Better Together: Competitive Agents and Competitive Climate in the Agency  
Keith A. Richards, PhD, Wyatt A. Schrock, PhD Candidate, Douglas E. Hughes, PhD, Frank Q. Fu, PhD, and Eli Jones, PhD

Understanding Client Attitudes  
JaeHwan Kwon, PhD, and Dhananjay Nayakankuppam, PhD

How Does Reinterpretation Influence Our First Impressions?  
Thomas C. Mann, PhD Candidate, and Melissa J. Ferguson, PhD

The Wrong Ladder: Mismatch Between Subgoal Sequences and Actual Goal Performance  
Liyin Jin, PhD, Qian Xu, PhD, and Ying Zhang, PhD

Developing a Winning Theme or The Attention Getter  
Charles Fifield, MBA

Trust in Leadership and Authenticity in Real Estate  
Amanda Rodriguez, MBA

INSIDER: Stretch: Extending Your Professional Expiration Date  
Jack Kohles, MBA Candidate

INSIDER: Get Set, Reset, Go  
Erick Huntley, MBA Candidate
One thing is certain about the business world of tomorrow: it is changing and the change is happening at a faster rate. When you hear the word change, what emotions come to your mind? If excitement is first on your mind, then you are positioned to handle the business world. If fear or reluctance are your dominant emotions, then this article will help you to prepare for change in the real estate industry. Ultimately, your perception of change is what dictates whether you will be ready and equipped for the demands of the business world of tomorrow or be left without the skills that are necessary to thrive.

Companies must stay relevant to rapidly changing technology and changing demands of customers. Therefore, they need their employees to be equipped to handle that change. Thus, the ability to change quickly is an increasingly desirable trait of business professionals. In their book, *Stretch*, Karie Willyerd and Barbara Mistick provide numerous practical strategies for professionals to help themselves stay relevant in an ever-changing business world. Real estate is not immune from change and real estate professionals need to prepare themselves to excel in this changing environment.

In order to stay relevant, a real estate agent needs to understand, respond to, and anticipate change in the industry. Excelling in a changing work environment does not happen by chance. In order to prepare themselves for the needs of tomorrow’s real estate environment, real estate professionals must begin thinking about what they can do now to anticipate the change. In the follow paragraphs, I offer four opportunities for real estate professionals to stretch themselves in anticipation of tomorrow’s real estate needs.

**THINK POINT #1: Stretch Yourself to Stay Relevant**

When you think about your career three, five, or ten years down the road, you probably have different goals for each milestone. Some of these goals are fast and firm while some are a little more flexible. Some are work-related, some are career-related, and some are a little more personal. Most of these goals are focused on equipping yourself to prepare for the demands of
work today. But, have you considered developing a goal related to preparing for changes in real estate?

Blockbuster did not consider Redbox and Netflix as threats when they entered the movie rental industry. Fast-forward five years and Blockbuster is no longer in business. Redbox and Netflix are thriving. Since Blockbuster did not consider Redbox and Netflix as threats, the same can be said for disruptions in real estate. When Zillow and Trulia first started, real estate professionals considered these websites as something that would pass in time. However, the real estate professionals who saw these websites as an opportunity were able to harness the power of placing themselves at the crossroads of real estate purchasers and their need for immediate information. However, doing so required the real estate professionals to stretch themselves beyond their normal business operations.

As changes in real estate practices accelerate, it is important to stretch yourself outside of your normal methods of selling real estate. Success is not a good teacher because it convinces you do not need to change. However, opportunities to stretch yourself will always be present in the typical real estate transaction. Taking a stretch mindset can prepare yourself to seek new opportunities to learn and prepare yourself for the demands of tomorrow. One example of seeking a new opportunity is taking the opportunity to take a class on negotiation. Learning how to better prepare yourself to discuss the intricacies of the normal real estate transactions can equip you to be a reputable real estate agent with a knack for negotiating the best deals for your clients. Although this is just one example, seeking new opportunities to stretch yourself beyond your normal real estate transactions can equip you to handle the demands of tomorrow’s work.

**THINK POINT #2: Do Not Become an “Expired Product”**

When supermarkets label products with a sell-by date, they are guaranteeing to the customer that this product is fresh up-to-this date. In business, we all have a sell-by date. This is when we are no longer able or willing to change in order to meet the new demands of the work world. When we have reached our sell-by date, we are no longer fresh to employers or clients. In order to prepare for tomorrow’s demands, we have to assume the work environment will be different than it is today. Therefore, the question to ask yourself is “What are you doing today to extend your sell-by date for tomorrow?”

Millennials are now the largest generation in the workplace in most countries. As more Millennials enter the workforce, a larger number will begin looking to purchase their first home. However, the demands of Millennials are much different from the demands of their parents. Millennials desire to be connected to the world around them and a majority of it is done through mobile phones. According to Willyerd and Mistick, eight in ten Millennials believe the Internet has changed the world for the better, while less than half of the oldest generations of workers
believe the same (p. 10). Therefore, real estate agents may find themselves unprepared in working with Millennials.

Although a minor change, learning to text has helped real estate agents communicate with a new generation of buyers. However, text messaging is quickly becoming outdated and new messaging apps are becoming the norm. To extend your sell-by date, a real estate agent can begin adopting new modes of communication popular amongst Millennials. New messaging apps such as Snapchat and Periscope have potential to change the normal agent/client interface. Both Snapchat and Periscope allow agents to interact with existing clients and potential clients unlike other apps. Snapchat is a video messaging app that allows users to share a 5-10 second video clip with a specific client/person or all of their “followers.” Meanwhile, Periscope is an app that allows users to broadcast a live video, longer than Snapchat, to their followers. Both of these apps allow a real estate agent to post videos to market a specific house to followers or allow an agent to show a property to a client unable to be present at the showing. These apps have potential to prepare a real estate agent for tomorrow’s demands and extend his or her sell-by date.

THINK POINT #3: Look for Feedback in All Directions

Since real estate is constantly changing, real estate agents need to keep their ears open to potential areas of improvement. However, it is unrealistic for real estate agents to know what they need to prepare for by themselves. A real estate agent can look in all directions for feedback on areas to improve.

a. The wisdom of experienced agents: One of the biggest advantages of knowing more-experienced agents is being able to glean wisdom from their years of experience. Take the opportunity to seek advice and wisdom from these more-experienced agents in your market. Here are four question you could ask a mentor to glean wisdom:

1. What are some of the obstacles I am going to face?
2. What are some ways you distinguish yourself from your competitors?
3. What changes in the real estate industry were you not prepared for?
4. What could you have done to prepare yourself for changes in real estate?
b. **The knowledge of agents in same career phase:** those who are in the same career phase as you can be a vital resource. Take the opportunity to be open with one another, exploring strategies that have been successful for your colleagues. Although difficult, asking for feedback from your peers provides a different perspective on areas for improvement.

c. **The zeal and excitement of young agents:** as new real estate agents enter the industry, they enter with new ideas and fresh insights. They also enter with excitement and zeal to help new clients. Taking the time to mentor new agents in their new career can also help you gain insight and vision for new opportunities or potential changes coming in the future.

Looking in all directions can help you see potential changes in the real estate industry that you may not see yourself. Building a network of trusted resources can help give you an advantage to stay ahead of change.

**THINK POINT #4: Bouncing Forward From Failure**

When failure happens, it can be difficult to find a way forward. Failure can take the wind out of a real estate professional’s sails. In *Stretch*, Willyerd and Mistick offer five stretch strategies to help a professional bounce forward:

1. **Renounce:** feedback can be difficult to receive. However, it can also be some of the best opportunities for growth. Getting comfortable with feedback is a skill a real estate professional can use to enhance his or her career. When receiving feedback, take the opportunity to renounce a fixed mindset of always being right or in control of your outcomes. Instead, adopt a growth mindset that enables you to hear feedback and learn as much as you can.

2. **Pounce:** If surprising incidents happen, do you hunker down and wait the storm or do you stick your head up and try to look for answers? Curious people ask questions, which helps stage the best action for the best outcome. When surprising situations occur, take the opportunity to ask questions and wonder why they happened.

3. **Trounce:** Winning from start to finish is difficult, but to win often, real estate professionals need to find ways to practice their skills through repetition. Taking the time to master the skills required of real estate professionals will prepare them to meet any unexpected event in their careers.

4. **Announce:** Anyone knows you do not train for a marathon by running 26 miles the first day. You slowly build endurance, increasing the distance a little every day. In a real
estate career, it can be difficult to find motivation to improve a little every day. Announcing intentions to a friend or colleague can help motivate you to stay on course for your goals.

5. **Denounce the small stuff:** When a real estate professional is in the daily grind, it can be difficult to see the improvement he or she has made. Holding onto inspiration can be difficult. Therefore, take the chance to write your own meaning into your job and then denounce the small stuff that does not fit your meaning. If your meaning is helping your client, when something does not go as planned, do not let it sway you from your ultimate goal: helping your client.

**Conclusion**

Approaching work with a business-as-usual mindset will set you up for failure in the future. In order to prepare yourself for future change, you need to think proactively about extending your sell-by date. Approaching the opportunities with a growth mindset will help you seek out new opportunities to stretch yourself and prepare yourself for an uncertain future.

**Recommended Reading**


**About the Author**

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