

HOW TO BECOME A SIX-FIGURE REAL ESTATE AGENT

Tips, tricks, and best practices for agents of every kind

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INTRODUCTION

Becoming a successful real estate agent requires equal parts hard work, outstanding networking, continuous education, and an intimate understanding of your market. A little bit of luck doesn't hurt, either. Real estate, like any job largely dependent on sales commission, is an exercise in leveraging opportunity and building on past success. Most importantly, you must be willing to push through difficult times and find ways to close deals even when circumstances change, obstacles present themselves, and the environment turns from friendly to inhospitable. Growing your real estate business means growing every day, every week, and every quarter.

This e-Book will cover some important business considerations with respect to licensing, advertising and marketing, selling, growth, and more. Of course, nonstop education at every stage of your career is absolutely pivotal to sustained success.

In this guide, we'll evaluate key areas you will need to develop, maintain, and strengthen during your real estate journey, as well as provide the needed direction to ensure you have the tools and information you need to thrive in the complex, competitive real estate game. Lots of resources are at your disposal, and we encourage you to use them!

A hand in a blue suit sleeve holding a pen, positioned over a city skyline with various skyscrapers. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the city buildings to be seen through the hand and pen.

Some of the areas we will cover are:

- ✔ Basic information regarding how to obtain a real estate license in the state of North Carolina
- ✔ Choosing the right real estate firm with which to work
- ✔ Selecting and cultivating a relationship with a real estate mentor
- ✔ Identifying winning lead generation strategies
- ✔ Employing best practices with respect to advertising and marketing
- ✔ Tips to leverage relationships with existing clients for lead referrals

This e-Book is a crucial gateway into the real estate industry for newcomers, and it will provide the necessary backdrop for the future success of agents at any stage of their journey. We will expand on everything we discuss here in the comprehensive programming package offered at our Skyline School of Real Estate (<https://www.skylineschool.net/>).

At the Skyline School, we offer pre-licensing and post-licensing services as well as top-flight continuing education. For more information on what we cover here in this book, and for details about our services, please explore our website at: <https://www.skylineschool.net/>.

With that said, let's jump right into the real estate guide and get to work crafting your soon-to-be wildly lucrative real estate career.

SECTION 1:

The Basics of Real Estate Licensing

In order to become a real estate agent in the state of North Carolina, you need to take a number of steps before you can begin to represent buyers and sellers. First, you must obtain a license, which requires several of its own important steps.

According to the North Carolina Real Estate Commission, any individual or business entity who engages in real estate brokerage transactions for compensation needs to first obtain a license from the North Carolina Real Estate Commission.

<https://www.ncrec.gov/Brochures/general.pdf>

According to the Commission, "The Real Estate Commission, an independent government agency of the State of North Carolina, is responsible for licensing and regulating all real estate brokers in this state. Operating as a real estate broker in North Carolina without the proper license is a criminal offense. North Carolina is a 'broker license only' state, meaning that there is only one basic type of license—a broker license. However, there are several categories or status levels of a broker license."



The categories of broker in North Carolina, per the Commission are:

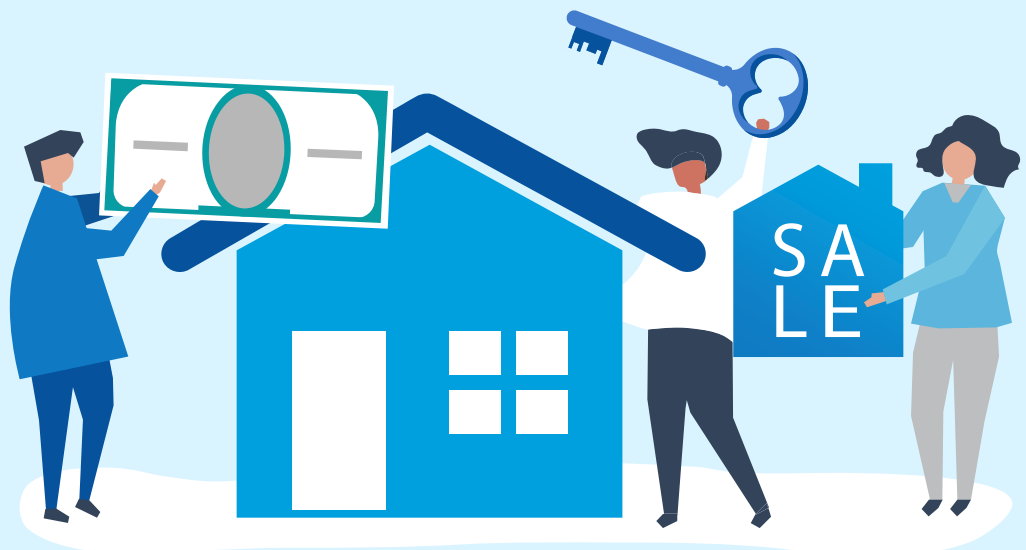
Provisional Broker- An entry-level status that requires passing a licensing examination. Provisional brokers must be under the supervision of an individual who qualifies as a “broker-in-charge” in order to legally provide services. Brokers must complete 90 hours of post-license educational programming to remove the provisional status.

Broker- The primary status of brokers in the North Carolina. Individuals who achieve this title have satisfied all the provisional and post-licensing requirements. People with this status can conduct business either with affiliated agents of a brokerage firm, under the guidance of a broker-in-charge, or independently.

Broker-in-Charge Eligible- These individuals have satisfied the needed requirements, submitted a request for such status, and completed a 12-hour Broker-in-Charge course in the allotted time window.

Broker-in-Charge (BIC)- “Each real estate firm or sole proprietorship must have a BIC for each office,” according to the real estate commission. Their responsibilities include, among other things:

- ✔ Assuring employed brokers have active/current licenses
- ✔ Advertising
- ✔ Maintaining escrow accounts
- ✔ Supervising provisional brokers
- ✔ Retaining records



Firm- A license may also be obtained by a business entity. A sole proprietorship does not need a firm license; however, corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, general partnerships, joint business ventures, and associations do need such a license.

Limited Nonresident Commercial Broker- This license is issued to an individual who does not live in the state of North Carolina, has an active license in another state, and wants to enter into a commercial transaction in North Carolina as an affiliate with an out-of-state brokerage. This person must enter a "Declaration of Affiliation and a Brokerage Cooperation Agreement" with a resident broker who will take on the responsibility of supervising the out-of-state broker.

In addition to the necessary education, application, and exam requirements, you should also be aware that the Commission takes every applicant's character into consideration when making a real estate broker licensing decision. Again, according to real estate regulators, "Every applicant for a real estate license has the burden of satisfying the Commission that the applicant possesses the honesty, truthfulness, integrity, good moral character, and general fitness, including mental and emotional fitness, necessary to protect the public interest and promote public confidence in the real estate brokerage business."

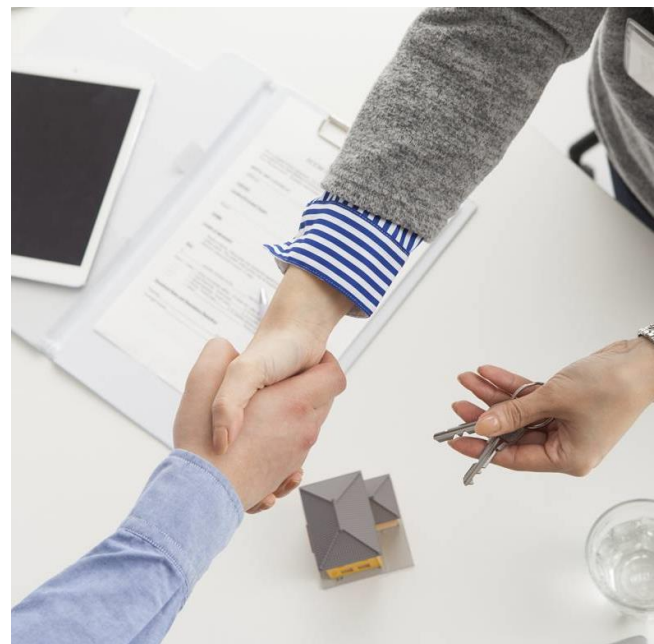
To that end, applicants must submit any information regarding criminal offenses—including serious traffic offenses—professional licensure discipline, unpaid judgements, and liens. The Commission expects full disclosure in this area, and nondisclosure will only "increase an applicant's burden of proving truthfulness, honesty and integrity."

Once you have satisfied each of these requirements, you will then begin the challenging task of translating *permission* to engage in real estate transactions to *success* in doing so. Of course, this success comes with its own set of obstacles. In the coming sections, we will parse the nuances of running a thriving real estate business and go over strategies to grow it into the practice you have envisioned from the start.

SECTION 2:

How do You Choose Your Real Estate Brokerage?

Choosing the right brokerage can be the difference between wrestling with early struggles that stunt future growth and closing early wins that springboard your new career.



Consider the Environment - Most importantly, you want to be comfortable in whatever environment you choose to work. If you are not comfortable with your brokerage, both personally and professionally, it will be extremely difficult to navigate the inevitable challenges facing a new broker. It will also be, quite honestly, not much fun.

You will need to think about countless financial, cultural, and practical considerations as you decide on a group. Try to find a brokerage early on that can help with lead generation, marketing, and conversion, since you will not have the same resources as larger, more experienced brokers.

Getting off to a strong start can make all the difference as your career blossoms and grows. For your first brokerage, you want to be extra attentive to finding the support you need and working with individuals who nourish your development.

Consider Commission - Another key consideration is the practical matter of commission division. In addition to splitting costs between the buying agent and the selling agent, real estate brokers will also have to give a cut to their firm. Think about what type of split you are comfortable with before you start your search.

With this matter in mind, you will obviously want to work for a brokerage that offers a favorable split. Keep in mind, too, your commission split will likely get better as you gain more experience.

Some brokerages offer hybrid-compensation models that include some salary and benefits in addition to the traditional commissions you will earn. This policy may be appealing to you as well, and it is certainly worth exploring if you're more comfortable with a guaranteed income floor.

Consider culture - Another important area of consideration is company culture. The individuals with whom you associate are going to have a huge impact on your experience at the firm. Be certain those individuals—and the work environment they create—fit your expectations and comfort level. For some, large franchise brokerages with more freedom are preferable. Others might like the intimacy of a boutique firm. Largely, this will come down to your personal preference and comfort level. Of course, it's entirely possible that your preferences will change over time. You might like the idea of a smaller brokerage offering a lot of support when you first start out, but then you may want to try something with a little more freedom once you get your bearings.

Ultimately, you want to ensure that you're neither too constricted nor too independent as you progress through the various stages of real estate work. Each broker must carefully audit their preferences and make the appropriate decisions.

Choosing the right brokerage may take some time, and it might be worthwhile to consider numerous possibilities before you pick one. Don't be afraid to explore your options and always ask questions regarding anything about which you are unsure. It's better to get all the information you need ahead of time than it is to jump into something that's not right and find yourself needing to quickly backpedal.



Choosing a Real Estate Mentor - A mentor's support can be just as helpful as your brokerage's support. Real estate mentors, like many other types of professional mentors, offer critical encouragement as you start reaping the benefits of your legwork. In essence, a good mentor can help you transform potential business into *actual* success.

Finding a mentor can be challenging. Even if you know a lot of successful agents, choosing the right one—and finding one who is available and willing to take on the role—might take a little exertion on your part. However, the benefits of finding the right mentor can be tremendous, especially early in your career.

Young agents are urged to let any mentor-mentee relationship develop naturally. Don't force the relationship, and try to keep your expectations in check. Like any relationship, this one must grow and evolve over time and be based on mutual respect and trust.

The essence of any good relationship, as noted above, is respect. You should respect the experience and guidance of your mentor, and they should respect your work ethic and willingness to learn. Always reciprocate the respect they give you, be mindful of your mentor's time and energy, and offer them support whenever you can.





SECTION 3:

Winning Advertising and Lead Generation Strategies

As you will surely find out, success in the world of real estate hinges on your ability to continually drum up new business. This ability comes from effective, relentless marketing. You cannot close deals you never had a chance to broker in the first place. Much ink has been spilled regarding the best ways to advertise your services and bring in new clients, so it will be nearly impossible to cover them all here. (This is one of the most important subjects we cover at <https://www.skylineschool.net/>.) We can, however, touch on some of the essential tips and strategies you should employ in order to accomplish your marketing, advertising, and lead generation goals.

Cross-promotion - One simple, effective tip is to join the local Chamber of Commerce. This action accomplishes a few things. For one, the Chamber will list your business and name on all sorts of digital and printed materials. This perk alone could directly lead to referrals. Also, being involved in the Chamber will expose you to other area professionals. This exposure will open up the gate to potential cross-promotion and partnerships. Also, remember, you do not need to limit yourself to just one Chamber of Commerce. You may be eligible for hyper-local, county, and even regional Chamber membership. Explore all of them.

Cross-promotion is a powerful driver of business. Building strong relationships with leaders in adjacent industries is a great way to grow your business and learn more about your market. Individuals who might prove to be useful contacts include:

- ✔ Housing inspectors
- ✔ Lenders
- ✔ Construction companies
- ✔ Other brokers
- ✔ Real estate attorneys



Cross promotion is good for you, good for the other members in the community, good for your business, and ultimately good for your clients. Two of the best ways you might build these relationships include 1) regularly attending networking events, and 2) developing a strong, active social media presence. Once you become comfortable working with other professionals in your market, you can then begin to refer a handful of them to your clients. The stronger these relationships become, the more likely they will be to actually mature into actionable referrals. This working relationship will greatly benefit your clients and make their experience that much smoother.

A note on organization - Since real estate brokering is so dependent on networking and personal contacts, it is extremely important to keep detailed records of your transactions, clients, networks, leads, and potential areas of growth. The larger your brokerage, the more organization you will need. It can be very easy to lose track of things.

In this area, technological solutions can be extremely useful. Loads of software programs and systems out there can help with organization. These Customer Relationship Management (CRM) options offer an enormous amount of support and flexibility for brokers. Depending on the size of your practice, your growth plans, and how many clients you are currently serving, it is likely you could benefit from such CRM software. Consider some of their most popular features:

- ✔ Organize information regarding new prospects
- ✔ Track and create efficient responses for people inquiring about individual properties
- ✔ Keep tabs on how far along clients are in their buying process
- ✔ Store digital information and gather useful data regarding website activity
- ✔ Manage closings
- ✔ Manage relationships
- ✔ Generate future referrals
- ✔ Automate workflow
- ✔ Email open house follow-ups.

Organization is helpful in every business venture, but in a real estate biome featuring mountains of contacts, it is essential. What you can't do by hand, you should automate. For that matter, what you *can* do by hand, you should still automate. The benefits to using CRM will almost always outweigh the costs.



Keep an ear to the ground –

Familiarity with the pulse of a community is vital to being able to sell in it. Agents looking to find individuals likely to move on real estate deals must keep a sharp eye out for major life changes that people in their market might be experiencing. These changes, which can sometimes be unpleasant, often lead to transactions. For example, divorce and death are two common events that tend to create a demand for real estate services.



Of course, you must be sensitive to these individuals and their reality. These occurrences are not merely business interests; they are real life events with real life consequences. You never want your clients to feel like you're capitalizing on their misfortunes; nor should you approach these situations in that way. These circumstances do, however, often require the services of a real estate agent. Making yourself available when people need you fulfills both your needs and theirs.

You could also explore lots of other demand-producing events when you're looking to generate leads. Scour the internet (Facebook, online classifieds, virtual marketplaces, etc.) for upcoming garage and estates sales. These activities are often evidence that people are cleaning out their homes ahead of a move, so you could find yourself with potential leads for both the new buyers and new sellers.

Nursing homes - Nursing homes are another great location for meeting individuals who might be interested in your services. Perhaps they have property they no longer need or have family members who are looking to move property. As people change stages in their lives, they tend to need the services you provide. Always keep an eye out for individuals in periods of transition.

Mailers - Another useful strategy some agents use is to titillate area homeowners with mailers highlighting successful deals they just closed. If you close a big deal, quickly send out literature pointing out the final sale price. This strategy might get homeowners who are already on the fence about selling to consider finally making the leap to list their home. Don't be afraid to showboat a little, either. Big, flashy numbers can grab a potential sellers' attention and might get them thinking about their own potential haul.

News outlets - Another way you can drum up some extra attention for your listings is to pitch them to local news outlets. This extra attention has a few benefits. First, it can create a lot of buzz and hype for your property, especially if a reputable outlet with a healthy circulation features the listing. Further, you may also be able to generate new leads and clients from the publicity the media coverage gives you.

Networking - Another useful strategy is to make a special effort to periodically meet with top contacts in person. Lead generation is often born of personal connection. Listen to your contacts' stories, learn about their lives, and soak up valuable feedback they might have about the market or the industry. You could even host a party or exclusive event just for your top contacts. Even if these individuals do not have direct business leads, they might know someone who does. Good networking is the life force of good selling.

Show appreciation - Another great tip is to be sure to thoroughly show your thankfulness for leads and referrals and give appropriate appreciation to your sources. When possible, you can even reward them for their helpfulness. This policy is important for both leads that work out and leads that don't quite work out. Show appreciation for the help you get, even if it doesn't lead directly to earnings. Doing so can only help, and failing to do so needlessly risks the potential for future business.

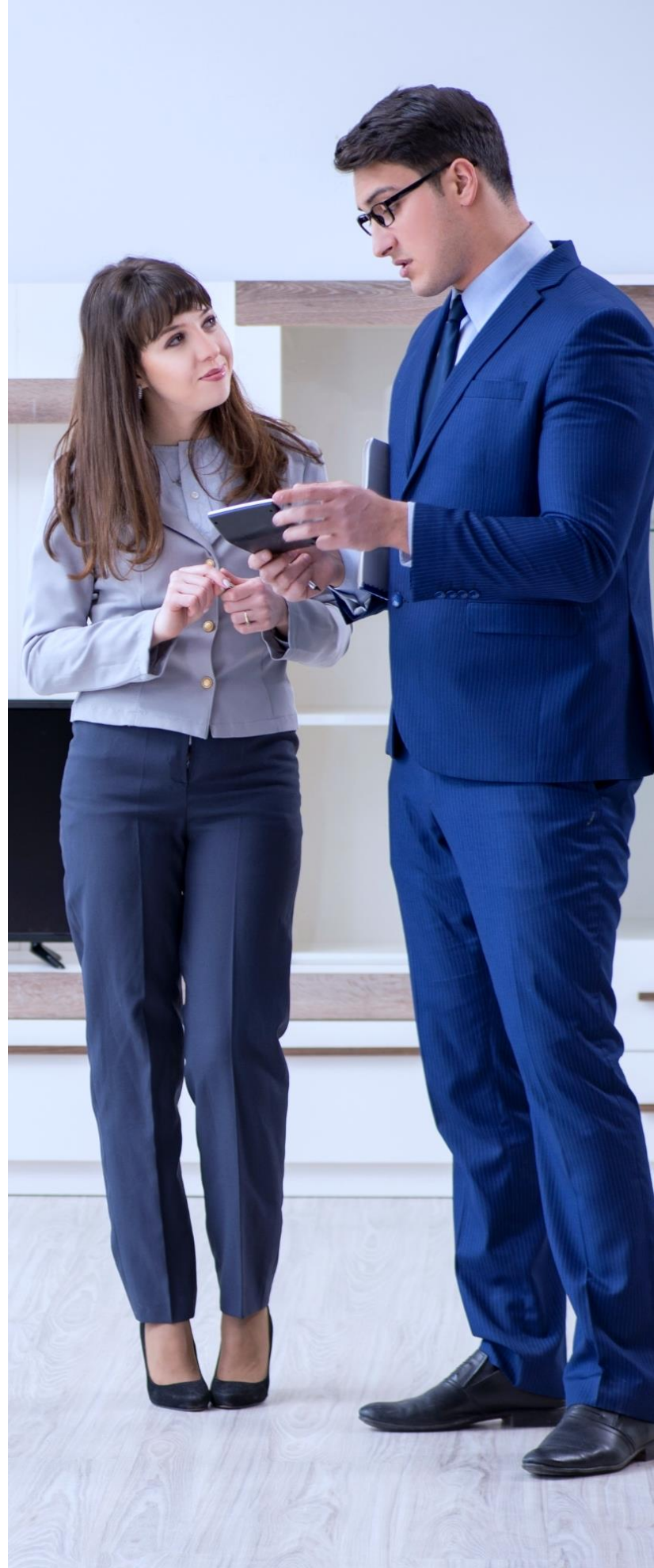
Leveraging existing clients for referrals - Speaking of your referrals, one of the best sources of future business comes from those with whom you have done business in the past. Your former clients are the "boots on the ground," so to speak. They have an endless network of friends, family, and contacts that will all eventually require the services of a real estate agent.

Naturally, the most important thing you can do to win these referrals is provide exceptional service to your clients. No one is going to recommend you to anyone in their social circle if you don't provide great service. Be informed, be attentive, and most importantly, be helpful.

Also, be sure to stay in touch with your clients throughout your real estate career. Even after you close your transaction, keep connected. Past clients can help create future business if they remember you and the service you provided.

A lot of agents take these past clients and their referrals for granted. Don't. If you want to continue to drum up new business, you have to put in the time and the effort to show these clients you care about their home, their process, and their wellbeing.

One thing you can do to stay relevant to clients is continue to provide them value; be sure to make them aware that your services are always available. Sending an e-newsletter, checking in via email or social media, and employing other methods of contact are great ways to stay in touch.



Also, be proactive in your efforts. Sure, many of your former clients will likely refer you to those in their social circle without prompting, but others might need a little nudge. Don't be afraid to ask for referrals. It's entirely fair game to let your former clients know that you're looking for their help to land new business—just be sure to do it tactfully.

It's no secret that the real estate industry is largely founded on referrals. It's okay to nudge, of course, but you don't want to come off as desperate, and you definitely don't want to be annoying. Be strategic about when and how you ask for referrals, and of course be thankful for everything anyone offers you.

It is also especially important to be specific when seeking referrals. If you specialize in a particular type of service, let people know that. If you have had noteworthy success with first-time buyers or older sellers, be sure to communicate that fact as well. The more information you can give to your former clients, the better off you will be in the long run.

Because you're going to generate so much business from referrals, you'll need great organizational skills (and perhaps software). Keeping track of who generated how much business will be invaluable as you grow your client base. You can't reward your top sources if you can't keep track of who they are. This is only one of the many reasons why CRM software is so important.

It's impossible to cover the mountains of worthwhile tips here. For that reason, we continue to remind agents about the importance of training and education, no matter what stage of the real estate game you are currently playing in.





IN CLOSING

We covered a lot of ground in this e-Book. We touched on topics ranging from the benefits of training to the importance of picking the right organization and cultivating relationships with clients. We also discussed some industry-proven tips and tricks essential to growing your real estate business. These pointers are all important and helpful. However, nothing can replace hard work and your commitment to improving your bottom line and driving business. Success in real estate brokering, at its core, is predicated on ambition, focus, and dedication to your craft. All the tips and tricks in the world will do you no good if you don't hustle.

We hope you gathered lots of great information here, and we hope you can use that information to generate loads of leads and revenue. For more of this important education, please consider our pre-licensing, post-licensing, and continuing education services. We offer a wealth of information packed concisely and efficiently for your consumption. As the housing market, economy, and real estate industry continue to change and evolve, it will be incumbent upon you to keep up with those changes. The best way to do that, as we mentioned earlier, is with solid training and education.

Again, we will point you to <https://www.skylineschool.net/> for exactly that.

Notes about getting started in Real Estate- Many prospective agents are reluctant to wade into the industry for one reason or another. Perhaps it is fear of the unknown, an unwillingness to leave the comfort of their current profession, or something else entirely. However, one of the great things about working in the real estate industry is its accessibility.

If you like your current job, you can keep it and supplement your income with real estate work on the side. If you want to go in full bore, you can do that too. The transition from part-time to full-time is fairly easy.

A lot of brokers like to get started with a few closings and see how they like dealing with the buyers and sellers. As their comfort level grows, they begin spending more time in the space and taking on heavier workloads. This strategy is a great way to build your network and your business without cutting off other revenue sources. Do as much as you like—or as much as you can handle—and go from there. Real estate is a game you can play on your own time and at your own pace. Don't rush in, and don't be pressured to do anything you aren't comfortable doing.

As you go forward, keep in mind all we have discussed here and consider what else you may want to do to ensure you continue to grow and thrive. Real estate is an exciting, stimulating field, and I hope you enjoy helping your clients buy and sell their way into their dreams. If you work hard and follow the best practices discussed here (and in our classes!), you will undoubtedly find yourself enjoying tremendous success in no time.