

Tools of the Trade: Brokers—Do You Really Know Who You’re Hiring?

RISMEDIA, March 3 — On the eve of a shifting market and with the goal of doubling her agent count over the next five years, Linda Hauff, general manager of Prudential Tropical Realty in Port Richey, Florida, has her work cut out for her.

Hauff is seeing a slowing market in the expensive Tampa Bay area, but also is faced with the added challenge of meeting demanding recruitment goals over the years ahead. The combination of conditions make it critically important to the company bottom line that she not only hone the skills of her existing 480 agents but also hire only the most qualified new agents who will know how to keep sales moving.

To help her accomplish this, Hauff has been using The Real Estate Simulator, from AlignMark (formerly Upward Motion), an assessment tool that uses simulation technology to recreate real-life challenges that agents encounter on a daily basis to help brokers hire the most qualified people for the job.

“Recruitment is a hot topic for brokers, especially as we anticipate starting to prepare for a changing market,” says Hauff, who has been in real estate for 35 years. “We consider ourselves to be an innovative company, and we’re always exploring new technology. The Real Estate Simulator gives us a complete recruiting solution. It’s got a pipeline—you can see what our brokers are doing. We didn’t have anything like this ourselves, and this seemed to meet everything we needed to put us on the leading edge.”

When using the Simulator, the “real estate agent” is taken through the entire sales cycle from building rapport to closing and must demonstrate their ability to handle objections, negotiate price, understand client needs, deal with personality clashes, and even handle periodic rejection. The Simulator also evaluates selling skills, intelligence, and personality to provide comprehensive information about a person’s strengths and weaknesses in real estate sales.

“For us, the person who fits best in our company is an individual with high standards in ethics, and we get a good sense from the questions and the interview of whether someone is able to succeed at our company,” says Hauff. “We pride ourselves in being choosy and making good choices. That has not always been the standard in this industry, but Prudential Tropical has always been on that course to look carefully at who we are hiring before we make a decision.”

Hauff is planning to hire nearly another 500 agents over the next five years, she says, a task she couldn’t do without The Real Estate Simulator. “It allows us to be proactive and makes everyone accountable for focusing on being the best we can be,” she says. “This system gives us credibility because we can track everything in the pipeline and everyone who has access can see what’s happening. It not only keeps track of recruiting, but provides a complete system for keeping good records.”

The system soon will offer more services, explains Hauff, whose company is part of a beta test of AlignMark’s new contact management system that will be fully integrated with The Real Estate Simulator and offer features like an automatic drip marketing campaign, a mass e-mail program and a complete contact management solution.

“We are very excited about being a part of the beta test group,” adds Hauff.

The Real Estate Simulator is also a good training and development tool for Hauff’s existing agents, she says, and works in conjunction with Prudential Tropical’s new training development center where new agents gain hands on training.

“The Real Estate Simulator is a great coaching tool that gives us an idea of where we need to begin training our agents,” says Hauff. “It helps us see what they are good at and where they need to improve.”

Hauff also asked their existing agents to take the assessment. “It’s not easy, and it’s understandable that some might feel hesitant to do that, but there is no failing,” she says. “All it does is provide us with a better way to know where everyone’s strengths and weaknesses are and help us know where to go with training and development.”

Top performers love it, she adds, providing them with a way to improve their skills through coaching and learning.

“Most industries have always done assessments, but it hasn’t been done in real estate,” she says. “The Real Estate Simulator is a very innovative product for the way our business is done today and for finding the quality agents that you need for what today’s consumers are looking for.”

—By Beth McGuire

For more information on The Real Estate Simulator, visit www.RealEstateSimulator.com.

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