

Find and Wow Buyers

Rebecca Romaine Shares Her Secret.



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PASSION NICHE:

TURN YOUR HOBBY INTO A MARKETING MAGNET

BY LISA A. BEACH

Joan Pletcher of Joan Pletcher Real Estate Network grew up riding, training and competing on horses. She also married thoroughbred trainer J.J. Pletcher. So, you might say, she's entrenched in the equestrian lifestyle. That's why it seems natural for her to work with buyers and sellers who are also horse lovers—a niche that has certainly paid off.

When one buyer needed a spacious farm for a horse training center, he called Pletcher, who had placed an ad for her services in the duPont REGISTRY. "He wanted a 650-acre property that [previously] had been divided into six parcels in an auction," explains Pletcher, who was tasked with putting the parcels back together. She negotiated with the property owners and stitched the land into a \$45 million transaction.

Pletcher markets herself as "the trusted expert in Ocala horse farms and real estate." Here's how she weaved her equestrian life into a real estate niche:

1. DO WHAT COMES NATURALLY.

"My father was a builder/developer. Through him, I learned how to develop beautiful homes while preserving the land." She also grew up riding horses. The two pas-

sions first came together when Cloyce Box, who owned the estate featured in the "Dallas" TV series, wanted to buy 350 acres in Ocala and asked Pletcher's husband to train horses there. "That's what got me into real estate in Florida," says Pletcher, who oversaw the design, construction and landscaping for an \$8 million equestrian training center.

2. TAP INTO NICHE KNOWLEDGE.

Thanks to her background, Pletcher understands the nuances of different types of farms, barns, fencing, soil and grasses. She uses these insights to match customers with the perfect equestrian properties.

3. MINE YOUR NETWORK.

Pletcher enjoys getting to know equestrian trainers, riders and their friends and families, all of whom could one day refer customers to her.



"It opened up a whole different world for me," she says.

Use the tips on the next page to develop your own real estate niche, and you could end up marrying your passion with your career.

Lisa A. Beach (Lisa-BeachWrites.com) is a freelance journalist and copywriter.

"My father was a builder/developer. Through him, I learned how to develop beautiful homes while preserving the land."

—JOAN PLETCHER

Watch & Listen!

Check out these videos and podcasts that discuss how to find your niche.

VIDEOS

Dominating a Real Estate Niche by Knolly Williams:
<https://youtu.be/wUMtdt-89I4>

Find Your Real Estate Niche by Ricky Carruth:
<https://youtu.be/A2MRS4jfxUM>

How to Find Your Real Estate Niche! by Jay Morrison:
https://youtu.be/kqw-ejOCp_Y

Niche Marketing Strategy for Real Estate Agents by Kevin Ward:
<https://youtu.be/FJ2YTNTeSQs>

Why the Micro-niche Is Mighty by Kevi Jans:
<https://youtu.be/rYNDQUOUmT8>

PODCAST

The Niche Agent Podcast by Ryan Smith:
<http://bit.ly/RyanSmithPodcast>

6 TYPES OF NICHEs

1. Real Estate (historic, beachfront, lakeside homes)
2. Buyers/Sellers (first-time homebuyers, veterans, empty nesters)
3. Geographic (neighborhood, downtown, gated community)
4. Hobbies (gardening, coaching soccer, the arts)
5. Social (Kiwanis, house of worship, alumni association)
6. Architectural (log cabins, brownstones, Victorian)

PASSION: BOATING

NICHE: WATERFRONT PROPERTY

An avid boater since age 13, Corey Cabral of Downing Frye Realty in Naples taps into his lifelong passion to sell real estate. Cabral's experience with cabin cruisers, power boats, sailboats, fishing and competitive sailing in regattas means he gets the boating lifestyle and knows the waters—a huge plus when trying to market waterfront properties.

When Cabral got his real estate license in 1978, he got very involved in Marco Island, partnering with a top-producing sales office and putting together the perfect marketing

plan for selling waterfront properties.

The team would dock a cabin cruiser right behind the model home center, then show customers all the lot locations by water instead of by land.

"That was the beginning of taking a passion and turning it into a career. I continue that with my personal boat today," says Cabral. "One of the greatest ways to introduce customers to the Naples lifestyle is to get them on the



beach and water. I give them the grand tour on my boat. By the time we're done, the majority of them want to buy something in Naples."

Cabral's advice to other Realtors® looking for their niche? Do something you love, and you'll be the best at it. If you can combine a personal passion with your career, that's a win-win.

5 WAYS TO FIND YOUR NICHE

Plan a day to explore different niches to see which one resonates with you. Here are some ideas:

1. ANALYZE LOCAL DEMOGRAPHICS.

Probe U.S. Census data to spot demographic trends—a surge of baby boomers in your area, for example—and pay special attention to underserved groups, says Josh Gonzalez, director of Realty Executives International's Latin Division, which helps provide trustworthy service to Latinos. But be careful, says Gonzalez, when working with large demographic groups that you don't alienate any one subgroup.

2. PINPOINT YOUR PASSION.

What do you know and love? For Cookie Boyd, ABR®,



e-PRO, it's golf. The former golf pro is now an associate with John R. Wood Properties in Naples, where he specializes in finding buyers homes on golf courses that match their skill level. The idea stemmed from a conversation he overheard in the clubhouse; a man with meager golfing ability was complaining that the course near his home was too difficult. "[Would] you want to live on a golf course where you're always frustrated?" asks Boyd. Instead, he observes customers playing golf before showing them homes. "If you hate the golf course, you're a prisoner."

3. ZERO IN ON A DEFINED GEOGRAPHIC AREA.

Be the go-to resource on a few popular communities in your area or be the downtown expert.

4. LOOK RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.

Who are you working with now? Do you find you're serving a lot of young professionals who are new to town? Investors? Seniors? Categorize your current buyers and sellers, and hone in on marketing to those groups.

5. TAP YOUR EXISTING NETWORKS.

What groups do you belong to now? For example, get active in your kid's school, a young professionals association or some other group that feeds one of your passions.

Source: National Association of Realtors®, "Own Your Niche," realtormag.realtor.org