THE PROVEN PATH TO SUCCESS

Good market or bad, you need to invest in your business. And one of your most important assets is your agents. A better trained, more experienced agent will help increase your bottom line, reduce your liability and enhance your market share.

Providing best-in-class training through the Council of Residential Specialists is one of the least expensive investments you can make for one of your most important assets. Other than time away from the office, no financial outlay is required, although many brokers opt to share the cost (and reward) with their agents. Either way, the information agents learn in CRS Courses will more than pay for your financial and time commitments.

Think you’ve heard it all before? If your agents aren’t CRS-trained and your bottom line is, well, a bit flat, then perhaps you should give us a few minutes to share what we’re hearing from other brokers.
Dollars & Sense

CRS trained sales agents have a higher GCI than the average REALTOR®. Nearly three times more annually, and have more than three times more transactions and three times higher annual gross sales. That means more income for the broker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average REALTOR® Sales Agent</th>
<th>REALTORS® with CRS Designation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME</td>
<td>$26,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>$79,000</td>
<td>$900,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDIAN ANNUAL GROSS SALES</td>
<td>$2,440,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN ANNUAL TRANSACTIONS</td>
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“If your agents are making more money, you’ll make more money too,” says Faye Brock, CRS, of Wilmington, N.C., who estimates her CRS agents are 25 percent more productive. “If they don’t have the CRS Designation, I require it within the first year.”

“It’s the best investment a broker can make,” according to Sandra Nickel, CRS, who owns an “all CRS” brokerage in Montgomery, Ala. “The cost of a course is a tiny piece of a commission…and a one-time expense.”

“A good agent knows how to take training and make money from it,” says Chicago broker Jim Kinney, CRS, CRB. “No one can walk away from a CRS course without being the better for it; I don’t care how long you’ve been in the business.”

Janelle Pfleiger, CRS, of Anchorage, Alaska agrees. “There’s absolutely no question the CRS Designation positively impacts my bottom line. And it’s not just the referrals; it’s the education.”
**Network Referral “Twofer”**

The networking associated with classroom training is like getting two-for-one. Not only do agents build an important referral network with fellow classmates, but those earning the designation become part of a worldwide directory of trained agents.

“I still get referrals from people I took CRS classes with 20 or more years ago,” says Jim Kinney. Faye Brock estimates that two-thirds of her personal business is from CRS referrals and Sandra Nickel's firm receives three to four inbound referrals every month from CRSs. For referrals outside her local market, she passes them on to other CRS agents in the state. “I’m confident that if they are a CRS, they are a good agent.”

Some brokers encourage their agents to take classes outside their local market to broaden their network. Others know that the convenience of being able to take classes online fits the lifestyle and learning preferences of many newer agents. Either way, the commission agents earn from being part of the CRS network pays off...for the agent and for the broker.

**Do the Math**

Training is an investment, and like all good investments, there’s a return. Some brokers shy away from encouraging their agents to take classes because of the expectation that the broker pays. Yet 2011 NAR research shows that CRS agents have three times more transactions annually than the average agent. Apply this to your non-CRS trained sales force for just one year and imagine your bottom line. Can you afford not to train your agents?

Moreover, there are creative ways to fund training and to get agents to put some skin into the game. Offer the next referral to an agent willing to apply 50 percent of the paid commission toward training. Or, offer agents who agree to pay for the first class your share of the first paid commission from a CRS referral towards the cost of the next class.

Send one agent at a time, starting with your best agent. Use referral fees paid from this agent as seed money for the next. Their increased productivity will motivate others. For every CRS referral, put 25 percent of your share into a “training bank” to fund the next agent. Before you know it, you’ll have funds to train all your agents, or better yet, your agents will quickly see the value and invest in their own training!
Be the “Go-To” Firm

Training is about more than just revenue; it’s also about professionalism. Doug Carpenter, a metro Chicago broker, finds that the advanced knowledge from training makes for a more professional team which draws people to his firm. In an increasingly complex and competitive industry, your agents’ professionalism can make the difference in your firm’s success, and the ability to attract (and keep) top producers.

Sandra Nickel says she wants to work only with productive people—people who know the business and don’t need a lot of support. “I want my agents to be independent professionals…business people who produce. And that’s what CRS teaches.”

Less than four percent of REALTORS® have earned the CRS designation and most will tell you it’s about the education and professionalism…not just the letters behind their names. These are an elite pool of professionals that will enhance your reputation in the market and send the message to buyers and sellers that your firm is the “go-to” firm.

Worry-Free Agents

The better educated an agent is, the less risk and liability for you. When Denver broker Ingrid Glancy, CRS, worked at a 50+ agent firm in the mid-2000s, risk management was a top priority for the broker. “They wanted all their agents to be CRS trained because they didn’t feel they had to guide CRS agents as much as other agents.” As broker/owner of her own firm, Ingrid knows from experience that a top priority for all brokers is risk management. Serious liability is a concern she shares with fellow brokers. “If they are not already a CRS, we have a conversation about training and I support them in becoming a CRS.”

Depending on your E&O insurer, your premiums may decrease with an increase in designated agents. That’s been Faye Brock’s experience. “You need to train on issues beyond just listing and selling. CRS training is more advanced and covers the many areas that agents use daily.”

Sandra Nickel knows that CRS training has reduced her risk. “We represent a lot of historic properties with lots of problems, termites…mold…you name it. And, we’re a non-disclosure state. Yet in the past three years and with 300 transactions, we’ve had only one claim. That’s not accidental; that’s folks knowing what they’re doing.”
A Proven Path to Success

The Council of Residential Specialists offers a wide array of business benefits and opportunities to help agents thrive in today’s market. But we understand that the broker’s financial bottom line needs to be our service bottom line. Therefore, agent training is our number one priority. Training that helps you—the broker—benefit from:

- Increased bottom line
- Two-for-one referral network
- High ROI
- Enhanced market reputation
- Reduced liability and risk

We think these are five fundamental reasons for embracing the CRS Residential Sales Training program. CRS training has proven to be the pathway to success for tens of thousands of residential agents and for the brokers who understand that no matter what the business model, more successful agents means more successful brokers.

For More Information…

To learn more about training opportunities with the Council of Residential Specialists, including course content and schedule, sponsorship opportunities, eLearning, webinars and designation requirements, visit our website at http://www.crs.com/Education.