

FLORIDA

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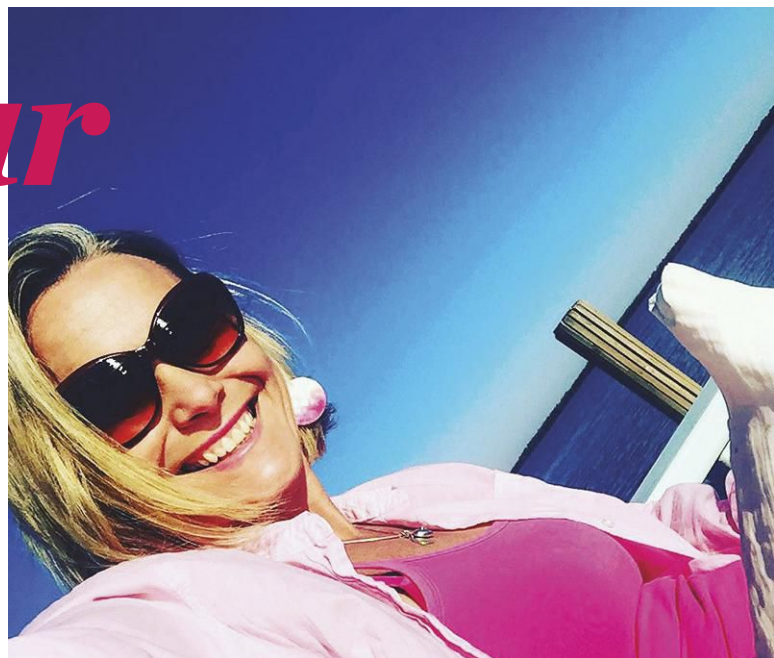
APPS REALTORS LOVE



BRANDING

CREATING *Your* MEMORABLE STORY

Telling your story helps customers connect with you on a personal level.



You don't need a multimillion-dollar corporate marketing budget to establish a memorable brand. Just ask Sue Benson, aka the Pink Lady of Real Estate.

A sales associate since 2009, Benson and her then-partner thought they should have team colors (green and pink) to set themselves apart as real estate professionals in their Spring Hill community.

"At the time, there were five other Sues in our office. When people called in and asked for Sue, it was hard to distinguish myself," explains Benson. "The team colors provided an easy, memorable way to brand ourselves."

Benson held onto the pink branding concept when she moved her business to Naples. There, it became an intentional, evolving marketing strategy. She uses the pink theme in her website name (pinkladyofrealestate.com), in her current tagline, "Pinky Knows Naples," and even in dozens of videos in which, decked out in pink, she shines the spotlight on her community.

Here are Benson's top tips for creating a memorable brand:

1. FARM YOURSELF.

"Be self-aware and think

about what makes you different," says Benson. Whether you're a foodie, a golfer or a family-focused father of eight, embrace your hobby or your passion. When you tell people what you love, you're telling your personal and professional story and engaging with your community.

2. BE CONSISTENT.

"You've got to be intentional about incorporating your brand into everything you do," notes Benson. Promote a consistent brand across all marketing efforts, including postcards, social media, blogs, videos, etc. Benson wears pink virtually every

day to reinforce her brand. In fact, on the rare occasion she's not wearing pink, people will ask, "Where's your pink?" Her signature color sets her apart from others because it's bright and memorable, and she wears it so regularly that people have come to expect it when they see her photos and videos.

3. THINK VISUAL.

When you're out in the community, find ways to reinforce your brand. For example, if you're a foodie, tweet a selfie at your favorite

restaurant. Local businesses will appreciate the plug, and you'll be solidifying your brand as "The Foodie Real Estate Agent." In her Pinky Knows Naples videos, Benson focuses on visual elements of Naples, highlighting the community, restaurants and local businesses. And she, of course, wears pink in them!

"Embrace your differences!" advises Benson. "In a field of 1,000 yellow tulips, you'll be the red tulip." Or, in Benson's case, the pink one!

Engage Others in Your Brand

To reinforce your brand, Benson suggests you create a dialogue with your blog readers and social media followers. Post brand-related questions on your blog or social media accounts to encourage others to interact with you and connect with your brand. Benson once took a photo of herself in front of a pink Volkswagen Beetle with a chrome sticker that said #pinkbeetle. She posted it on social media with a clever message that reinforced her identity as "The Pink Lady of Real Estate" and invited followers to help raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which also uses pink in its marketing.

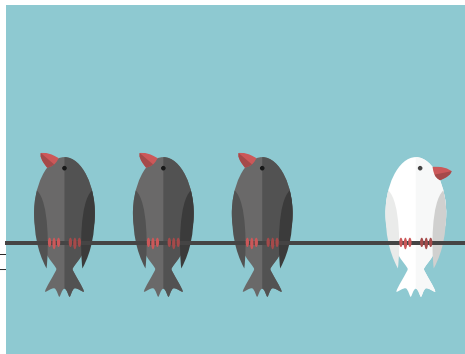
BUILD YOUR BRAND in 5 Steps

While shaping your brand takes time, it involves only a few simple steps.

1. Be authentic. Tap into your core qualities, passions, values—even your charming quirks. Your brand should be a true reflection of who you are, couched in the unique perspective and experience you bring to the job.

2. Show, don't tell. Just as in skillful writing, good storytelling creates an image in people's minds rather than just telling them what to think. Example: Don't just

say you're the "foodie real estate professional." Show people through photos of your handmade open house appetizers, Facebook posts about your favorite seafood restaurant and a "welcome home" menu (complete with all the ingredients as a closing gift)—perfect for owners celebrating their first dinner in their new home.



3. Provide value. While your brand tells your story, it's not all about you. Keep in mind the needs of your buyers and sellers, and provide value (i.e., insider information, services, etc.) that meets those needs, weaving in your brand along the way. This distinguishes you from other agents and keeps your prospects coming back for more.

4. Build an online presence. From your LinkedIn profile to your website to your social media channels, communicate your story through a steady stream of relevant, authentic posts, articles, blogs, photos and videos, providing written, visual (and sharable) content.

5. Establish real-world connections. While an online presence is essential, don't rely too heavily on technology and automation. Phone calls and face-to-face conversations offer intimate opportunities to share your story and connect with others. Go old school with coffee dates, Kiwanis events, industry luncheons and just-touching-base phone calls to keep the in-real-life (IRL) connections real.

Why Sharing Your Story Matters

Stories, especially those that tap into our emotions, connect us with one another. When you share what makes you unique, yet are still relatable, people are more likely to trust you. Think about the details of why you chose a career in real estate, what you love about it and what keeps you engaged. When you're able to truly define who you are as a sales associate, and what you offer potential home buyers and sellers that no other agent can, you're successfully communicating what your brand represents and why you're the best choice for your real estate leads.

Source: Adapted from "Telling the Story of Your Real Estate Business: Winning Clients with Your Brand" by Elizabeth Christensen, Placester.com

3 WAYS TO INCORPORATE STORYTELLING INTO YOUR BRAND

1. Use testimonials. Tap into customers' positive experiences with you, especially if they reinforce your brand. For example, if you brand yourself as "the caring, family-focused father of eight children," use it to reinforce your natural understanding of the needs buyers with big families have for space, safety and stellar schools. That way, your relatability will come through as authentic.

2. Go visual. While writing helpful, engaging content serves as the

cornerstone of great marketing, using photos, infographics, videos and other visual content helps ideas stick. Tap into these free or low-cost online resources:

- Canva (canva.com) and PicMonkey (picmonkey.com) for creating graphics
- Picjumbo (picjumbo.com) and Unsplash (unsplash.com) for free, high-quality photos
- Animoto (animoto.com) and Magisto (magisto.com) for creating videos and slideshows
- Infogr.am and Piktochart (piktochart.com) for creating infographics

- Facebook Live (live.fb.com) and Periscope (iTunes or Google Play app stores) for live video streaming

3. Do cause marketing. If you proudly call yourself a dog lover and decide to incorporate that into your brand, get involved in causes that speak to your passion for animal welfare. Align yourself with like-minded community groups and support their efforts. Some ideas: volunteer at a pet shelter, promote a local group's pet adoption events, conduct a pet food drive, seek pet supply donations that are on the group's wish list or raise money to fund badly needed medical equipment. Promote these efforts on your blog, in social media and in email marketing campaigns to encourage community involvement, perhaps opening your office as a drop-off point for donations. #