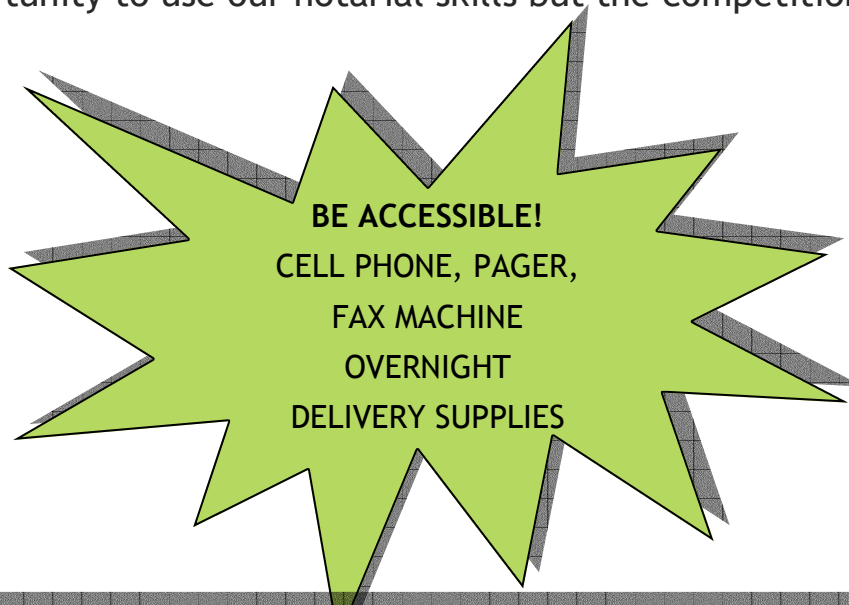


## CHAPTER 5 MARKETING YOUR SKILLS

Several recent events in our economy and lifestyle have contributed to the booming refinance market, such as:

- ◆ Inflation of home prices.
- ◆ Falling interest rates.
- ◆ Mobility of the work force.
- ◆ Overextension of personal credit.
- ◆ Tax code changes.
- ◆ Competition among lenders/brokers.
- ◆ Centralization of lenders in locations across the country.
- ◆ Savvy consumers.

The above issues present a double-edged sword for signing agents. We have more opportunity to use our notarial skills but the competition is fierce.



Like any other business you must find ways to provide that extra something that will insure that your clients will call you first when they have a signing in your area.

**The Signing Agent provides a service of *convenience!***

## MARKETING TECHNIQUES

- ◆ Find out where potential clients are located and research their needs.
- ◆ ID benefits you can provide to them.
- ◆ Let them know about your service and benefits.
- ◆ Be Confident.
- ◆ Be persistent, but not annoying. Do not oversell.
- ◆ Make the “ask” - let them know your purpose - that you want to work for them.
- ◆ Be honest and straightforward about your intentions.
- ◆ Network, Network, Network!



### FACE-TO-FACE MARKETING

Many people are intimidated by the idea of marketing their skills in person, but a face-to-face meeting is always the most effective strategy for obtaining business from title/escrow companies.

#### Strategies for face-to-face meetings:

- ◆ Overcome the fear of an in person meeting - once you get started, it will get easier.
- ◆ Bring doughnuts to their office...do it again a few weeks later.
- ◆ Be casual, introduce yourself and be honest about your intentions.
- ◆ Leave something behind (e.g., a business card or a rolodex card) to let them know how to reach you.

#### HINT:

Many companies offer to list you on their website with the promise of getting you more business as a signing agent. This is often a gimmick to get you to purchase something from them. Find out which companies actually search the listing for signing agents and how often.

## MARKETING TOOLS


### WHO DO YOU KNOW?

A personal connection will help you obtain business. Do you know anyone that does any of the following jobs? Let them know that you are available to work as a signing agent and ASK THEM to refer you to others.

Escrow Officer  
Banker  
Real Estate Agent  
Loan Officer  
Mortgage Broker

OR

Do you know someone who works with or knows any of these people?



Always follow  
up on referrals  
you are given

### WHAT TO SEND, BRING, OR LEAVE BEHIND when marketing yourself to title/escrow companies

- ◆ Leave rolodex business cards (so they have a place to put them).
- ◆ Bring proof of experience and/or references.
- ◆ Bring doughnuts or other treats or supplies.
- ◆ Send or bring an introduction letter (to a specific person in the company).

#### HINT:

Include your telephone number, cell number, address, email address, and fax number on all literature.

## KEEPING BUSINESS

- ◆ Be thorough and make sure you do your job correct the first time.
- ◆ Be flexible - accept the signing at and odd hour in order to get your foot in the door.
- ◆ Go above and beyond your client's expectations.
- ◆ Make it an effortless and pleasant experience for your client.

**CHECKLIST FOR STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS**

- Develop a Business Plan. Know where you are going and how you will get there! Include an approximate budget, timeline, and future market for your services.
- Conduct market research. Target your future clients and market your services to them in areas you cover. Follow-up within a few weeks.
- Locate and utilize the services of an accountant, banker, insurance broker and lawyer as needed.
- Decide on a legal structure. (see below)
- File and publish a Fictitious Business Name Statement, if applicable, with your County Clerk. Generally this information can be found on the internet, listed under your county (i.e. Alameda County) or call your county for information.
- Obtain a local business license. Check with your city hall for local rules and regulations. Also obtain other necessary permits or licenses from county, state, and federal governments, if applicable. Check local zoning laws and land use ordinances that might apply to your business.
- Check the state and federal tax requirements based on your legal structure. Keep records of your expenses and offset these expenses against your income. You may need to pay estimated taxes quarterly.
- Contact your local insurance broker to discuss and obtain the type of commercial insurance you may need.
- Develop the various business forms that will be needed in your business (i.e. invoices, business cards, marketing materials, record keeping forms).
- Network, network, network!!

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**LEGAL STRUCTURE**

After deciding to establish a business, you must choose the type of legal structure your business will have (Sole Proprietorship, Partnership, Limited Partnership, etc). There are many subtleties involved in deciding which legal structure your business should take. If you are considering a partnership or corporation, the advice of an attorney could help in your decision making process.

## ***WHO ARE MY CLIENTS?***

**>> TITLE AND ESCROW COMPANIES**

**>> LENDERS**

**>> BROKERS AND AGENTS**

**>> SIGNING AGENCIES**

## ***ESCROW AND TITLE COMPANIES***

Escrow officers are responsible for ensuring the documents are executed properly. You can market your services directly to escrow officers at the title companies in your area.

Below are some of the issues that you must overcome when marketing directly to the escrow/title companies:

Friends & Relatives of the Escrow officers!

Availability

Identity

Name recognition

### **NOTE:**

What you charge for your service is not as important as the extra convenience you provide

## ***LENDERS, BROKERS & AGENTS***

Occasionally you will find a broker that has a large volume of business. The broker may use the same title company or escrow officer for all of his work. The trick is to convince the broker that you will handle all of his work and ensure that his borrowers will be happy with the service of convenience that you can provide. The broker will then request your services when opening escrow.

## ***SIGNING AGENCIES***

Signing Agencies or Loan Document Signing Companies or Signing Services, as they are sometimes called, are a relatively new concept in the industry. Literally hundreds of these companies have sprung up over the last several years!

Signing companies operate with a database of notaries all over the state/country. They market their services to escrow companies, title companies and lenders with the promise that *their* service will find a reliable signing agent anywhere... on a moment's notice... and the escrow/title company will only have to make *one* phone call!

You can market yourself by getting your name into the database of these signing companies.

Generally, the signing service charges the title companies \$100 to \$200 and pays you \$50 to \$65.

The signing service will do all the legwork...find the clients and bill the clients. Of course you must then bill the signing company for your services.

### **HINT:**

**For a complete list of signing agencies, log on to:  
[www.50statenotary.com/directory/company\\_listing01.html](http://www.50statenotary.com/directory/company_listing01.html)**

### **These are some of the details to be aware of when working with Signing Agencies.**

- ◆ Toll-free phone numbers for faxing confirmations back to them.
- ◆ Calling “completion line” *immediately* after a signing.
- ◆ Calling them after arriving at the borrower's home.
- ◆ Each signing company has its own system and policies. Be sure you understand how they operate and follow their instructions to the letter!

## Contracts with Signing Agencies

If the signing company wants you sign a contract, check it for clauses that address the following issues:

### “Non-Compete Clause”

What will you get if...:

- ◆ The borrower doesn't show.
- ◆ The borrower doesn't sign.
- ◆ Their client doesn't pay them?
- ◆ You need to reschedule an appointment at the last minute. (Not your fault).

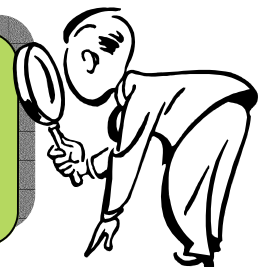
Additional fees for...

- ◆ Accepting faxes from the lender/title Co.
- ◆ Making long distance calls to their client.
- ◆ Extended travel.

Policy Questions...

- ◆ When will you be paid?
- ◆ Requirements for a notarization that does not comply with California state laws.

Thoroughly investigate a signing agency's reputation. Ask how long they have been in business and who their clients are. Verify what they tell you!



**For a complete list of signing companies, log on to:**  
**[www.50statenotary.com/directory/company\\_listing01.html](http://www.50statenotary.com/directory/company_listing01.html)**

Or can search the Internet. Just search for:

“Loan Document Signing Services”

“Loan Document Signing Companies”