

Margaret Rome

Successful Solo — But Not Alone with Today's Technology

By Peg Silloway



Multi-tasking on the road.

A sleek black convertible glides north from Baltimore. At the driver's right hand, a cell phone chimes and she answers in a warm, calm voice, "This is Margaret." Another day begins for Margaret Rome. In the next hours, this top-producing Realtor will take unique listings, negotiate deals, and stay in touch with her friends, family and colleagues. She will never be more than an arm's length from her cell phone and her computer. The technology at her fingertips will make it possible to do business her way: providing personal service to each of her sellers.

When the phone rang that day in 1990, she wasn't looking for a career in real estate. As Margaret recalls, "I got a 'cold call' from a Realtor asking if I wanted to sell my house. It turned out she was a former nurse and we had worked at the same hospital when I was a pediatric nurse. She was also a collector of my pottery, and that started a conversation. I was already helping people write ads for their homes and helping them find homes and getting very nice thank you notes. She said, 'If you become an agent, you could get a referral fee.'"

If Margaret had not been in an auto accident a few weeks before, that might have been the end of this story. But she was unable to lift any weight, and though she would heal, it would take time. For a ceramic/porcelain artist, that meant she could not work with the dense porcelain clay and large, delicate pottery pieces she created. Margaret recalls, "I signed up for the course that week," and adds with a wry smile, "That was just to tide me over 'til I could go back to my ceramic art."

What started as something to do until she could get back to working in clay quickly became the kind of career that recruiters like to

use as examples for prospective agents. Since those first days, Margaret has accumulated more awards and recognitions than her office can hold. What is most remarkable is that she has done it solo.

WORKING SOLO — KEEPING IT PERSONAL

Margaret works solo. When you call her, she is the one who answers the phone. She takes all inquiries on each of her listings, and makes all her own appointments. Margaret believes it is essential that she is the only one to talk with her sellers. She knows the seller's horse best, and she knows



Shoot and print — always ready.

Attention to detail.



how to ask the right questions of the buyers and their agents on what they are looking for. By taking the time to find out what matters to a buyer, and knowing what the seller's special needs are, she assures the quality as well as the quantity of showings. She tells prospective clients, "When you hire me, you get me. You will never have to talk with



Margaret's works of art.

anyone else about your listing." That personal connection leads to good transactions and happy sellers.

WORKING SOLO — WITH A TEAM ON CALL

Margaret will tell you that working solo doesn't mean working alone. In fact, she learned early in her real estate career that she's most successful when she concentrates on what she does best — listing and selling houses — and finds experts to do the rest. Whether the subject is updating her website or exercise, she focuses on the best and most efficient way to get it done.

WORKING SOLO — USING TECHNOLOGY

When she leaves the house, Margaret slings a single strap over her shoulder and walks out carrying a powerful tablet computer that is always connected to the Internet. Her cell phone/PDA is on her belt, and a digital camera rides along for listings. Her arsenal of tech tools includes an all-in-one (printer, copier, fax, scanner), mini mouse and portable keyboard. She even has a program that lets her fax into and out of the computer.

Always connected: have tablet, will travel.



Having all this handy turns a listing appointment into a multimedia experience. With a touch of the screen, the seller can see how their property will be marketed, sign a listing agreement and even look at the properties that have sold in their area — all on

Margaret's tablet computer.

Settlements have their own level of stress that Margaret finds is reduced by having technology at hand. "It's so convenient to talk with a title company and have them fax me the HUD 1 sheet so I can review it before we get to the settlement table. Then I can fax or e-mail it to the client without having to run around looking for a fax machine." Getting to those settlements is easy using the GPS in her car. Total mobility and connectivity mean personal service for Margaret's clients no matter where the day takes her.

THE REWARDS OF TECHNOLOGY LEAD TO SUCCESS

Margaret Rome has more awards than can be listed in this article; however, she is proudest of two awards that are not based on listing, sales or commissions. Earlier this year she was named Humanitarian of the Year at the Allen F. Hainge CyberStars Convention. And the one award that means most came a few years ago: the Carolyn Howd Award. This award is named for an agent who helped her clients, other agents and friends even as she was hospitalized and dying of breast cancer. It is presented by Floyd Wickman's Master Sales Academy to a real estate broker or agent who helps others in the industry. Mike Pallin of The Floyd Wickman StarMaker Team says, "If you ask Margaret's clients, friends, colleagues or competition about her best quality, the universal answer is her positive attitude. No matter what challenges life has thrown her way, Margaret's philosophy has always been, 'I don't do upset.' She is always there to help an agent, always the first to volunteer to share her experience and expertise, and always with a giving heart."



Reviewing today's listings.

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