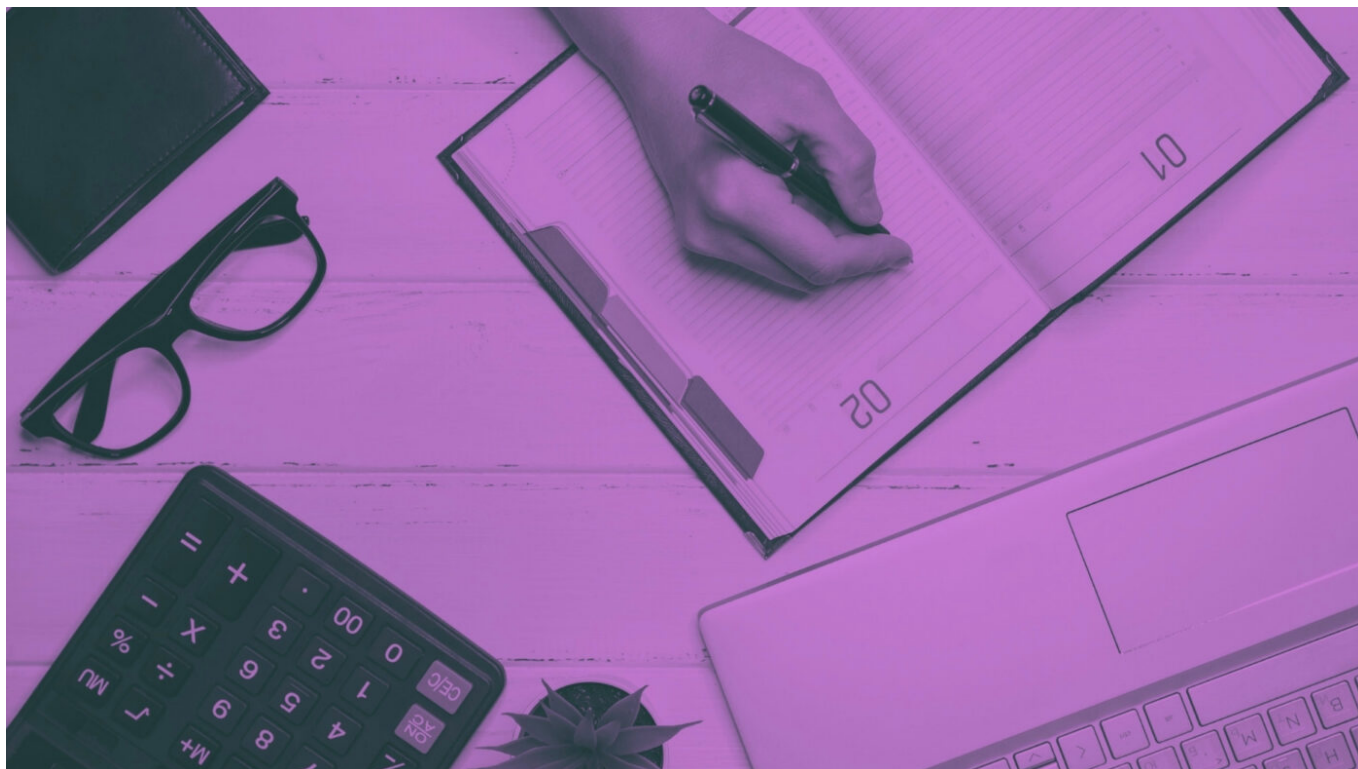


Want to hit the ground running in 2021? Follow these 8 steps

To make the most of their time, agents need to hit the restart button now — before jumping into the new year. Cross out these actionable items, and you'll kick off 2021 right



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BY **MAYLEENE
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The end of an era is upon us. This year will be long remembered for the quarantine, [the COVID-19 pandemic](#), a historic presidential election and so much more.

That said, we are experiencing a perfect time for business evolution. Are you taking full advantage of the opportunities available for you to develop your skills and boost your career to the next level?

We all know real estate agents work 24/7, 365 days a year. Now, we should be maximizing the work we do to increase our personal return on our investment of *time*. As they say, we are all given the same number of hours — it's what we *do* with those hours that will set us apart for everyone else. Below are eight steps that can help start or restart your career engine and help you realize an effective 2021.

1. Define your motivation

Take a moment. Step back, and view your career — whether it's a new adventure or a profession you've had for years — with a wide-angle lens. Why did you [choose to be an agent](#)?

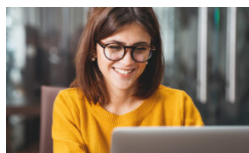
What makes you consciously get up daily and serve others in an industry that's unpredictable, competitive and stressful? Dig deep. Somewhere, somehow, you developed a passion that has brought you here or kept you here. Whatever that is, it's your motivation — aka your “why,” as they say.

2. Coordinate your branding

Once you understand where your motivation stems from, you've also got to clarify what message you want to convey to the world — who *you* are and the standards you hold for yourself when working on your client's behalf.

Clarifying your brand includes making sure your message is representative of who you are and not something fake. It also incorporates a bit of legwork as you should look at your [overarching social footprint](#) to make sure all the platforms send the same message.

You don't want people to Google you and find a 5-year-old resume on LinkedIn from before you became a Realtor, an on-brand message on Facebook and a generic note informing the world you passed your real estate exam on Twitter, immediately preceded by what you ate for lunch. Whatever your color scheme or slogan is, make sure you keep it [relevant and consistent](#).



3. Determine your target audience

Once you've pinned down your message, it's time to target where that message will be going. Some agents wonder if targeting one specific audience will harm their opportunities for growth. But you must start somewhere, and having a small, targeted group of people who can speak to your services is an invaluable asset.

Targeting your audience will not limit your business at all. In fact, targeting one specific audience to start or reignite your career can help you succeed faster in a smaller area. You can then expand your reach once you've become a staple within your first audience. Remember — baby steps make a big difference.

4. Get your sheets together

No matter what level of experience you have in the industry, there is exponential opportunity for you to increase your success rate when you get your sheets together. Your spreadsheets, that is, and your notepads, your Post-it notes and even the restaurant napkins you saved with a potential lead.

[A customer relationship management](#) (CRM) system at its core is a collection of customer data for you to manage and evaluate interactions. Get your clients

organized and in a database, whether it's a free spreadsheet or a paid CRM service.

This will help you establish routines, circle back to old clients and [maintain communications](#) with your entire network. Your consistency will pay off as your target audience learns to return to *you*, the industry expert, every time the notion of a home sale comes up.

5. Sharpen your skills

There is no better time than now to take advantage of the [vast educational options](#) available to you. In fact, between Inman Connect Now, the [National Association of Realtors \(NAR\)](#), virtual mentors and online designation classes, there's no limit to what you can learn and explore — to increase your industry expertise and become a more knowledgeable professional in the eyes of your clients.

6. Post your numbers

If you search for Realtor business planning online, a lot of the free resources will lead you to the financial mapping part of your business plan. This is always important to be aware of. Theoretically, you start with the end in mind, as in, how much would you like to make on an annual basis, and work your way backward.

Knowing your numbers — such as how many transactions it will take to reach your monthly goals and how many leads you will have to close to reach your desired number of monthly transactions — is a smart thing to do and keep track

of. Do the math, and post your goals to stay motivated all year long. Work smarter, not harder!

7. Establish a plan

Once you know your motivation, your message and your target market, and your database is established — it's time to make a plan. Get your calendar out, outline some key events you would like to promote for the year ahead, set up automatic emails to reach your clients regularly, and provide them with relevant, intriguing content.

Map out when you will work on social media posts, and then step away. Do *not* get caught in the online black hole and spend hours of *busy* work instead of hyper-focused time blocks of productivity. And make sure you plan time to personally [reach out to people](#) you know.

8. Execute and review

What's left? Do it. Take action, start implementing your new system, and hit the ground running for 2021. No plan will be perfect from the start, so set aside some time on a bimonthly or quarterly basis to review your plan, assess how it's been working for you, and revise it. That's it — review, revise, repeat.

Taking these steps and moving forward with actionable items, no matter how small, will help you see positive movement in your business. Understanding your own story, maintaining consistent messaging to a targeted audience through your organized database, staying educated on industry news and technology, and instituting a plan of action are the beginning of the unrealized potential you can ignite for yourself and your business in 2021.

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