



# WEST FLORIDA REIA NEWS

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## Do You Need a Brand?

By Barbara Grasse

Some of the guru programs must make a pretty big deal out of creating your brand because I see new investors show up with business cards and logos worthy of Fortune 500 companies. If you're not planning on becoming an international real estate mogul, do you need to worry about brand?

The answer is yes, but probably not for the reasons you think.

First, let's get clear on what we're talking about here. A brand is not your logo, the colors that you pick, or your snappy catch phrase. (And "That Real Estate Guy!" is NOT a snappy catch phrase.) These can all be elements of your brand, but your brand is much more than that. Blaine and The Fabulous Honey Parker (now there's a brand!) in their book *Billion Dollar Branding*, say

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## Deal Directly With the Seller

By Barbara Grasse

In most real estate transactions, the seller's agent presents the offer from the buyer's agent to the seller. This is almost certain death for a creative real estate transaction. One or both of the agents will be uncomfortable with the very idea of a creative deal and will tank it—either consciously or subconsciously. (How many times have you heard of an agent **refusing** to present a low but legitimate offer?")

Even if both agents are on board with a creative offer, there's a much higher risk of miscommunication. You tell your agent, who tells the seller's agent, who tells the seller. The seller responds to his agent, who tells it to your agent, who tells you. If you have ever played the game Telephone as a kid, you know it takes fewer

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*Do you remember  
playing the game  
Telephone as a kid?*

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that your brand is the experience people have when they use your product or service, from their first contact through to the last. And you were agonizing over what colors to use...

You need to be intentional in building your brand. Take some time to think about your own personality. If you are a small business (and most of us are, at least when starting out), your brand is probably going to reflect your personality. Are you warm? Outgoing? Friendly but professional? Formal? Strictly a numbers person? Type A? Laid back? None of these is wrong or right—it is a matter of recognizing your personal style and incorporating it into what you do.

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*“If the customer’s experience is unpleasant, your brand will not stand.”*

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Next think about how the people you deal with would want to be treated. Many people want reassurance that you will do what you say. Some will need hand holding. If you’re wholesaling, you may be buying from those types of people but selling to investors who are strictly numbers people.

Once you decide on your desired customer experience, you can work backwards from there. Does your company name convey the image you want to project? Do you want your colors to be bold and flashy or more subtle and substantial? Does your tagline create the right customer expectation? Does your logo immediately tell people you’re in real estate?

All of these things are the outward symbols of your brand. Even with all of these done right, if the customer’s experience is unpleasant, your brand will not stand.

There’s an entire psycho-science built around brand—certain colors convey a certain feeling, for example. The graphics in your logo or the exact phrasing of your tagline add meaning. But these aren’t the most important components of your brand.

Back in the day, people didn’t call it a brand. It was called reputation. All real estate is local and all markets are small. People talk. They refer people to each other. If you put more thought into how your customers will experience working with you than what colors your logo should have, then your brand will be just fine.

*Deal Directly* from page 1

than three people to hopelessly garble the message and sometimes it happens in just one retelling. If your agent works with a “team” then the likelihood of miscommunication just grew exponentially.

You need to speak directly to the seller for at least three reasons. First, people do business with people they know, like, and trust. That doesn’t happen unless you actually meet and talk with someone. Face to face is best; over the phone can work, too. The point is you have a *personal* connection.

Second, in order to develop an offer that meets the seller’s needs, you need to find out what their needs are. That takes a bit of time because the problem they first tell you is often not the real problem. The agent won’t dig to find out why the seller is really selling; they just want an easy answer to the question when a potential buyer asks, “Why are they selling?”

For the creative real estate investor, that answer is very important. In fact, the whole deal usually hinges on finding the real answer to that question. Most people don’t spill their problems to a stranger within minutes of meeting them. That comes out of building rapport and trust.

Third, when you deal directly with the seller, you are the person sitting down and going over your offer with them. You can explain each component and how it helps solve the seller’s problem(s). You can answer any questions or objections on the spot instead of having those concerns relayed through two agents, or worse, having one of the agents “make up” an answer.

If you’re paying cash and putting in low-ball offers on MLS listings, then by all means, use an agent. In that scenario, you’re doing a straight negotiation on numbers. But for those of us who buy creatively on terms, we need to deal directly with the seller.



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## Let Us Know

What real estate and business topics would you like to hear about? Let us know and we'll do our best to contact and bring in knowledgeable speakers.

Send us an email: [info@WestFloridaREIA.com](mailto:info@WestFloridaREIA.com) and tell us what you want to learn.

## Coming Up:

### *Marketing Mastermind*

*Not finding deals?  
You have to market.*

- What to do
- How to do it
- What strategies to use
- Branding
- Follow up

No matter what marketing strategies you use, the key to success is marketing **CONSISTENTLY**.

**DETAILS COMING SOON!**

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## Members Only

We have a shared contact list for members only. If you want to be in touch with other members, to let them know about deals you may have or are looking for, or just to get together to talk deals, sign up at

<http://westfloridareia.com/member-emails/>

### *Port Charlotte/North Port/Englewood Charlotte County Area*

Our **Port Charlotte Sub-Group** meets every Thursday night at 6:30. Bring your deals, your questions, your experience. Pick up a new trick and talk shop with fellow investors.

#### **Luigi's Restaurant**

3883 Tamiami Trail

Port Charlotte, FL

\$5 per meeting

**FREE** to West Florida REIA members.

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### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We can always use a helping hand!

We're looking for people who can help check in members, assist with coffee set up and break down and putting together our newsletter.

If you'd like to help, please email us at [info@WestFloridaREIA.com](mailto:info@WestFloridaREIA.com)

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