

ASSEMBLING YOUR

# Sphere of Influence

A REAL ESTATE EBOOK FROM



**FRESH LICENSE IN HAND** – or maybe just nearly in hand – you’re probably itching to hit the streets and soak up all the real estate work a promising business owner can get their hands on.

## But where to start?

Real estate’s such a big industry, consisting of the largest financial decisions that most people ever make, that you might be feeling at a loss for how to proceed. Even once the licensing exam has been conquered, finding clients is a bit more abstract than a test.

### **NEVER FEAR!**

Your pals at The CE Shop have put together this super-helpful guide for helping you solve this very quandary. We’ll teach you how to assemble and mold your sphere of influence into legitimate business contacts that’ll help your business take flight.







“Achievement seems to be connected with action.  
Successful men and women keep moving.

They make mistakes but they don’t quit.”

– Conrad Hilton  
FOUNDER OF HILTON HOTELS



# Introducing Your Sphere

Even before fate smiled on you and you downloaded this eBook, "sphere of influence" is a phrase you may have heard before. It refers to the group of people you have influence over, and whom have influence over you. These are the people that could be swayed by your opinion on their ugly new watch, or whom you might invite to one of your fantastic dinner parties. Still waiting for our invite, by the way.





# A common mistake that new licensees make is to avoid their sphere.

They'd rather try out their great new real estate knowledge on strangers than risk looking like a pushy salesperson with their friends and family. Which makes sense, of course – why share that you have a superpower until you're absolutely certain you know how it works?

Real estate's a social industry, and it's going to take some home sales under your belt before strangers want to cozy up with you. It makes sense to **start with your sphere, which, after all, consists of your closest friends and family and, hopefully, includes all the people that would trust you with their real estate business.** These people know and like you more than anyone, so why not start with them?



## BEGIN BY WRITING DOWN A LIST OF:

- Former customers from other businesses you've been involved with
- School friends
- Friends
- Family
- Groups and associations you belong to
- Neighbors
- Vendors you do business with regularly
- Professionals such as your doctor, accountant, lawyer
- Teachers, professors

Thumb through your email address list, your holiday card list, and your phone's contact list for more ideas on who to include in your sphere. **The wider you can cast this net the better; you'll pare it down later and be left with only gold.**



## ANNOUNCEMENT CARDS

**CONTACT YOUR SPHERE AND LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE NOW IN REAL ESTATE.** Announcement cards will do the trick, and, when you join a firm, they might even provide them for you. Keep the cards simple and to the point, nothing fancy – you're selling houses, after all, not greeting cards.

Personalize your announcement cards by including something the recipient already knows about you. Maybe you used to work together, or maybe you happen to know this person's been thinking of moving for a while. Maybe they've just got a really nice car.

Explain why you made the career transition; remind them how they know you, and how that connects with your new career. Always include two business cards - one for them to keep and the other to pass along to someone who might benefit from a fantastic new real estate connection.

NEVER BE AFRAID TO EXPLICITLY ASK FOR BUSINESS. REAL ESTATE COACH BRIAN BUFFINI RECOMMENDS CONCLUDING EVERY COMMUNICATION WITH,  
**"BY THE WAY, I'M NEVER TOO BUSY FOR ANY OF YOUR REFERRALS."**





“Winners never quit and  
quitters never win.”

– Vince Lombardi  
NFL COACH



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a beige cardigan and blue jeans, is sitting on a white kitchen counter. She is smiling and talking on a mobile phone. The kitchen is bright and modern, with white cabinets, a microwave, and a washing machine integrated into the counter. There are potted plants and jars on shelves in the background. A large window with a wooden frame is on the right, letting in natural light. A wooden dining table is in the foreground.

# Keep in contact

Maintain communication by sending a monthly newsletter featuring market news in your area. It's a great way to stay connected with your sphere in an inexpensive way. Successful newsletters are full of important real estate information written to engage and inform your leads.

## CREATING A NEWSLETTER

This can be as simple as a form letter (individually addressed, of course). Include any **recent sales** you've been involved with, any **buyers you're working with**, and any **recent real estate news** ("housing prices are seeing a 14% upswing in the area over this time last year").

Be sure to cite your sources, and aim for your newsletter to be full of relevant information as opposed to just another marketing piece. Your aim is not to sell to them but rather to position yourself as their local authority on real estate. Selling to them will come more naturally later if they already trust your industry knowledge.

TRY TO **MEET FACE-TO-FACE** WITH EACH MEMBER OF YOUR SPHERE AT LEAST **QUARTERLY**. KEEP A LOG SO YOU DON'T LET ANYONE DROP OFF YOUR LIST.





# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The important thing to remember is to be consistent. The last thing you want is to hear that a friend sold a home with a different agent because they forgot you were in the business - or weren't sure that you still were.

## IN ORDER OF IMPACT ARE:

1

FACE-TO-FACE  
CONVERSATIONS



2

PHONE  
CALLS



3

HANDWRITTEN  
NOTES



*(Nobody does this anymore and people love receiving them. Make sure to write a note after every face-to-face meeting, but don't include a business card here. This is strictly for relationship building).*

4

NEWSLETTERS





“What is the point of being  
alive if you don’t at least try to  
do something remarkable?”

– John Green  
AUTHOR





# Qualify Your Sphere

Starting out, you'll announce your new career to everyone in your sphere. As time goes on, though, you'll want to pare down the list to only those who you know will refer you. For instance, you can cross off the guy whose brother is a real estate agent in your area. You want to make your time and marketing dollars count, and while you refine your sphere list, it helps to separate people into categories.



## BRIAN BUFFINI RECOMMENDS

## SORTING YOUR SPHERE

## LIKE SO:

- A+** These people have given you **multiple referrals** or have **worked with you several times** and you enjoyed the experience.
- A** These people have **given you one referral** and you would like to receive more from them.
- B** These people would **refer others to you if they were asked to do so and shown how**.
- C** These people **might refer** to you in the future.
- D** You know who deserves a D, and **they can be ejected from your sphere immediately**. No point in wasting time and money by sending your brilliant marketing pieces if you know they'll immediately end up in the trash.

After reading those categories, you're probably wondering how in the world you'd know if someone would refer you. You might be thinking that's similar to asking if someone likes you as a person, but you're wrong - this is *business*, after all! A social business, yes, but their reason for not referring you might be as simple as they already have a great agent on their speed dial.





## QUALIFY YOUR LIST

That's why you should qualify your list. **Pick 10% to work with at a time.** Ask each one, "If you wanted to buy or sell a home, or had a friend or family who did, do you have a real estate professional you would refer them to?" This helps you avoid wasting your time and theirs by marketing to someone who'd never refer you anyway. Think of it as a mayoral candidate asking voters "Would you vote for me?" except minus all the political baggage.

Only 20% of real estate agents make it to year three. **Building a list, qualifying that list, and continually refining it are what will make you a top producer while others fall by the wayside.**

*"The secret of joy in work is contained in one word: excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it."*

– PEARL BUCK,  
AUTHOR





# Find Your Place

To further narrow the scope of your fledgling business, it's important to find a niche that suits you. You can definitely have more than one niche, but selecting and starting out with just one is optimal.





# Finding your niche

Your niche can be based on:

## **GEOGRAPHY**

(a specific neighborhood)

## **PROPERTY VALUE**

(e.g., \$250,000-\$500,000)

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

(first-time homebuyers, golfers, cat ladies, etc.)

## **CLIENT TYPE**

(landlords, investors, FSBOs, etc.)

## **PROPERTY TYPE**

(new construction, historic homes, condos, etc.)



# DISCOVERING YOUR NICHE

The point of having a niche is to focus your efforts so you aren't spread too thin, unable to get noticed by anyone. Specializing will conserve your energy and resources, but how do you know which niche to choose?

**There are several paths to discovering a niche that works for you. Here are some of the most common:**

- **LIKE A LONG-LOST LOVE AT THE END OF A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE, YOUR NICHE SOMETIMES FINDS YOU.** You may find yourself just naturally working with a specific market segment, or maybe a tightly knit group of people keeps referring you.
- **YOU LIKE WORKING WITH A SPECIFIC GROUP OF CLIENTS MORE THAN OTHERS.** You may find that wealthy people aren't your cup of tea, or maybe you just really like homeowners with corgis. Who doesn't?

- **YOU MAY HAVE A HOBBY OR GROUP YOU BELONG TO THAT BECOMES YOUR NICHE.** If you're an avid sailor active in the sailing community, you may find that selling waterfront properties is a natural fit.





## DISCOVERING YOUR NICHE *(continued)*

- **YOU MAY LIVE IN A UNIQUE PROPERTY AND END UP SPECIALIZING IN BUYERS AND SELLERS OF THAT PROPERTY TYPE.** Say you just finished restoring a Victorian home, and in your search for contractors you met other Victorian homeowners who could then become your clients.
- **YOU MIGHT TURN A TALENT OR SKILL INTO A NICHE.** If you speak Spanish, you might develop a niche serving Spanish-speaking clients.
- **YOU MAY HAVE A SPOUSE, PARTNER, PARENT, OR SIBLING WHO IS CONNECTED IN SOME WAY TO YOUR NICHE.** For instance, if your brother is a builder, through him you may connect with other builders who want you to list their properties.
- **A FORMER JOB CAN LEAD TO YOUR NICHE.** If you were previously a teacher, you may find that serving teachers comes naturally to you.

These are just a few ideas to get you started; the possibilities for niche creation are endless, and the more creative you are in establishing your niche, the less competition you'll have. Only one company ever named a quirky car after a bug, after all.





“Continuous learning is the  
minimum requirement for  
success in any field.”

– Waitley  
MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER



## ABOUT US

Founded in 2005, we've become the **leading provider of online real estate education** through hard work and an encyclopedic knowledge of the real estate industry.

Over the years honing our courses, we've been fortunate enough to be recognized as a **COLORADO COMPANY TO WATCH** (2015), one of the **TOP 250 PRIVATE COMPANIES** (2015), and one of the **BEST PLACES TO WORK** (2015, 2016).

With **courses available in all 50 states and DC**, we're driven by a desire to constantly improve, both for ourselves and for our students.



# What are you waiting for?

Finish your courses so you can put all this knowledge to use and **BUILD YOUR BUSINESS!**

LEARN WITH US  
& **SAVE 20% TODAY!**

Promo Code **LICENSE20**

 **The CE Shop**

