



The Model for an Optimized Real Estate Agent/Broker

By Ray Cobel, President



805-494-9647 ray@cobel.com www.OptimizedAgent.com

Copyright 2009, by Ray Cobel

CONTENTS

The Model For an Optimized Real Estate Agent/Broker	2
What Do Optimized Agents/Brokers Know?	4
1. It still comes down to relationships.	4
2. Technology is leveling the playing field.	4
The Model for Creating an Optimized Real Estate Agency/Brokerage.....	6
1. Planning	6
2. Communications.....	6
3. Systems.....	6
4. Team Work	6
These are the five pieces within the Planning Section of the Model.	7
1. Vision	7
2. Targeting	8
3. Strategy	9
4. Tactics	10
These are the seven pieces within the Communications section of the Model.	13
1. Web Sites	13
2. Blogging	13
3. Email	13
4. Direct Mail	13
5. Social Networking	14
6. Advertising	14
7. Presentations	14
These are the eight pieces within the Systems section of the Model.....	16
1. Relationship Management	16
2. Scheduling	16

These are the three pieces within the Team Work section of the Model.....	20
1. Recruiting	20
2. Training.....	20
3. Work Flow	20
The Optimized Agents/Brokers Model at a Glance	21
Conclusion	22
1. See where you are	23
2. See where you need to go	23
3. Learn how to get there	23
<i>Join Our Optimizers Discussion</i>	<i>24</i>

WHAT DO OPTIMIZED AGENTS/BROKERS KNOW?

1. It still comes down to relationships.

Who are buyers and sellers going trust to help them with the biggest purchases of their lives?

- Someone whose name they just saw for the first time? Nope.
- Someone who never seems to be available? Nope.
- Someone who takes forever to get back to them, if ever? Nope
- Someone they've never spoken to? Nope.
- Someone who appears to be pretty much like every other agent out there? Nope.
- Someone who doesn't seem to be really connected to all the right resources? Nope.
- Someone who hasn't fully demonstrated that they really know what they're doing? Nope.
- Someone who plays real estate like the lotto; just waiting to hit the lucky score? Nope



Optimized Agents/Brokers know that strong relationships are the absolutely necessary foundation for doing transactions. And they know that striving to build superior credibility, confidence, and trust through consistent demonstrations of significant value and responsiveness is the best and only real way to build strong, productive relationships.

2. Technology is leveling the playing field.

In years past it took an awful lot of money to buy print advertising to promote the office' listings. That's one of the ways big national franchises and large local brokerages, with their big volume advertising discounts, created huge financial barriers to entry for elite boutique brokerages. But now, huge changes are happening very fast.

Consider what's happening to the newspaper industry:

- Circulation is dropping like a rock
- Advertising revenues are plummeting
- Newspaper staffs are shrinking (so their product is getting worse, not better)



- Newspapers are closing; even the big flagships are in trouble

Does all this mean that people care less about getting news? On the contrary, they care so much that they're shifting to getting their news online via Web sites, Blogs, email and text messaging. Why? Because it's faster, more comprehensive, more in-depth, more up to the minute and more connected to other resources than print media could ever be.

You've already seen how vitally important Internet listings have become. That phenomenon together with the downward spirals print newspapers are on means that real estate print advertising is becoming less and less important. Before much longer listing print advertising is going to virtually disappear.

And this listing print advertising decline means that the listing advertising volume discount barrier that national franchises and large local brokers previously enjoyed is also coming down.

For Optimized Agents/Brokers this sea change calls into question a number of other sacred cows:

- Why then pay the high cost of buying into and maintaining a national franchise?
 - Especially if you know that you're doing all your own rain making anyway?
- Why obligate yourself to lease attractive office space large enough to support a critical mass of agents to help pay your rent?
- Why pay to furnish and equip said office?
 - Especially since everybody at least has a computer at home and a mobile phone; and everything that needs to be done in this business can be networked online?
- Why continue to pay to keep the lights on, the phones connected and the copier running?
 - Especially since communications can be totally mobile and electronic; and you need to be out in the field anyway?

Year after year NAR surveys show that franchise affiliation is significant in agent selections less than 7% of the time. Agents and brokers have been far more impressed with these affiliations than the buyers and sellers ever were.

The technology forced decline in newspaper listing advertising is leading to a complete reevaluation of the whole bricks and mortar real estate model. And that's leading the savviest agents and brokers to realize there are huge advantages to be gained by transforming themselves into elite boutique brokerages.

Technology that already exists, plus real estate savvy; equals an exciting new business model, and boundless opportunity.

"If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade."

Tom Peters

"If you don't have a plan for yourself, you'll be part of someone else's."

THE MODEL FOR CREATING AN OPTIMIZED REAL ESTATE AGENCY/BROKERAGE

This model is not just a random pile of tactics piled upon tactics; as far too many real estate operations are today.

Instead, this is a comprehensive model for integrating proven strategies, technologies and people into a complete, synergistic organization capable of exceptionally high cost efficiency and productivity.



There are four major sections in this model that fit together like pieces in a puzzle:

1. Planning
2. Communications
3. Systems
4. Team Work

Each major section contains sub-pieces as follows.



"Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up."

A. Milne

THESE ARE THE FIVE PIECES WITHIN THE PLANNING SECTION OF THE MODEL.

1. VISION



What is your dream? What do you want your organization to become?

As long as you're designing your business, you might as well be clear about how you'd like it to perform.

The most important question to answer is; what kind of Life Style do you want your business to afford you?

- On a personal level the issues are income and time spent getting it.
- On a business level the issues are largely about how you will spend what percentages of your time.

If you most enjoy working directly with clients, then having a lot of agents working for you isn't the best idea. On the other hand, if you prefer managing people, then lots of agents and administrative help are a good idea.

Think about these issues carefully, before your business takes on a life of its own. A little more thought up front will help ensure it turns out just the way you like it.

2. TARGETING

Target marketing works better because:

- It gets you away from the "one-size-fits-all" approach that really doesn't impress anyone.
- It causes you to delve deeper into the specific wants, needs and solutions for the people in the niche. Consequently you truly become more valuable to the people in that niche.
- It causes you to seek out marketing channels that will connect you more directly and cost effectively to prospects in that niche.
- It causes you to create marketing communications that speak more directly to the interests of prospects in that niche.
- It helps distinguish you as an expert in that niche; which makes you much more attractive to prospects in that niche.



For example, think about some of the possible niches within the buyer segment:

- First timers
- Single women
- Single men
- Young couples
- Middle aged couples
- Old couples
- Young families
- Families with teens
- Soon to be empty nesters
- Soon to retire
- Job relocators
- Investors

Even though they are all potential buyers, the wants, needs and solutions for each of these niches are really quite different.

The channels for reaching the prospects within each of these niches are quite different.

The expertise you need to truly be of great value to the prospects in each of these niches is quite different.

Figure out which niches you are attracted to, know the most about, and can help the most. That's where you're going to find your greatest success.

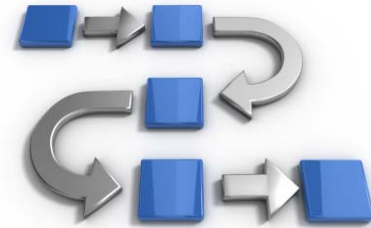
3. STRATEGY

What do you need to do to achieve your vision?

With your Vision and Target Niche(s) in mind you'll be in a better position to develop your best strategy for achieving your goals.

This is the piece where you'll figure out:

- The best channel(s) for reaching your target prospects:
 - Web
 - Email
 - Social networking
 - Direct mail
 - Advertising
- Your best offer(s) for attracting responses from your target prospects:
 - Web site content
 - Webinar content
 - Publication content
 - Meeting content
 - Email content
 - Consultation content
 - Referral content
- Your best systems for managing:
 - Marketing Campaigns



- Leads
 - Sales Follow up
 - Relationships
 - Administrative Activities
- Your needs for:
 - Recruiting
 - Orientation
 - Training
 - Team Building
 - Team Coordination

The right strategy makes any tactic work better. The right strategy puts less pressure on executing your tactics perfectly.

4. TACTICS

What do you need to do to achieve your strategy; and when?

This is the piece where the preparation in Visioning, Targeting, and Strategizing really pays off. Now you're in position to choose implementation tactics that work together in a comprehensive and synergistic manner to:

- Cover all the necessary bases
- Reduce redundancy
- Lower costs
- Increase efficiency
- Increase productivity
- Increase return on investment



Consequently you'll be able to make much smarter choices about how and when you will use:

- Vendor services
- Web technologies
- Communication systems
- Computer equipment, software and services
- Staffing

Carving your turns better is a tactic.

Choosing the right ski area in the first place is a strategy.

Everyone skis better in Utah, it turns out.

Seth Godin

5. BUDGET

Budgeting will make you realize that planning is not a linear process, but an iterative one. You can and should start with a grand vision, ambitious and multiple target markets, plus comprehensive strategy and tactics capable of delivering your desired results; but don't expect your first pass to be your last. Budgeting will help you revise and tighten your plan, then show you where and how to package your plan into prioritized, bite-sized steps.

Q. What's the best way to eat an elephant?

A. One bite at a time.

Comprehensive planning is vital, because it enables you to make your best, most integrated and therefore cost effective decisions about the rest of your business. It also puts you into a very solid place for creating all of your marketing communications.



"The two words 'information' and 'communication' are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through."

Sydney J. Harris

The goal of all your communications is to start, build and maintain relationships that are strong enough to do repeated business and get referrals.

It's helpful to realize that the business of starting, building and maintaining relationships is very similar to courting. In courting it's almost never productive to start with, "Hi! Will you marry me?" Instead the process follows this natural progression:



- Initial meeting
- A mutual search for commonality
- Agreements to spend more time together (i.e. coffee, lunch, dinner, shared activities, etc.)
- Deeper searches for commonality
- Making and keeping mutual commitments
- Growing credibility, confidence and trust

After enough of that relationship building process has transpired, "Will you marry me?" becomes a much easier question to ask and answer.

As much as we might want the business relationship process to be different, it's really not. We still have to have:

- Initial meetings
- Searches for commonality

- Agreements to spend greater amounts of time together, doing deeper searches for commonality
- Making and keeping mutual commitments
- Growing enough credibility, confidence and trust to do business

All of your communications should be designed to facilitate the natural relationship building process. They should flow smoothly and seamlessly from initial attraction (i.e. your lead generation offers), through your initial calls and emails, then through your presentations. All along the way all of your communications should be helping you build ever increasing amounts of credibility, confidence and trust.

What you say, where you say it, how you say it, and when you say it all need to be taken into account when you create your marketing communications.

THESE ARE THE SEVEN PIECES WITHIN THE COMMUNICATIONS SECTION OF THE MODEL.

1. WEB SITES

The Web is a communications content library. Anything you can see on a computer can be organized and hosted on the Web. Once on the Web people can be led to it through search engines, or via links in email and other Web pages.

Never before have agents and brokers been able to make so much high quality marketing communications, available to so many people, at such low cost. You truly are in the Golden Age of Real Estate Marketing.

Elite Boutique Brokers need to move beyond the cookie cutter template sites that so many others have into revealing more of their unique personalities, knowledge and ability.



2. BLOGGING

One of the very best ways to build a library of unique content that shows who you are, what you know, and how you help.

Your posts can become a key element in your ongoing automated marketing campaigns.

3. EMAIL

Whether custom messages, boilerplate, or mass distributions; email is fast, easy and almost free no matter how many messages you send

A robust email library for both marketing and administrative uses is a must for Optimized Agents/Brokers.

4. DIRECT MAIL

Sometimes the only way to reach people, especially initially, is through physical direct mail. Elite Boutique Brokers will still use direct mail to help build their relationship marketing databases.

5. SOCIAL NETWORKING

Whether it's in person at clubs, associations, Chambers and other membership organizations; or online through LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter; social networking is an important part of the Elite Boutique Broker's marketing mix.

6. ADVERTISING

While traditional newspaper listing advertising is in decline, there will still be opportunities to get targeted visibility for your offers in a wide variety of publications. When combined with Web pages, online forms and email; advertising will help generate productive relationships.

7. PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are vitally important because they can help you communicate a great deal of complex information quickly and simply. Strong presentations can be a tremendous aid in building the levels of credibility, confidence and trust you need to do business.

Presentations published to the Web make it easy for you to give them anytime from any place; for one person or even hundreds at a time.

"Communication works for those who work at it."

John Powell

Once you have your content created you'll need systems in place systems to automate marketing campaign scheduling and distribution; as well as a host of other things.



It's truly amazing to see how much technology has leveled the playing field. An entire real estate business can be effectively run (actually, more effectively run) from a laptop, mobile phone and the Web.

Web sites enable you to host more and better content that is visible to far more people, for much less money than print.

Email enables you to contact more people, faster and easier for practically no money; and it can link directly to all your Web content

Online real estate systems can hold all of your contacts, your schedule, your notes, your correspondence (both outbound and inbound), and complete histories; and make them accessible from your laptop or PDA/phone anytime, from anywhere.

These same online real estate systems can easily and quickly expand from a single agent to dozens of agents and staff; all networked online; all sharing the same database, notes, schedules, correspondence and histories.

These same online real estate systems can automatically capture Web leads as well as schedule and distribute entire, year-long, targeted, custom, marketing campaigns.

Other online systems can be integrated to create documents, obtain signatures, and manage entire transaction processes.

Given all that capability, plus the speed and coordination advantages, at comparatively very low cost; it's increasingly hard to justify the high expense of renting, furnishing, equipping and maintaining a brick and mortar office. That money could be much more productively spent on additional marketing.

Smart systems selection and implementation will give elite boutique brokers a huge competitive edge over the old schoolers.

THESE ARE THE EIGHT PIECES WITHIN THE SYSTEMS SECTION OF THE MODEL.

1. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

The higher the volume of business you want to do, the more you'll need to automate your starting, building and maintaining of your relationships. If you want to bring additional agents into your operation, you'll definitely want to automate your relationship management.

More and more often your first point of contact will be your Web site. You'll need Web forms that capture visitor contact information, automatically import it to your contact database, and automatically trigger a sequence of email and call follow-up.

After that you'll need additional targeted sequences that distribute appropriate information to niche buyers and sellers.

In addition, you'll need automated follow-up appropriate to newly met people who aren't currently in the market; as well as appropriate continuing communications to your "Mets" and past clients who are not currently in the market either.

The volume and complexity of keeping up with all the various sequences is daunting, unless you have fully automated relationship management systems in place; then it's a snap.

2. SCHEDULING

Staying on top of your own schedule can be a challenge. Factor in some administrative staff and additional agents and you've got the makings of a three ring circus.

To function as a smooth running team, that doesn't drop any balls, you'll need an integrated scheduling system that all of you can access anytime, from anywhere.



3. LEAD GENERATION

Over the last 50 years homeowners across the U.S. moved at an average rate of 10% per year. Local conditions have made local move rates fluctuate between 5% and 15%. The good news is, no matter what the conditions, homeowners keep moving.

The trick to lead generation is to get them to pick you. "Pick" is the key word, because movers have lots of choices. The trick to getting people to pick you is to offer them something you know they really need and would like to have.

Once they respond to your offer the relationship building clock starts.

The trick after that is to offer the next logical thing that will draw them closer to you; then the next; then the next; and so on.

To generate and follow-up leads effectively you'll first need to use your understanding of your target markets to create compelling Web communications and your email library.

Then you'll need to create a series of automation campaigns for distributing the right content to the right people at the right time.

Enough compelling, targeted offers made to enough of the right people will generate plenty of leads.

4. PRESENTATIONS

Good presentation production systems will make it fast and easy to create personalized highly professional presentations. These systems should also automatically publish your presentations to the Web so you can do more Webinar like presentations to individuals and groups alike; on the fly.



5. WORK FLOW

Conceptually, the task is very simple: You want everything, done right, on time.

If you're working alone, and you're doing a pretty good volume of business, meeting that goal can be very challenging at times.

Add a few more people to the mix who can't share the same information and you're in a three ring circus; many, many balls are going to be dropped.

Online systems can enable ever expanding groups of people to easily share information and tasks, thus tightening team coordination and work flow.

6. LISTING MANAGEMENT

There are a lot of parts to the job of marketing listings well; staging, photos, virtual tours, Web listings, flyers, agent promotions, showings, etc.

If you do more than one listing at a time you'll have dozens and dozens of balls to keep constantly in the air.

A good, online system will keep you on top of everything and make it easy to delegate and supervise tasks.

7. CLOSING MANAGEMENT

There are a lot of parts to the job of effectively managing escrows to closing. If you do more than one escrow at a time you'll have dozens and dozens of critical balls to keep constantly in the air.

A good, online system will help keep you on top of everything and make it easy to delegate and supervise tasks.

8. REPORTING

To manage a team effectively you need a way to quickly and easily know the status of just about everything. Who's doing what for whom? When's the deadline? How far along is the project?

You'll need a way to answer these questions across your entire team, and down to the individual situation. A good, online real estate broker's system will enable you to do that.

At this point you've got a solid Plan, your Communications are ready to go, and you've got your Systems in place to handle everything in the most efficient, productive manner. Now it's time to consider your Team Work.



"Technology does not run an enterprise, relationships do."

Patricia Fripp

Developing the skills to create and manage a high-performance team is probably the most difficult transition for elite boutique brokers to make.

There is a huge difference between being a star performer and a star manager. In fact, the tendency to just do it yourself, because you can do it better, is what keeps star performers from becoming star managers.

Star Managers are able to find joy in letting go and empowering others to become the best they can be.

If you are starting as a single performer, then building your Planning, Communications and Systems foundations will solidify your high-level performance. At that point you may be having so much fun, and success, that you might want to just stay a single performer.

If you still want to go all the way and build an Elite Boutique Brokerage you'll find that all of the work you've done on this model will give you a great head start.

THESE ARE THE THREE PIECES WITHIN THE TEAM WORK SECTION OF THE MODEL.

1. RECRUITING

"Selecting the right person for the right job is the largest part of coaching."

Philip Crosby

Having those foundations and performance track record in place will make it easier to attract and retain really good people, because they will appreciate, respect and see the personal advantages that what you've built affords them.

If they don't "get it", or aren't ready to help support your model, they certainly don't belong in your boutique.

2. TRAINING

*"No coach has ever won a game by what he knows;
it's what his players know that counts."*

Paul Bryant

One of the great benefits of implementing this Model is that you'll have a comprehensive system of best practices in place for every critical function.

It will be much easier to assimilate new people into your organization, because well planned, efficient, integrated systems will be in place. Learn the system and you've learned how to do the job at a very high level.

Consequently your training curve will be much shorter and easier. Just make sure that everyone on your team understands your Plan, Communications and Systems.

3. WORK FLOW

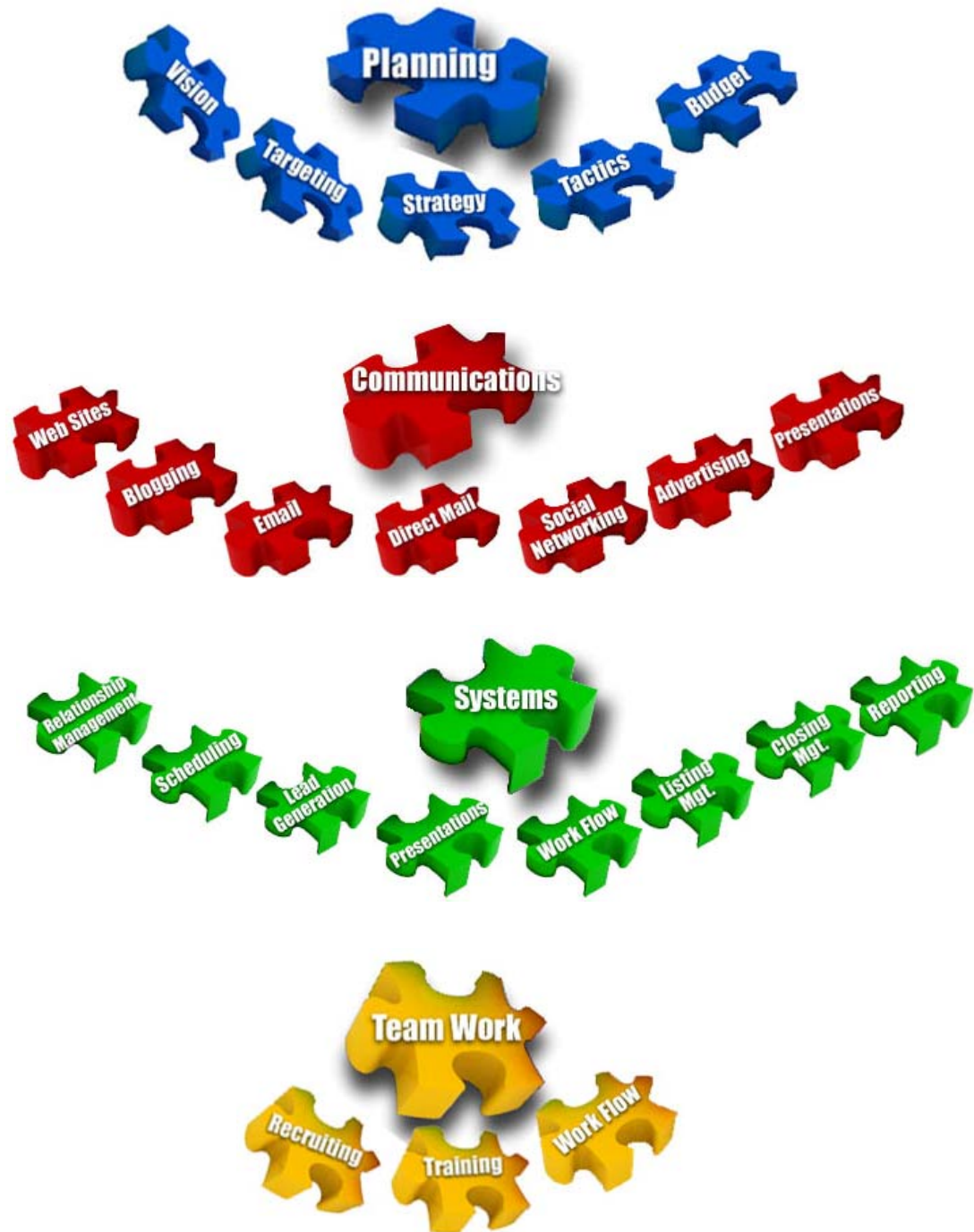
*"Coaches have to watch for what they don't want to see
And listen to what they don't want to hear."*

John madden

Team coordination is inherently part of your system.

Your systems will enable you to watch and listen, but people will still need coaching to get your team up to a high performance level.

THE OPTIMIZED AGENTS/BROKERS MODEL AT A GLANCE



CONCLUSION

Everywhere agents and brokers turn they are bombarded with, "Try this!", "Try that!" Free floating tactics piled upon more free floating tactics. It's like preparing for a cross country car trip with this mindset:

"Oooo, let's pack some of these, and some of those too! I bet they will come in handy."

What you get with this approach is a mixed bag of disjointed and incomplete tactical decisions, all made without bothering to:

- Check the tires
- Check the oil
- Get some maps (or a GPS)
- Figure out where to stay along the way
- Calculating how much you'll need for expenses
- Delegating who will help with what

Technology and the economic train wreck are causing massive changes to the real estate industry. Those who cling to the old school methods of print advertising, big franchise fees, bricks and mortar operations, and incomplete technology integration are riding a train to nowhere.

Those who see opportunity in the sea changes and prepare to take advantage of them by thinking through, then implementing their Planning, Communications, Systems and Team Work are going seize the day.



"High achievers spot rich opportunities swiftly, make big decisions quickly and move into action immediately. Follow these principles and you can make your dreams come true."

Robert H. Schuller

SO, HOW READY ARE YOU TO BECOME AN OPTIMIZED AGENT/BROKER?

To have a really good shot you'll need to meet these basic requirements:

- You've been in the real estate business three or more years
- You have a broker's license (or are on your way to getting one)
- You've consistently earned over \$100k per year
- You consider yourself to be in the top 10% of real estate sales knowledge
- You are your own rain maker
- You desire more independence
- You want to captain your own ship
- You have a passion for empowering others

If you meet those criteria, then an Optimized Agent/Broker Assessment will help you:

1. See where you are
2. See where you need to go
3. Learn how to get there

[CLICK HERE TO SCHEDULE YOUR OPTIMIZED AGENT/BROKER ASSESSMENT.](#)

*"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls
and looks like work."*

Thomas Alva Edison

This Model is the foundation for continuing discussion in our Group called:



Technology and the economy are driving radical change in the real estate industry.

While massive change does bring pain, it also opens up exciting new opportunities for those who can see how to take advantage of them.

Do you wonder how you can not only survive this transition, but come out of it in even better shape than ever before?

If you're in the mood for some serious insight in this regard, then the discussion in our Optimizers Group will definitely interest you.

Now that you've seen the Model, feel free to jump right in. We're all looking forward to hearing from you.

[You are more than welcome to Join Us.](#)

Sincerely,

Ray Cobel, President



805-494-9647 ray@cobel.com www.OptimizedAgent.com