

# Classified Ad Secrets:

How to Attract New Buyers and Listing Prospects and Get Them to Call YOU



## **Inside This Report...**

Here's a simple, step-by-step guide for multiplying the effectiveness of your classified homes advertising...

By Craig Forte

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## Dear Friend and Real Estate Professional,

You've just landed your hands on one of the most valuable resources for growing your real estate practice. I say that because...when used right...dollar-for-dollar, pound-for-pound classified ads can be an enormously-profitable way to create a conveyor-belt of quality leads and clients into your business.

Whether you're a battle-hardened veteran, or a newly-hatched rookie agent, what I'm about to tell you in the next few pages could easily be worth \$500,000 or more in extra income in your career – once you know how to use it.

So I hope you'll pay close attention. You'll want to save this briefing for future reference – it'll be a valuable asset you'll use for years to come.

Consider these REALTORS® who are living success stories of what I'm about to show you...

- An agent in Florida needed buyers fast. None of his traditional marketing was working to generate leads. So he employed my *Classified Ad Secrets*™ using listings that weren't even his own – in a perfectly legal and ethical way. Two months ago he told me he generated an extra \$72,000 in production last year using this ONE technique alone. His marketing budget? Less than \$75 per week!
- Another agent was fed up with her Open House results. Getting 2 or 3 showings from “tire kickers” and nosy neighbors wasn't selling any homes, and wasn't bringing in any new business. She was at a loss until she learned my *Classified Ad Secrets*™. She now attracts ready-to-buy buyers to her open houses like ants to a picnic. She's even taken listings from attendees to her open houses.
- An agent in California desperately wanted to break into the luxury home buyer market. But using all the “*I'm a top producer*” traditional marketing was draining his funds. So he applied my *Classified Ad Secrets*™ for writing classified ads and his phone is now ringing off the hook. Now he can't believe how easy it is to attract ANY type of buyer he wants.

When it comes to marketing, nothing contributes more to your bottom line profits than a powerful new marketing strategy. A single strategic idea, applied in the right areas, can easily be worth \$6-figures to you.

Sadly, most agents view classified advertising as a “necessary evil” for promoting their listings. And in most cases, their ads lose money.

Think about the last time you ran a classified for a home you listed. Chances are your ad pulled a few calls, but for the most part lost money. And the reason it lost money is because it was missing the essential ingredients you're going to learn right here.

I'm going to introduce you to 7 powerful secrets for multiplying the success of your classifieds. I'm going to show you how to convert your classifieds into client-generators instead of "marketing expenses."

I'm going to show you several ways to use classifieds to make your phone ring off the hook with qualified buyers. Plus, I'm going to give you examples and proven words, so you can immediately start using this new tool and reap extra profits from your marketing.

But first, I want to briefly shift your attention to WHY we, as human beings, respond to anything. And in understanding why people respond, you'll also discover how to get people to respond to your marketing. This includes your ads, farming letters, home descriptions, or even your listing presentations.

## **How to Instantly Make Your Marketing More Effective**

Think about the last time you purchased a product or service that was more than \$500. What dynamic helped sway your decision from one product or service to another? What dynamic pushed you over the edge and made you say "yes" to purchasing it? Let me help you...

It was because you perceived the product you were considering would either...

### **SOLVE AN IMMEDIATE, PRESSING PROBLEM, OR DELIVER AN IMMEDIATE DESIRED BENEFIT**

The only way to solve a problem, or deliver a benefit to your clients is to first know what your potential client is looking for – their problems and desires; what they want. And the more you can relate to their emotional situation – how they feel about their problems and desires – the more you'll connect with them, and the more receptive they'll be to your proposition to help.

I know this sounds simplistic, but 95% of agents get it wrong, and it's critical that you get it right.

Most agent marketing loses money because it fails to understand and address HUMAN DESIRE. You see it all the time: ads with "multi-million dollar producer," "professionalism," "integrity," "going the extra mile for you" and so on.

These terms are absolutely meaningless to your prospects because it's all about YOU and nothing about THEM. And those things you're promoting...like "professionalism" and the like...are what people expect anyhow from an agent.

Don't take this personally, but no one cares about you. They don't care WHO you are...they only care about what you can DO for them.

We generally care only about our own particular situation. And we ignore anything that doesn't either provide an answer to an immediate pressing problem we're facing, or an immediate benefit we're seeking.

## **No One Will Ever Respond to Your Marketing, or Decide to Work with YOU Without an Irresistible, Self-Serving REASON for Doing So**

So rather than focus your marketing on yourself, and how great you or your company is or how “professional” you are, try focusing on the core desires of your prospects and clients. Put yourself into your prospect’s emotional shoes, and think about the problems they’re trying to solve, and the benefits they want to realize.

Would a few examples help?

I thought so. Seeing these examples may help you “dial-in” on thinking OUTSIDE of you, and INTO your prospects and clients.

Sellers want to get the best possible price for their home. And they want to sell it in their time frame – usually quickly. They want the process to be hassle-free. And they want to know tips and secrets that will help them achieve these goals. And they may also be facing problems and fears. They may be upside down on their mortgage. Or need to move within 45 days and get the kids into school on time. Or maybe they need bridge financing for their new home.

Buyers want to buy the most home for their money. Maybe they want an edge when searching the market more efficiently. They want to find the perfect home at a bargain price. They often need help with financing – to make their home as affordable as possible. And they want to avoid making a mistake in the process – they don’t want to get hoodwinked in the process.

Are you getting the picture here?

I assure you, the minute you change your focus from promoting yourself, to understanding your client and offering to solve their problems or deliver benefits better than any other agent, you will instantly increase your client volume and income.

Now that you understand the importance of solving problems and delivering benefits, let’s shift gears, and get your bank account fattening with today’s topic...

### **How to Get Explosive Results from Cheap Little Classified Ads**

Do you remember the last classified ad you wrote? It was probably for a listing you had in inventory. Or maybe it was to promote an open house. And do you remember your thoughts each week you had to run it?

Probably something like, “*Oh boy, more money down the drain. The only reason I’m doing this is to show my sellers I’m doing something to sell their home. I hope this thing sells soon.*”

That’s all going to change right now. Here are 7 secret elements you can use, just like a checklist, when creating classified ads – and watch your response rates multiply.

## **Element #1: Every Classified Must Start With A “Call-out Headline.”**

The number one reason why most classifieds get poor results is: THE AD NEVER GETS SEEN!

Lots of people (including classified ad reps) will mislead you into thinking that all or at least most of readers of a newspaper will read the classifieds. This is simply not true. The facts are this: 98% of newspaper readers will never even turn to the classified section. And the 2% who do, are met with a barrage of ads all looking the same.

And that's why you need to have powerful, attention-getting call-out.

A good call-out is the single element that will make your ad stand out from the rest and get read by the person you've targeted for the ad. You should spend 80 to 90 percent of your time creating your call-out for your ad. **Remember: if your ad doesn't get seen, it won't get read or acted upon.**

Your call-out has ONE and only one purpose: to get your ad READ. Consider using graphical enhancements to attract attention, like stars and check marks.

Your call-out is very much like a 2 or 3 word punchy headline designed to attract your desired reader, interest them, and motivate them to read your ad. It should be typed in bold print and centered on the first line of your classified. Here are the elements of a good call-out:

1. The call-out must attract attention, much like the headline of a newspaper article. It should use quirky and possibly shocking words to grab attention.
2. Your call-out can identify and attract your desired reader, such as "Attention Home Buyers," or "Notice: Luxury Home Buyers!"
3. Your call-out should create a sense of curiosity from the reader. And the best call-outs should reveal news or something new or unique.
4. Most important, your call-out should reveal a benefit of your home or offer.

Here are a few examples of call-out headlines that have worked very well for clients of mine: "Rent To Own," "Zero Down," "Hidden Bargain," "Secret Revealed!," "Buyers Revenge," "Going Fast," "FREE Pool!," "Resort Living," "Relief Is Here," "Feeling Like A Caged Tiger?," "Legalized Theft!," "Waterfront Luxury Homes," "Golf Every Day," "Hidden Paradise," "Must Sell Now!," "The Pampered Life," "Easy To Buy," or "Bella Vista" (area).

Often agents promoting lower-end homes use affordability features as call-outs, such as: "Only \$4,000 Down!," "445/Mo. It's Yours!," "Steal For \$550/Mo." Note: Be careful to avoid violating Reg. Z when promoting financing.

## **Element #2: Promote BENEFITS, Not Just Features.**

If you look in the classifieds, you'll see most agents promote only the features of a home: "4 br., 2 ba., 2cg," etc. Problem is, features don't sell homes. If they did, then you wouldn't have a problem selling your 3 br/2ba home to anyone. But that's not why they buy.

People buy homes because of the LIFESTYLE BENEFITS they perceive when they read, hear about, or visit the home. We all use mental pictures and visual projection to decide whether we want to live in a certain home.

In other words, buying decisions are EMOTIONAL. After an emotional decision is made, we usually justify our decision with logical reasons for the purchase.

So, when promoting a home, build desire by identifying the special, unique attributes about the home that give it the most appeal.

It may be views. It may be benefits of living in the home or the community. It may be the soaring ceilings, bright open spaces or the chef's kitchen. Or it may be affordability or financing. But you must identify the unique benefits of every home you list. Better yet, with every home you list ask yourself this question:

### **Specifically WHY Should Someone Buy This Home Over Any Other Home?**

The answer to your question will reveal the unique "Hot Buttons" you'll use to promote the home. When you write classifieds, you have very little space and time to reveal the most important benefits of living in a home. So make a list based on the above question, prioritize it, and create your classified with short-word descriptions.

Examples of short word descriptions include: "quiet street," "gourmet's delight," "relaxing ramada," "roman tub," "pristine views," "family paradise," "private retreat," "entertainer's heaven," "enormous rooms," "shady hammock,," "professional workshop," "exercise pool," "tree-lined street," "great neighborhood," "fenced yard," "shady yard."

### **Element #3: Promote Your Home As A BARGAIN.**

Let's face it, everyone wants to get a good deal. No one wants to be victimized, or pay more than they should for a property. People are naturally attracted to "hidden" or "secret bargains." And that's why one of the hot buttons you must hit with every home is: IT'S A BARGAIN!

That said, what if your home is not a bargain?

What if the sellers are unreasonable and the home is overpriced? My answer: Then you have a problem, because overpriced homes don't sell, and you're wasting your time and money. Don't fool yourself otherwise. My suggestion is never take overpriced listings. They don't sell. They make your sellers angry because they blame you for everything. And you'll look like a bad agent to clients and peers.

If you're looking a little sheepish right now because you took an overpriced listing, don't fret. You can still use this strategy to attract buyer inquiries for the home and convert them to clients. You probably won't sell your listing anytime soon, but you can generate buyers.

One agent told me she routinely CLOSES 1 to 2 buyers with every home she lists. Why? Because she knows how to use the home to attract buyer inquiries. And she knows how to convert those inquiries to clients. If she never sells the listing, she doubles or triples her commissions just by knowing how to attract buyers!

Now, assuming you did price your listing well, then you can and should promote it as a bargain. If it's below appraisal, say so. If it's a neighborhood bargain, say so. You need to appeal to the "bargain hunter" nature in everyone.

How do you do this? By using words like, "priced to sell now," "incredible bargain," "below appraisal," or using a call-out like "Attention Bargain Hunters."

#### **Element #4: Promote The AFFORDABILITY Of Your Home.**

No, affordability is NOT the same as a bargain. Affordability has everything to do with financing. A \$150,000 home financed at 6 percent may not be affordable to someone if financed at 9 percent. The price is the same in both, but affordability is not.

Affordability is another one of those "Hot Buttons" people intuitively look for in their lives. It's how people get more home for their money. And part of your job is to make buying your listings or other homes E-A-S-Y!

So, anytime you promote a listing, you MUST offer affordability and EASE OF PURCHASE. How do you do this?

By contacting your buddy in the mortgage business, and have them put 2 or 3 specific financing packages together for each listing you promote. They should love you for this because they're promoting their business through you, and perhaps getting a new client when a buyer appears. Best of all, you now have a new tool to promote affordability.

But promoting affordability for different price ranges is tricky. I recommend using very specific numbers with lower priced homes, such as "\$3,000 down, \$425.mo It's YOURS!." Again don't violate regulation Z. But for higher priced homes, you need to create the same packages, and simply promote, "Special Financing Packages," or "Affordable Financing Packages – Call Now!," or "Special financing – buy more home than ever!"

Some homes are so difficult to sell, you may need seller participation or other "creative financing" to get buyers interested. Either way, promoting affordability is essential.

#### **Element #5: Make An OFFER To Your Reader**

I said this earlier, but it's so important I want to say it again: **No one will call you without a self-serving, even irresistible reason for doing so.** And that's why 99% of agent marketing, whether it's your personal marketing, marketing for buyers or marketing your listings, gets poor results.



The single element that will instantly transform your wasteful “image” marketing into cash-generating marketing is an irresistible OFFER. And using slogans like “*call when you’re serious about real estate*” and the like aren’t anywhere close.

You need to give people SPECIFIC reasons for responding to your marketing.

If you learn nothing more from this report, please know that the ONLY way to get people to respond to you is to OFFER something they want very, very badly in their specific situation. And if you can make it for Free or a special deal, (and risk free for them) all the better.

So knowing this, how do you make an offer in your classifieds? Simple. Package something specific to their situation and make it available to them.

For example, if you’re promoting your listings, use this slogan, “Free info pkg reveals all.” Then put together a nice package about your listing with another offer to use your services when buying a home.

If you’re lead generating for buyers, for example, you could offer a Free Report, “*8 Secrets For Saving Thousands When Finding, Buying And Financing Your Next Home.*”

Remember, an offer is simply a promise to deliver a specific, highly-desired benefit to your prospect, or solve a pressing problem. There are many elements to a good offer, but for the purpose of classified ads, you must give them a reason to call. And that reason must be MEANINGFUL and IMPORTANT to them: Free Report, Free info pkg., Free List of Homes For Sale, Beat Other Buyers to Hot Listings, Free List Of Waterfront Properties, etc.

## **Element #6: Make A CALL To ACTION To Your Reader**

Following closely on the footsteps of an irresistible offer is telling people EXACTLY what to do. This is known as your “Call to Action.”

A Top Producer who sold over \$38 million of homes last year once told me something I’ll never forget. And I want to share it with you.

*She said, “Craig, the reason I’m so successful in this business is because I listen carefully to what people really want in their situation. And when I find the best solution for them, I simply tell them what to do in a direct and confident way – and I give them meaningful reasons why it’s in their best interests to do it. Agents don’t realize that people hire you to help them make a decision! Yet, 90% of agents I observe in this profession, even seasoned veterans, are either too afraid of rejection or don’t have the confidence to look clients in the eye, and tell them what to do. That’s why they don’t close deals. And that’s why they don’t make as much money.”*

If you don’t close deals, you don’t make money. And you would be amazed at how many people will say “yes” if you simply ask. You would also be amazed at how few agents ask.

So, if you want to close more deals, or simply get more calls from your classifieds, you need to tell your prospects what to do. In a classified, it could be, “24-hr. Free Recorded Message,” “Call Now,” or “Call while it lasts.” It’s that simple.

### **Element #7: Create An URGENCY To Respond.**

There’s ONE human dynamic you must deal with in any sales profession. And that dynamic is procrastination. Even with all the other elements present in your marketing, you must never overestimate your prospect’s ability to act. You’ve got to work hard to get people to move.

It seems that people are reluctant to act even when they know their action is in their best interests. Whether or not you like this human dynamic, you must deal with it.

And the best way to get someone to act in your behalf is to create urgency. How do you create urgency? By telling them something they want very badly won’t be available for long. You need to create a shortage!

Most importantly, you must show your prospect what they will lose if they don’t act. And your reasons must be believable. So, what kinds of shortages should you consider? There are lots of ways, but you don’t want to be deceptive here. Perhaps you have a limited supply of reports available, or your listings won’t last long. People want things that are dwindling in supply – it’s human nature.

Simply use words such as “going fast,” “first come—first serve,” “don’t miss out,” and the like will go a long way to stimulating action.

## **2 Simple Classified Ad Prospecting Strategies...**

OK, at this point, you’ve learned 7 incredibly powerful elements for turning your classified ads into money-making magnets for calls. I now want to share with you a number of applications you can use to make money with classifieds:

### **SAMPLE STRATEGY #1: Here’s A Strategy for Selling Your Listings FAST, and Generating Hot Leads at the Same Time!**

Use classifieds to promote your listings. When you incorporate the classified elements you just learned, your ad will get seen, read, and your phone will ring. Statistically, the more “rings” you get on your listings, the better the chances of SELLING the home.

Use a recorded message system that will PAGE you or a buyers agent when a buyer calls – thereby creating a prospecting SYSTEM that works even when you’re not there. For more information, including getting a fantastic Free “New Rules” marketing course, you can visit [www.SixFigureHotlines.com](http://www.SixFigureHotlines.com) (no, I don’t own the company – just know a great service when I see one!)

And since you’re spending money to promote your listing anyhow, you might as well make money with it by either 1) working the BUYER lead calls you get, OR 2) Team

up with a Buyers agents to handle the leads, and work out a split of their commission. Now you're leveraging your ability to make money.

Remember, the reason for promoting your listings is NOT just to sell the home, but to generate more business for YOU. And if you don't get qualified prospects to call, you lose money.

## **SAMPLE STRATEGY #2: Here's a Brilliant Way to INSTANTLY Capture a Flow of New, Hungry Leads for Any BUYER AGENT!**

Here's a very smart marketing system you can start using to immediately generate new leads – IF YOU HAVE NO LISTINGS (If you DO have listings, start with those first). I'll explain it in just a few steps:

**STEP #1: TARGET YOUR BUYER.** Decide on the **PREFERRED TYPE** of buyer you're looking to attract. For example, maybe you're looking for buyers in a certain price range, such as \$300,000 buyers. Or maybe you're looking for buyers of horse properties or certain geographic areas (subdivisions or areas). Or maybe it's buyers of resort properties, or ocean front, etc. The better you can DEFINE they type of buyer you're looking for, the easier the process will be for you. *Think about what segments of your market are HOT right now, and focus on those.*

Now...ask yourself this question, "What would attract and motivate THIS type of buyer to give me a call?" The answer: The PERFECT \$300,000 home (or horse, resort, ocean front property, geo area, etc.).

**STEP #2: FIND THE HOMES.** Hop on your trusty MLS computer and locate a number of PERFECT homes that will attract your PREFERRED TYPE of buyer. Maybe you will need to preview a few homes to make sure they fit your exact criteria. Get yourself a bunch of homes that meet your criteria for your specific market (from Step #1).

**STEP #3: GET PERMISSION** to use the listed home with your promotions. Some agents tell me if the home is listed in MLS, you may promote it any way you want (hmmmm...) – others tell me the opposite. Perhaps rules and regs differ from state to state or MLS/REALTOR® board.

Either way, your best bet is to call the listing agent/broker and say, "*I'm putting together a series of promotions for the [ ] area, and I noticed you have a listing in the area. Would you like me to include your listing in our promotion?*" The listing agent should be OK with it because they want to sell their listing and you're helping to promote it for free. If they say "no," move on to the next listing (and a smarter agent!).

**STEP #4: Write A GREAT AD** – using the elements you learned right here. Where do buyers go to get information when searching for a new home? Frequently it's the classifieds.

**STEP #5: TEST and MULTIPLY.** Run your ad for a test – if you start getting a series of calls, you've got a system developing. If not, re-write the ad or consider a

different classified section, target market (price range, etc.) that may be hotter. The point is – DO NOT GIVE UP ON YOUR FIRST TRY.

If you get an ad that pulls calls, MULTIPLY the ad. There are 2 ways to multiply your ad: 1) Run the exact same ad in various sections of classifieds, or 2) Find other homes just like the one you have listed and run ads for those at the same time (this will also make you look like a very active agent).

I know several agents who run up to 12 classifieds every week and generate a huge flow of buyer leads (and some listings too).

**Step #6: Know Your NUMBERS.** Before you go out and do this or any marketing, you want to know how to work the numbers to make sure it's a profitable system. Here's a simple form to help you know your testing numbers:

**Calculate Your Cost Per LEAD:**

	<u>Input</u>	<u>Example</u>
Cost Of Ad	\$ _____	\$300
(Divided by): # Leads From Ad	_____	14
= Cost per Lead	_____	\$21.43

**Calculate Cost Per CLIENT GENERATED:**

% of Leads Converted to Sales	_____ %	.05 (1 out of 20 = .05)
(Divide by Cost per Lead) = Cost per CLIENT	=====	<u>\$428</u> (\$21.43 / .05 = \$428)

What does all this mean for you? In the example above...if you spend \$300 on classified advertising that brings 14 calls (to your hotline, etc.), AND you know that you convert one out of every 20 callers to a client (from history) – you're total *cost per sale* would be \$428...against a commission of \$4,000, \$8,000, \$12,000 or more (yes, you'll need to net-out the marketing costs of a listing, for example – but \$428 was your net cost to generate the client).

Is this a good return on investment? Well...if your banker wrote you a letter and said they would pay you \$10 dollars for every \$1 you bring down to him, how fast would you head down to the bank?

The point I'm making is this: NEVER focus on your response rate percentage. NEVER focus on the raw number of people who respond to your advertising. ALWAYS focus on your *cost to generate a client* AND your *return on invested marketing dollar*.

This is the only way to maximize your marketing dollars.

## Examples of Classifieds

I want to share with you brief examples of classifieds using the 7 secrets you just learned here today. See if you can identify the elements in each ad:

**Example #1:** This agent runs multiple listing ads (8 to 12 per weekend!) for various areas and uses a recorded “hotline” to take in leads. Here’s an example of one of his ads:

**MISSION VIEJO**

Lovely home, quiet neighborhood, tree-lined street, fenced yard. \$195,000 bargain! \$0 down, \$1,303/mo. 7.2 apr. Free info pkg, call 24 hr hotline at 800-222-2222. Won’t last long. Call now!  
[agent name, broker]

**Example #2:** This next agent wanted to attract luxury home buyers. So he put together a special package of well-priced luxury homes in his market and we created this ad with him. Although this ad is longer and more expensive than most, it paid for itself hundreds of times in increased inquiries.

**LUXURY HOMES!**

**Best Prices, Affordable Financing,  
Premium Locations**

Free consumer service just released exclusive list of lovely bargain luxury homes in S. Orange Cnty. \$200 to \$800K, hidden bargains, distressed sales, best areas. Special financing pkgs. Get more home than you thought possible. Call 24 hr. free recorded mssg. to order: 800-222-2222. Quantities limited first come—first serve. Call now!  
[agent name, broker]

**Conclusion**

Sometimes the smallest changes in your marketing can bring tremendous results. And the psychology of what motivates a prospect to respond to your marketing isn’t always readily apparent. The 7 secrets I just gave you should go a long way to turning your classifieds (and ALL of your marketing) into steady, long-term money makers.

Put them to work right away, and keep at it, because once you find a system that works, you can multiply your income using it.

Wishing you great success and happiness,

Craig Forte, President  
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