarding any of the material, or would like more information about our Masterclasses, please email us at [masterclass@reapit.com](mailto:masterclass@reapit.com).



### About the Author

Andrew Tyler is Head of Product Communication at Reapit Ltd. He has spent his entire career working in property, starting as a trainee sales negotiator in 1980. He worked in both the corporate and independent sectors in Surrey, Sussex, and Gloucestershire for twenty years as a negotiator, lister, manager and trainer. In the late 1990's he ran his own Cotswold sales agency practice.

In 2000 he moved into agency training. For three years he was Head of Training for Countrywide Assured Franchising Limited, helping prospective franchisees to become successful sales agents. In 2003 he joined Reapit as Head of Training and ran the department for fourteen years, teaching RPS best practice to sales and lettings staff across the UK and Ireland. During this time, he also developed and ran the Branch Management Masterclass; a series of hands-on consultancy-based sessions promoting the use of data-driven traditional agency techniques in the modern sales and lettings arena, attended by hundreds of managers and business owners. In 2017, Andrew left the training team to focus on providing business and product consultancy to senior staff across the Reapit network.

Andrew is a Fellow of the National Association of Estate Agents. He is married and lives with his wife Diane in the Cotswolds. He is a keen skier, mountain biker and walker.

