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The Queen *of* Social Media

All too often the story is told of professionals who are born into the real estate industry and eventually leave it behind. All too often, agents who have been around real estate their entire lives refuse to transform this deep knowledge into a passion to push themselves and the industry forward. This is an unfortunate truth in real estate today, which is what makes Sue Adler such a wonderful anomaly.

Sue's story is truly a profile in contemporary real estate. Having been in the industry since 1983, she even recognizes her position as an outlier, someone existing outside the popular paths of life and business. This reference to Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers* also hits on Sue's dedication to her craft. In the book, Gladwell cited a study finding that for someone to consider themselves an expert in their field, they must dedicate 10,000 hours of practice and experience. With Sue's real estate pedigree, she easily qualifies.

"My parents forced me to get my real estate license after college," she said. "I was planning on working at my dad's CENTURY 21 office in the suburbs of Philadelphia until I found a real career ... The rest is history."

Now with Keller Williams Realty of Essex, Union and Morris Counties, the Sue Adler Team is number-one in units sold along New Jersey's coveted Midtown Direct Line—a train line connecting the suburbs to New York City in less than an hour. Surprisingly, for an agent transitioning from Philadelphia to New

Jersey, Sue quickly took her new market by storm, achieving market dominance in just two years.

Excellence in Motion: Sue Adler's Market Transition

- 2004—Started over in the Short Hills/Summit New Jersey market
- 2005—Business: mostly buyer-sides; Staff: one assistant; Sales Volume: \$28 million
- 2006—Business: buyers and sellers; Staff: built a team of buyer agents; Sales Volume: \$42 million
- 2009—Total Transactions: 71; Sales Volume: \$48.5 million
- 2010—Business: 500+ leads in the pipeline; Sales Volume: \$36 million closed through June; Position: #8 Keller Williams Team Worldwide YTD through June

Before moving to New Jersey in 2003, Sue did a Google search and found that there were no agent websites for Realtors® in any of her towns. Acting quickly, she set up websites and made sure to get high search engine optimization (SEO) for all the markets she intended to serve. Then Sue, with permission, put other agents' listings on her sites and helped sell them, which increased her sites' usefulness to agents and buyers and positioned her as the area expert to online buyers from the very beginning. Very soon, her sites had achieved the number-one ranking in Google searches for the areas she served and became a huge lead-generating machine.

Some of Sue's Sites:
www.SueAdler.com, www.NJexperts.com
www.newjerseyhomeviewer.com

It was more than just search results that propelled Sue to the top. She is an agent who excels in every aspects of the real estate transaction, but add to this her gracious attitude, willingness to the extra mile, and fondness for connecting people to their communities, and you get a super-agent whose reputation grows quickly by word of mouth.

Sue described her perspective on real estate this way: “I get up every morning and feel so happy and lucky to have a career in which I can help people with something so important to them, and know that I can make a difference in their lives.”

Since her move to the Garden State, Sue has grown her business to handle 71 transactions in 2009, with sales volume in excess of \$48 million. Her team now includes a transaction manager, marketing/database manager, five buyer specialists, two showing assistants and a virtual assistant, with Sue handling most of the listings. It is a team of producers, elevating her business to exceed her full-year 2009 numbers by August of 2010.

Optimized

Sue’s strategy begins with SEO. Her websites achieve high rankings—consistently number one or two—in both the paid and organic search results. But why would an agent do this? Why would an agent expend time, energy and money to compete against herself in search engine rankings?

“Some people just want information and don’t want to talk to an agent,” Sue said. “So some of these results are my ‘Sue

Adler’ sites, while others are stealth sites with no mention of me or that it’s a Realtor site.”

While this strategy begins with SEO, it lives by content. For example, using TigerLeads for one of her sites, Sue shows a huge number of listings with search tools for buyers to find what they’re looking for. This information keeps her high in the search rankings and positioned as a resource for information. What keeps visitors coming back, however, is the regularly updated content she provides, including monthly home sale prices and statistics, town fan pages with town videos, commuter information, blogs, a home matchmaking section and more. This type of “stickiness” keeps her network involved, and Sue Adler top-of-mind as a local real estate resource.

“Don’t be afraid of too much information,” Sue said. “Provide as much information as possible to buyers so that they can make a decision. You can then play the role of real estate advisor.”

In order to see any search results on this site, however, visitors must register their information, which captures the lead and enters them into an email and phone call drip campaign executed by Sue’s virtual assistant. When the lead comes in, Sue is notified and she either calls this lead or distributes it to one of her buyer’s agents.

The Queen of Social Media

Sue finds it critical to Google her leads when they come in, so that when contact is actually made, she has more information



Above: Keller Williams Realty of Essex, Union and Morris County.

on them. Do they have a personal website? What company do they work for? Are they on any local or national advisory boards? All this information proves useful during the first personal interaction with the lead. To this end, Sue has discovered that social media sites have become one of the best avenues through which to learn about her leads and make connections. And she's embraced it whole-heartedly.

"My favorite part of the real estate business is marketing and social media," Sue explained. "I love coming up with new ideas, and real estate allows me to experiment with them on a daily basis."

If her lead has a profile on LinkedIn, Sue can get a more complete picture of this person by learning about their professional history. If she finds out they're on Twitter, she will follow them and find out what they're interested in, what they're posting publicly about themselves and their situation. However, Sue is incredibly deliberate in her research and outreach process.

"I typically won't contact someone through social media until I've had a personal interaction with them, unless they've reached out to me this way," she said. "Without previous personal interaction, this could appear false or manipulative."

Facebook has become one of Sue's primary tools for research and engagement. She first checks to see if she has any friends in common with the lead. If so, this is terrific information to have during personal interactions. However, Sue warns not

reach out to those mutual friends except for certain situations (i.e. the lead came from their mutual friend), because leveraging personal or preexisting relationships for business purposes can often backfire.

If she cannot find the lead on Facebook, Sue brings this up during their first interaction. Her script is simple, along these lines:

Sue: Are you on Facebook?

Lead: Yes.

Sue: Great! I'll add you as a friend.

This assumptive close (acting confidently as if the other person has already made the decision in your favor) is unassuming and effective, moving the relationship forward and instantly making the connection more permanent.

In maintaining a strong network, Sue is able to connect her clients—or potential clients—to the new communities they wish to enter. For instance, Sue met a gentleman looking to move with his family and rent a home in Summit, New Jersey, one of the neighborhoods she serves. While he wasn't looking to buy a home for another year, Sue got his permission to connect him to people in his new community through Facebook. Within a few hours there were dozens of posts from Summit citizens looking to help with this family's transition.

While this act did not result in an immediate client, the strength of this connection—and the network she entered him into—will surely result in future business. When the family looks to purchase in another year, Sue certainly will be their resource for information and advice.

Vital Impressions

This comprehensive marketing strategy is based on the concept of maximizing exposure through the efforts of third-party connections. In other words, permitting your community to be your marketing agency. A great example of this is Sue's Neighborhood and Town Tour Videos.

To help homebuyers looking to relocate to one of her communities, Sue produced videos for each area, highlighting interesting sites and hotspots, as well as interviewing local residents (and clients). Links to these videos are provided on her drip campaigns, but they are also posted to her websites, blogs, YouTube, Vimeo, and social media fan pages and profiles. Sue makes sure to tag each video by the featured locations and people, which increases the video's exposure, helping others to discover and share it.

This in turn encourages both participants and visitors to post the video to their own sites, blogs and profile pages. Every video post is also linked to Sue's main page—or blog—to ensure that Sue is undoubtedly recognized (staying top of mind) as the expert on that community's real estate needs. In addition, at the end of each town video, Sue says, "So if you



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want to come in for the real town tours, give me a call.” This simple message has produced leads each week since the videos were posted in November 2009, and resulted in 14 sales so far.

As you can see, when involving a community and a comprehensive strategy, one video can create dozens, if not hundreds of impressions. And the more impressions a marketing piece receives, the greater its effectiveness in generating business.

Sue’s strategy of cultivating leads and networks did not emerge overnight. Such skill and coordinated efforts are the result of years of experience, trial and error, perseverance and a mature marketing vision. Sue has found a way to use her vast industry knowledge—developed from the time she entered the industry in 1983, and perhaps before through watching her father—and evolve with changing markets and technology.

But if there is a lesson to learn from Sue’s success, it’s that these skills can be fostered and these results can be achieved. There is a plan, a perspective and a process, but no miracle formula ... well, if there were, maybe it’s this: Be original, sharpen your saw, anticipate change and seek opportunity.

As Sue put it, “This has really become a skills-based business. ... I’m continuously analyzing and improving every process so that we continue to dominate our market.”

Perhaps that’s the real reason she’s an outlier, and a STAR POWER Star. 🇺🇸



Below: Sue poses with her team at their new workspace in Short Hills, New Jersey.

