

## 10 Secrets of a ‘High Five’ Culture

by Larry Kendall

The average annual household income in the U.S. is \$56,516. For the top 5 percent of households, it’s \$159,619, and for the 1 percenters, it’s \$380,354. In our company, we are only interested in hiring associates who aspire to be 5 percenters or better. We call them ‘High Fivers,’ and we have a system to help them get there.

How do you build a ‘high five’ culture? Simple. Hire sales associates who aspire to be 5 percenters and coach them to success. Here are our observations of their top 10 attributes and activities:

**Mindset** – Players versus victims. Look for associates with a growth mindset who believe they can figure this business out and be successful if they work hard enough. (See Dr. Carol Dweck’s book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*.)

**Hungry** – Success takes effort. Hire associates who hunger to succeed and have the work ethic to get there. What is their motivation? What is their ‘why?’

**Character** – Hire likable people who tell the truth and do what they say. These character attributes are the keys for them to be a trusted advisor, rather than just a salesperson.

**Empathy** – Having the social skills to pick up on the subtle nuances and the feelings of another was the key attribute of the top 10 percent of sales associates, according to a study by Franklin-Covey.

**Flow** – Flow fixes everything. We are in a contact sport. High Fivers

are in flow (face-to-face or voice-to-voice) with at least 50 people a week—for some of them, it’s 50 a day! They use technology, but tend not to spend a lot of time looking at screens.

**Database** – What holds an associate back from flow? Fear of making calls? It could be, but we’ve another common factor: they don’t have a good database. They can’t make the calls or send the mailings because they don’t have email addresses and phone numbers. Help them put together a database or hire a student to help them. A survey of 20,000 REALTORS® shows that less than 40 percent had a database (even scraps of paper and business cards in a shoebox counted). Those with even a semblance of a database earned 251 percent more than those without one.

**Value Proposition** – High Fivers know how to create value by solving problems and making their clients feel good. They are constantly solving and serving, versus selling. They bring real value to their clients and know how to articulate their value proposition.

**Negotiation** – A survey by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) of homebuyers and sellers rated negotiation skills as a key attribute in selecting a real estate professional. Are you practicing negotiation skills in your meetings? Share best practices on the five negotiation points of a real estate contract: Price, Terms, Dates, Inclusions/Exclusions and Contingencies.

**Focus** – In his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Dr. Stephen Covey talks about living in our three circles. Circle 1 is our circle of concern: everything from politics to celebrities to football scores. Circle 2 is our circle of influence: clients, friends, kids, business. Circle 3 is our circle of control: our mindset, behavior and daily activities. High Fivers focus on their circles of control and influence. The 95 percenters tend to focus on their circle of concern and live their lives worrying about everything over which they have no control. This is also the focus of the victim. Players focus on their circles of control and influence.

**Reference Group** – Harvard Professor Dr. David McClelland found that “80 percent of a person’s success can be attributed to their reference group (peers, role models, mentors).” His research supports the adage “Birds of a feather flock together.” What kind of a flock are you creating at your company? Are you focusing on High Fivers?

Focus on these 10 attributes and activities of High Fivers, and you will build a high five company—and culture.

*Larry Kendall is chairman of Colorado-based The Group, Inc., and creator of Ninja Selling. For the latest real estate news and trends, bookmark RISMedia.com..*



# 5 Tools to Create That Special Vibe

by Vince Leisey

**H**ow does management go about creating a positive work culture that's filled with energy, excitement, enthusiasm, passion and a positive attitude? In other words, that invisible feeling and vibe we get but can't see?

The following are action items that we preach on a regular basis. First, we encourage our agents to do at least five simple acts of kindness daily—for example, complimenting others, opening doors, recognizing family events and special accomplishments. Little things like telling others you like what they're wearing, assisting people when their arms are full or buying coffee for the person behind you at Starbucks make a big difference. By being genuine, you put a smile on the faces of others who may be having a bad day, thereby creating a butterfly effect. This can cause them to exude positivity and it then reflects in others. Every one of us has the ability to control our surroundings. It can start with us—each and every one of us!

## 1 Daily Shower of Inspiration

It is easiest to create a positive culture when modeled by the leaders of an organization. When leaders inspire and motivate their employees, it flows throughout the company. We show motivational and inspirational videos weekly at sales meetings in hopes of getting our team pumped up and in the right state of mind. Zig Ziglar says, "People often say to me, 'Zig, motivation is great, but it doesn't last.' I just tell them, 'Bathing doesn't last either, that's why I recommend it daily.'"

Leaders that inspire their teams regularly create energized environments. We expect our agents to have a mentality of being a team—helping others and being an encouraging force for others through active engagement and friendly competition. Leadership must recognize individuals and acknowledge their accomplishments. Our office also has a "Good Guy" award that is given from agent to agent at weekly sales meetings. It can be given for any reason that made the agent a "good guy." This continues to help us focus on the goodwill of our peers.

## 2 Authenticity

Our agents are allowed to personalize their offices to make them colorful, energetic and vibrant. We give them permission to create whatever environment they feel most productive and good working in. Many of our agents have walls with different colors, chalk paint, personalized décor and even mannequins! Basically, we do not encourage a corporate mentality. We want our agents to have the freedom to do what works best to grow their business.

Agents are encouraged to come to the office daily to prospect



and grow their business. We have found that activity breeds activity. Agents seeing other productive agents growing and succeeding in business inspires and motivates them.

## 3 Agent Collaboration

We ask and expect that our most successful agents and top producers openly share what they do with others through classes and helping when asked. Our most successful agents and top producers are encouraged to share their business techniques, and what successes and failures they have encountered.

Top producers and true leaders serve others. They challenge others and want to be challenged. When you have top producers working around you, it raises the bar and sets higher standards. Again, activity breeds activity. It makes everyone strive to compete at a higher level.

To be as powerful and successful as you are capable of, you need to have a unique support team. All successful people learn to surround themselves with a great support team. This team gives advice, loves and encourages you, challenges you and wants to see and help you become prosperous. When you work together as a team, it's easier to make it to the top.

## 4 Attitude of Gratitude

Having the attitude of "give to get" is a humbling, yet very powerful feeling. We expect those in our organization to give to those within our business and to the community. There is a special karma in life that follows those who give to others and don't expect anything in return. They almost always grow and receive more than they ever could expect.

We also have various community charities that a large number of agents donate time and energy to. Knowing that we are helping those less fortunate makes everyone feel better about themselves and the organization. Today's millennial generation wants to do something special and make a difference. This is very important to them and it creates not only a great feeling, but it's a great way to network amongst peers and interact with others in the community.

## 5 Servant Leadership

It's crucial for leaders to be approachable and be available to consult others. Agents need to know someone is there to listen, advise and keep personal and business issues confidential. Leaders must listen and pay attention to help understand their agent's strengths and weaknesses. By understanding and building upon their strengths, we can help them attain their goals and achieve greatness!

Everyone wants to work in a positive environment, as it makes everyone more productive and happier. In this type of environment, leaders are not pointing fingers or telling people what to do and where to go. In other words, a leader helps to set an example through active involvement and support of the team. Great leaders are open to being challenged without being defensive, spurring growth, innovation and productivity. Thus, everyone in the organization feels better about the surrounding culture and their individual contribution to the workplace personality. Great leaders will push people and will always remind their team how today's work leads to tomorrow's dreams.

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## Find Top Talent and Bring 'Em on Board

*by the Experts at Buffini & Company*

One of the biggest challenges brokers face in today's real estate climate is recruiting—building a team of committed agents who not only have serious sales chops, but also fit in with the

company culture. Not easy, to say the least. So as you continue your search for solid candidates, here are a few key things to consider...

One of the biggest challenges brokers face in today's real estate climate is recruiting—building a team of committed agents who not only have serious sales chops, but also fit in with the company culture. Not easy, to say the least. So as you continue your search for solid candidates, here are a few key things to consider...

Just as you generate business through the referrals of your clients, one of the best ways to recruit top producers to your business is through your professional network. What constitutes your network?

- **Your internal network**, which includes business owners and vendors in your community that you work with and refer. It also includes people in your social sphere; that is, philanthropic or religious groups to which you belong.

- **Your external network**, which includes like-minded business professionals you'd like to build a relationship with, but haven't had a chance to connect with yet. Make a list and get in touch with them or join a professional organization to meet business pros that work like you.

- **Your referral network**, which includes your network of business contacts: lenders, appraisers and contractors.

All of the people in these networks have the potential to refer great, high-performing agents to your brokerage. Successful people tend to surround themselves with other successful people, so be sure to ask them if they know any top-producing agents who'd be a great addition to your brokerage.

### Who is your ideal agent?

If you're not sure what you're looking for, you'll never find it. Write a profile of the attributes and selling style of your ideal agent. Sure, a person may be a top producer, but if they have a cutthroat attitude that doesn't jive with your collaborative office, they'll wreak havoc. Be sure to outline the strengths, communication style and values you find important. Once you have your list, think about who in your network might have an existing relationship with your ideal agent.

### Tap into your groups.

Think about the groups and organizations you belong to, have belonged to, or would like to belong to. Are these organizations that would draw top producers? If so, get more involved and network with members. When you meet members who fit your criteria for an ideal agent you'd like in your brokerage, work to develop a relationship. If they're happy with their current brokerage, they may have connections with other agents who would be perfect for your business.

### Model the behavior you wish to attract.

Real estate is a social business that's all about relationships,

especially if you work by referral. Use a personal touch when communicating with potential recruits and people in your network. This means calling folks to check-in or sending a handwritten note.

Additionally, organize business lunches with the most successful business owners and connections in your network so you can spend time face-to-face. For large-scale networking, plan a business mixer. These actions not only model the way you do business and the way you hope your agents do business; they also build and reinforce the existing relationships in your network.

Finding the right agents for your brokerage takes persistence; however, patience pays off and, over time, you will be able to build a brokerage of like-minded, top-producing agents for your referral-based business.

*For more information, please visit [www.buffiniandcompany.com](http://www.buffiniandcompany.com).*

## Recruiting Tips for Your Brokerage

by Marc Gould

Recruiting should be looked at as a continuous process, rather than something that only happens when you're in a bind. Ongoing recruiting allows you to be thoughtful and calm about who you're looking for and not recruit in a panic, resulting in a poor hire. This measured approach creates a pool of candidates you can hire from in the future. Your agents may leave at any time, often for reasons other than dissatisfaction, such as illness or a spouse's job transfer. Be proactive instead of reactive with an ongoing recruiting process, and you'll be prepared to hire an excellent job candidate when the need arises.

Before initiating a recruitment program, make it a priority to define the kind of agents that'll fill a need in your brokerage. Are you looking for a seasoned agent, or a recent college grad? Do you need agents who have experience with a particular type of property, such as condos or tiny homes? Are you looking for agents who have experience working with specific types of clients, like first-time homebuyers, retirees, or people interested in vacation homes? Once you decide what kind of agent you need, you can tailor your recruitment process accordingly.

Recruiting sources have changed significantly in recent years. Job search websites like Monster are no longer the only source of applicants. Social media has now grown as an important source of job seekers. Sure, you can recruit through Google+, LinkedIn and Facebook, but why not expand your efforts to include Pinterest, Snapchat and YouTube? Snapchat allows you to add a short video to your job posting, giving applicants an idea of your company's culture. You can also create more permanent recruiting vid-



eos on YouTube. This allows you to verbally (and visually) explain your brokerage's philosophy, set out your recruiting requirements and create interest in your company. Pinterest is another unconventional source of recruits, where you can post job openings, along with boards highlighting your company culture and links to your career page. Additional recruiting sources include referrals, networking events, community and civic groups, real estate schools, career seminars, and even a simple career page on your brokerage website.

Don't limit your recruiting efforts to only the real estate field. You can find candidates with great service and sales backgrounds in many types of businesses. No matter which tactics you use, be sure to track what works and what doesn't in your recruiting process. With information on your success rate with various recruiting channels, you can refine your strategies to target the best candidates for your brokerage.

It's also important to identify why agents should choose your brokerage over any other real estate firm. Emphasize what makes your office stand out. Highlight your unique brokerage model and firm culture. Point out noteworthy employee benefits, such as health insurance, paid vacation days, salaries and training opportunities. Keep a running list of the strengths of your brokerage to have as a ready introduction for potential job candidates.

Make recruiting a natural, ongoing process by focusing on the type of agent you want to recruit, expanding your recruiting channels and accentuating your brokerage's unique features. Use these ideas to make your recruiting a success." **RE**

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## 4 Essentials When Recruiting Newer Agents

by Geoff Lewis

Adding experienced, already productive agents to your office brings a variety of obvious benefits, but recruiting newer agents—those with more potential than experience—can help your firm, as well, especially as these up-and-comers develop over time.

You need to approach adding new agents strategically, though. Opening your door to just anyone can hurt your culture. Finding and hiring the right sort of newer agent (regardless of experience level) can protect and improve your brokerage's long-term health.

It's true that newer agents often require more work up front, but these agents are also blank slates, with open minds that can be trained and molded for success.

Here are four things to keep in mind:

### Look for Attitude

All of us started from a point of inexperience. The key for brokers is to determine whether a prospect has the drive and personality to grow and thrive. Often, it isn't that hard to figure out. Try this: Ask prospects about their significant accomplishments in and outside of work. What initiatives have they managed or spearheaded? What big ideas have they put into action?

When they respond, don't just listen to the words; consider how they answer. Do they express passion and excitement? Do they show a spark? Does their reply suggest they have the commitment, drive and determination inherent in an entrepreneur?

### Help Them Succeed

As a broker, it's your responsibility to not only find talent, but also

to nurture it. This is particularly true with newer agents. You need programs in place that develop good habits, essential skills and a solid real estate foundation. There are many training resources out there, so do your research, find one you believe in and then make it your own. A strategy of bringing newer agents on board without instruction and support will fail in the long run.

### Have Them Invest in Themselves

It's one thing for you to invest in a newcomer's success; it's another for them to invest in their own. There can be a big difference in motivation between an agent on a free ride and an agent who has skin in the game. Agents who invest in their own training often take their education, and their careers, more seriously than those who don't. Paying the bill themselves is a powerful incentive for them to work as hard as they can.

### Protect Your Culture

Resist the urge to recruit any warm body that comes through the door. A come-one-come-all approach will quickly dilute your culture, or—even worse—define it. Quality agents are out there—prospects who may not be top producers yet, but who certainly aspire to be. And here's a great tip: Allocate a certain number of newer agent slots based on your office size (adding one newer agent for every 10 experienced agents is a good place to start). You'll maintain your productive culture while adding fresh, new blood to your group.

High-potential candidates without long real estate resumes are anxious to start their careers strong—or are languishing at offices that don't provide the support and competitive advantages they need. Consider giving them a place to grow. You can ensure that your future—and theirs—is one of prosperity and greater success. **RE**

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