

SUCCESS TIPS FOR YOUR REAL ESTATE CAREER

We asked **Illinois Young Professionals Network (YPN)** alumni to share their tips and best practices for success.

> Looking back, what is the #1 piece of advice you would give someone starting their career?

1 Find a coach or mentor

It's easy to fall into bad habits and not do the day-to-day activities that will increase your business. Connect with top-producing brokers who will hold you accountable. Make short-term goals (to reach a much larger goal) and constantly review your progress. – Victor Tellez

Experience matters in this business and unfortunately it is a learn-on-the-job industry. The greatest thing I have found is the leaders in the industry are often willing and wanting to help you succeed and raise the bar for all. Find a trusted advisor. – Eddie Ruettiger

2 Be intentional and purposeful on who you choose to surround yourself around

If the people you spend the most time with are NOT challenging you to raise the bar on the standard you hold yourself to and not giving you honest support, then FIND NEW PEOPLE. Who you choose to surround yourself with matters! – Tommy Choi

3 Trust your gut

Your gut is NEVER wrong. It's the greatest piece of advice I now give anybody starting in the business. You have to go with your instincts. Ask the questions you are too afraid or timid to ask. If the deal or even the client doesn't feel "right" then it's not. – Deena Zimmerman

4 Be confident

It's easy to doubt yourself as a new agent. Don't. This is another reason why it is so important to have a great support system as a REALTOR®. Whether it is your managing broker or a team leader, you will need someone experienced who can guide you. Don't be afraid to lean into people who have your best interest at heart. – Jayme Ahlden

5 Be consistent on a day-to-day basis

Treat real estate like a J.O.B. Too often new agents float through the day without completing the necessary proactive lead generating activities that are required to succeed in this business. Set up a daily time-blocked schedule (it can be flexible) and go to work. If you are fortunate enough to have a mentor, definitely lean into their advice and perform the tasks that are suggested. – Brian Kwilosz



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6 Explore all types of properties

I started my career as the marketing director of a new subdivision. If I had to change anything it would be to get my license MUCH sooner as I quickly realized that there are more sales to be had than just one subdivision! Once I diversified and started selling all types of homes, I quickly produced significant sales.

I think that putting all your eggs in one basket so fresh in the business can be limiting and would highly recommend exposing yourself to all types of properties. We won't know where our sweet specialty spot is until we explore all areas.

– Amanda Wycoff

> What is the BIGGEST factor that has led to your success as a new REALTOR®?

1 Surrounding myself with the right people

Through networking with others, I have been able to find and implement new business practices, as well as techniques. Everyone has something to offer! Whether it's completely new to you or a different perspective on something you already know, listen to what others have to say.

– Victor Tellez

2 NOT focusing on the results

We can't control whether someone will write an offer on a property or not. However, we can control the activities that lead to those results. I choose to focus on the activity daily. When you focus on the activities that lead to the results, the results will ALWAYS show up.

– Tommy Choi

3 I have a great support system.

I have a coach who holds me accountable. I am very involved with my local and state association. Having lots of REALTOR® friends has been beneficial.

– Jayme Ahlden

4 Networking with residential agents

I learn SO much about where people are buying homes and why. I represent retailers who find this information invaluable when we discuss their expansion plans and areas where they would see the greatest success. By understanding the consumer and where they are buying and why, it helps my clients better plan their expansion efforts. Networking in general has been my greatest success. The people I meet and the resources I have access to because of it have been invaluable in getting and retaining business.

– Deena Zimmerman

5 Putting in the hours and getting in front of as many people as possible

When I started in real estate and I did five open houses a weekend, I gathered contact information by having a drawing for a gift card donated by a local business. I created newsletters, joined Rotary, and went to every business event I could. I worked 16-hour days every day, for months on end, without taking a day off. That's just what it takes to get started.

– Amanda Wycoff

6 Finding a mentor who invested time in my success.

It is way too easy to get scattered in a hundred different directions in this business. Find someone that has already found a way to be successful, learn and model after them. Then, adjust according to what your strengths are.

– Brian Kwilosz

7 Putting in the work!

There is no quick fix or fast way to success. You have to show up.

– Eddie Ruettiger



EDDIE RUETTIGER

Baird & Warner,
Plainfield



VICTOR TELLEZ

Keller Williams Realty
Signature, Loves Park



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> What is your most profitable tool?

1 My phone and CRM = Lead generation! – Tommy Choi

2 My database

Personal referrals are the absolute core of my business. A database is not a list of names, it is a collection of relationships. Keep this up-to-date and stay in contact with everyone you have in there. Offer value and be a giver instead of being a taker. Many new agents feel awkward reaching out to friends and family because they don't want to 'beg' them for business. Change your mindset . . . you are not harassing them like a telemarketer. You are offering a valuable service that someone they know will need. Wouldn't you rather they use you and be well taken care of? Be sure to be a resource and offer value first. After all, a referral to a colleague, friend or family member is the highest compliment we can receive. – Brian Kwilosz

3 My CRM

Because my business is mostly referral based, my CRM is something I couldn't do business without. I encourage new agents to utilize the power of their database. Whether using an excel sheet or a CRM of some kind, be sure to have top of mind awareness with your sphere. – Jayme Ahlden

4 REALTORS® Property Resource Commercial – NARpr.com

I win more business because of it than any other tech tool out there. My clients absolutely love the reports I share with them. – Deena Zimmerman

5 Social media

The way I present listings on Facebook has been a HUGE tool in building my business. Social media can be a benefit or a burden depending on how you do it. I prefer to post often and make the posts relatable, as opposed to just listing a home for sale. Contests, videos, paid boosts... anything that is DIFFERENT in a positive way is a benefit on social media. But, you can't just do one post and walk away! You really have to follow up! – Amanda Wycoff

6 Talent

This is not necessarily a "tool," but my best investment has been in talent. The individuals I work alongside on my team have been a major component to increasing my business, while at the same time freeing up my time. I'm able to spend less time in the office and more time out showing homes and meeting with potential seller clients! – Victor Tellez

7 My newsletters

Staying in front of my past clients with a hardcopy, mailed-out newsletter. – Eddie Ruettiger

> What is one mistake you witness those in the business making more frequently than others?

1 Comparing yourself to someone else

We work in one of the most transparent industries out there. I can look up how much someone else is selling and figure out how much they are making. But what good does that do? What kind of forward progress did that allow me to make? None. In fact, when you compare yourself to someone else, you stand still. I choose to compare myself to who I was the day before. Focus on being better every day. When you do this, what I've found is that every morning your wake up, you present the best version of yourself to the world and all the small daily advancements you make will compound into something huge! – Tommy Choi

2 Spending money you don't have before you even make it

As a REALTOR®, you get inundated with opportunities to let go of your money. As a new agent, focus on lead generation techniques that cost little to nothing instead of purchasing leads or buying the latest technology.

- Establish yourself as the go-to expert within your sphere of influence and ask for referrals. Business by referral is the BEST!
- Network and build business-to-business relationships. Note: Think beyond real estate and lenders. Diversify your network.
- Cold call or door knock. These are effective if done strategically and consistently. Plus, they don't cost anything! – Brian Kwilosz

3 Some agents conduct their business models in a very transactional mindset

They don't necessarily mean to, but they lose touch with their clients and move on to the next. I have made it a point, especially the past couple of years, to ensure my business is more relational than transactional. – Jayme Ahlden

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4 Lack of self-confidence, for sure!

We are licensed professionals who guide families through perhaps the largest investment they'll make in their lifetime. I believe there's a lot of people who let themselves be pushed around and aren't taken as serious by the public. Remember, we are NOT tour guides. We are REALTORS®. We don't show, we SELL! – Victor Tellez

5 No follow-up

The main mistake I see is no follow-up after the home is listed. Not answering calls and no follow up AFTER the sale. I have a highly detailed template I personalize and send immediately after a home hits the market and when they receive inspection requests. It keeps us all on the same page. But, you have to follow up on the showings throughout the process daily! Keep your clients in a database and send cards on occasion (personal cards, not auto-generated). I host an annual Fall Pumpkin & Pumpkin Pie Pick Up Party in October and in December I rent an historical movie theater and have professional Santa pics taken before our annual Christmas movie is shown! It gives a great opportunity to reconnect, give away prizes, thank clients and post/tag on social media. – Amanda Wycoff

6 Ignoring past clients and closed deals

Not only are these clients likely to buy four to five times in their lifetime, they are likely to send you seven other buyers or sellers. Or maybe more. – Eddie Ruettiger

> What are a few resources you would recommend to someone looking to gain insight into becoming more successful?

1 Brian Buffini Podcast

I am a personal growth and self-improvement junkie. I think it's important to never stop learning and never stop growing. There are so many great resources available to us, including podcasts, books, and seminars. I would start with the Brian Buffini Podcast. – Jayme Ahlden

2 READ EVERYDAY!

Time block "thinking" time into your week where you work ON your business versus IN your business. Surround yourself with positive mentors to hold you accountable. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE! – Tommy Choi

3 Stay Updated Locally, Nationally and Globally

I like to stay on top of what is going on both locally in my market as well as on a national and global level. There are a ton of news sites out there, but a few to follow are: Inman.com, KeepingCurrentMatters.com, RISMedia.com, REALTOR® Magazine at Magazine.Realtor, and SecretsOfTopSellingAgents.com. Also, make sure you know your statistics. You don't have to know everything, but when you are at an event and asked about the market, know about the market! If you are able to answer with some current, relevant statistics you instantly gain credibility. – Brian Kwilosz

4 Your Local and State REALTOR® Associations

I would attend as many local board functions as possible to network with other REALTORS® who are NOT in your office. We all are in this together and it only helps to have a working relationship with your fellow REALTORS®. Get involved at the state and national level. The information and contacts you will make will serve you well in your career! – Amanda Wycoff

5 Books and YouTube

You might've heard it before: "the more you learn, the more you earn." There's no need to recreate the wheel. Learn from what others have done, add your twist, and then take action. No change is too small and no goal is too big! – Victor Tellez

6 Info from NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun

Lawrence Yun is Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of Research at the National Association of REALTORS®. The data is key to understanding the national outlook and therefore the local market. – Eddie Ruettiger

Illinois YPN is open to all Illinois REALTORS® who are young in the business, looking for valuable resources to stay on top of the latest trends and tools within real estate, and are interested in having fun and making lifelong connections to help each other succeed in the industry. Learn about upcoming events and how you can join!

www.IllinoisRealtors.org/YPN

