

New Agent Guide

produced for members of the
HAMPTON ROADS REALTORS® ASSOCIATION



INSIDE: DIY Marketing Ideas; Your Member Benefits;
Sample Agent Plan; Pathways To Professionalism; More

Welcome to HRRRA

CONGRATULATIONS on joining the association and becoming a new REALTOR®! We hope this booklet will provide the kick start you need to make the most of your career.



It's All About Building Relationships

Some of the best business relationships start at a HRRRA meeting or event. Making contact with your fellow members can have multiple benefits. Don't underestimate the power of networking as a way to advance in your career!

HRRRA has several Councils, Committees and Advisory Groups for members to participate in. Some of them even offer FREE LUNCH, sponsored by one of HRRRA's generous Affiliate members! Check www.HRRRA.com for dates and times.

- Affiliates Council
- Appraisers Council
- Commercial Alliance
- Government Affairs Committee
- Global Real Estate Advisory Group
- New Homes Council
- Owners/Managers Council
- Property Management and Leasing Council
- REALTOR®/Lawyer Committee
- Resale Council
- Sales Managers Council
- The Network (YPN)

In this Guide:

1. Benefits Overview
2. Sample Agent Plan
3. Common Abbreviations and Designations
4. Pathways to Professionalism
5. Government Affairs: What it means for REALTORS®
6. DIY Marketing Ideas
7. What's RPR and how can it help me?
8. Keep Up the Enthusiasm!

Benefits Overview

One thing that you may not realize is that when you pay your HRRRA dues you have a 3-tiered membership. In lieu of you (or your broker) making separate dues payments to three different associations, HRRRA collects and pays your dues to the Virginia Association of REALTORS® (VAR) and the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR). Along with your local HRRRA benefits, the state and national associations also offer a wealth of information for new members about education and events, law and ethics, political advocacy, and current real estate research and statistics.

HRRRA's website (www.HRRRA.com) is your one-stop shop for information, education, and networking opportunities in the Hampton Roads area. (Networking with other real estate professionals is just as important to your career success as selling your first home! Consider attending any of the free Council or Committee meetings at headquarters in Chesapeake.) Through HRRRA's site, you have easy access to NAR's New Agent Field Guide, NAR's Rookie Toolkit, VAR's New REALTOR® Resources, HRRRA's New Member Slideshow and the Post-Licensing courses that are available through Alpha College of Real Estate. You can register for classes and events online, connect to a host of branded social media sites, and access I am one® campaign materials through your Members Only login.

The VAR website (www.VARealtor.com) offers home sales reports, standard forms and contracts, membership discounts, awards programs, online education, as well as specific tools for new REALTORS®.

NAR's website (www.Realtor.org) includes a REALTOR® Benefits Program that provides educational opportunities, financial and personal protection services, insurance, marketing and technology tools, and travel and automotive discounts. NAR even lets you download free Kindle books from their virtual library.

The benefits of your HRRRA, VAR and NAR memberships are integral to your success as a new REALTOR®. Bookmark these sites and visit them often for updated REALTOR® specific information and continual membership support services.



Sample Agent Plan

GET STARTED

- Develop a formal, written Business Plan; seek your Broker's advice on realistic goals
- Make a budget
 - Identify business expenses, desired monthly income (net)
 - Make a plan to set aside and pay taxes
- Investigate business entity options: LLC, S-Corp, C-Corp, etc.

PROSPECT FOR CLIENTS

- Identify likely targets
 - Sphere of influence (Create a plan to contact everyone in it)
 - Your clubs, church, school, neighborhood groups, etc.
 - Civic League, Chamber of Commerce
 - Local business owners
 - Previous clients or co-workers in another industry
 - Prospects of agents leaving the real estate business
- Set up tracking database or paper system



MARKET YOURSELF

- Order business cards and supplies
- Send letters of introduction
- Use the free I am one® campaign materials available only to HRRRA members
- Create online presence (website, social media, blog)
- Create your Listing Presentation and Buyer Counseling Presentation
- Research local media advertising plans: newsprints, magazines, etc. Check with HRRRA Affiliates to see if there are any offers you can take advantage of.

SEEK ADDITIONAL EDUCATION & DESIGNATIONS

- Attend new agent training (Alpha College's QUICKSTART©, in-house, etc.)
- Attend all company sales meetings
- Designations offered through Alpha and HRRRA
- Make a plan to get PL/CE credits over 2-year period
- Consult Broker regarding coaching/mentoring arrangements
- Reading list: select 5 "best books" and read them

STAY ACTIVE AND INFORMED

- Get involved with HRRRA activities and specialty councils
- Participate in your company's functions, committees, etc.
- Follow up with all contacts (thank-you notes, emails, etc.)
- Preview properties; familiarize yourself with neighborhoods/inventory
- Hold "Open Houses" on other agents' listings (get permission!)
- Develop resource networks with HRRRA Affiliates (inspectors, lenders, repairmen, etc.)

Common Abbreviations and Designations

Abbreviations

When you first join HRRRA, you might feel like people around you are speaking a different language! Here is a short list of the most common bits of “alphabet soup” you will see.

ALPHA	Alpha College of Real Estate - www.AlphaCollegeOfRealEstate.com
CE	Continuing Education; credit needed to renew your license each year
DPOR	Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation dpor.virginia.gov
HRRRA	Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association www.HRRRA.com
IAM1	HRRRA's I am one® marketing and public awareness campaign
MLS	Multiple Listing Service
NAR	National Association of REALTORS® www.Realtor.org
PL	Post-Licensing; credit needed to renew your license the first time
REIN	Real Estate Information Network; our local MLS www.reininc.com
VAR	Virginia Association of REALTORS® www.VARealtor.com
VREB	Virginia Real Estate Board (at DPOR) dpor.virginia.gov

Designations

Have you ever wondered what those letters after a REALTOR®'s name stand for? They are professional designations that only REALTORS® can earn; non-member agents cannot. You can find a more comprehensive list at www.HRRRA.com.

ABR®	Accredited Buyer Representative
CCIMsm	Certified Commercial Investment Member
CDPE	Certified Distressed Property Expert®
CPM®	Certified Property Manager
CRBsm	Certified Residential Brokerage Manager
CRS®	Certified Residential Specialist
GRIsm	Graduate REALTOR® Institute
RSPS	Resort & Second Home Markets Certification
SFR	Short Sales and Foreclosure Resource
SIOR®	Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS®
SRES®	Senior Real Estate Specialist



Pathways to Professionalism

While the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the National Association establishes objective, enforceable ethical standards governing the professional conduct of REALTORS[®], it does not address issues of courtesy or etiquette. Based on input from many sources, the Professional Conduct Working Group of the Professional Standards Committee developed the following list of professional courtesies for use by REALTORS[®] on a voluntary basis. This list is not all-inclusive, and may be supplemented by local custom and practice.

Respect for the Public

1. Follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
2. Respond promptly to inquiries and requests for information.
3. Schedule appointments and showings as far in advance as possible.
4. Call if you are delayed or must cancel an appointment or showing.
5. If a prospective buyer decides not to view an occupied home, promptly explain the situation to the listing broker or the occupant.
6. Communicate with all parties in a timely fashion.
7. When entering a property, ensure that unexpected situations, such as pets, are handled appropriately.
8. Leave your business card if not prohibited by local rules.
9. Never criticize property in the presence of the occupant.
10. Inform occupants that you are leaving after showings.
11. When showing an occupied home, always ring the doorbell or knock—and announce yourself loudly—before entering. Knock and announce yourself loudly before entering any closed room.
12. Present a professional appearance at all times; dress appropriately and drive a clean car.
13. If occupants are home during showings, ask their permission before using the telephone or bathroom.
14. Encourage the clients of other brokers to direct questions to their agent or representative.
15. Communicate clearly; don't use jargon or slang that may not be readily understood.
16. Be aware of and respect cultural differences.
17. Show courtesy and respect to everyone.
18. Be aware of, and meet, all deadlines.
19. Promise only what you can deliver, and keep your promises.
20. Identify your REALTOR[®] and professional status in contacts with the public.
21. Do not tell people what you *think*—tell them what you *know*.

Respect for Peers

1. Identify your REALTOR® and professional status in all contacts with other agents.
2. Respond to other agents' calls, faxes, and e-mails promptly and courteously.
3. Be aware that large electronic files with attachments or lengthy faxes may be a burden on recipients.
4. Notify the listing broker if there appears to be inaccurate information on the listing.
5. Share important information about a property, including the presence of pets; security systems; and whether sellers will be present during the showing.
6. Show courtesy, trust and respect to other real estate professionals.
7. Avoid the inappropriate use of endearments or other denigrating language.
8. Do not prospect at other agents' open houses or similar events.
9. Return keys promptly.
10. Carefully replace keys in the lockbox after showings.
11. To be successful in the business, mutual respect is essential.
12. Real estate is a reputation business. What you do today may affect your reputation, and business, for years to come.

Follow the
Golden Rule!

Respect for Property

1. Be responsible for everyone you allow to enter listed property.
2. Never allow buyers to enter listed property unaccompanied.
3. When showing property, keep all members of the group together.
4. Never allow unaccompanied access to property without permission.
5. Enter property only with permission even if you have a lockbox key or combination.
6. When the occupant is absent, leave the property as you found it (lights, heating, cooling, drapes, etc). If you think something is amiss (e.g. vandalism) contact the listing broker immediately.
7. Be considerate of the seller's property. Do not allow anyone to eat, drink, smoke, dispose of trash, use bathing or sleeping facilities, or bring pets. Leave the house as you found it unless instructed otherwise.
8. Use sidewalks; if weather is bad, take off shoes and boots inside property.



Government Affairs: What it means for REALTORS®

HRRRA's Government Affairs program protects the professional interests of all Hampton Roads REALTORS®. Its primary goals are to:

- protect private property rights;
- promote economic development; and
- maintain a pro-business environment conducive to the practice of real estate.

HRRRA's **Government Affairs Committee** is responsible for lobbying, which includes interacting with elected officials, planning commissioners, and city or county staff. Some of the greatest benefits of HRRRA membership are early warnings of regulatory and legislative changes, the opportunity to shape industry responses to those changes, and the equally important opportunity to take the initiative to effect positive change on behalf of the industry. Sign ordinances, zoning requirements, comprehensive plans, and transportation planning are all examples of local government issues where HRRRA has been involved.

HRRRA's Government Affairs Committee undertakes vigorous and effective advocacy that benefits the real estate industry. All policies and actions are grounded in the common principles of promoting homeownership and furthering the real estate industry in Hampton Roads. Those principles ensure that REALTOR®-proposed initiatives receive heightened attention and that the association and its members remain respected and trusted stakeholders.

The Government Affairs Committee hosts an open, monthly meeting (with free lunch from one of our Affiliate Members) for all HRRRA members to learn more about various topics affecting the real estate industry. Check the calendar at www.HRRRA.com for dates and topics.

The **Hampton Roads REALTORS® Political Action Committee**, or HRRPAC, works in conjunction with its counterpart at the state and national level to make funding decisions about elected officials and candidates who support real estate issues. HRRPAC receives voluntary contributions from members to endorse the local elected officials who best support and represent REALTORS® and real estate industry issues.



DIY Marketing Ideas



Advertising your listings isn't enough; you have to market *yourself*. Focus on these key areas and watch your sphere of influence widen!

"OFFLINE" MARKETING

1. Include social media profile info on your business cards and carry them everywhere.
2. Sponsor a local event or fundraiser.
3. Attend and/or host local meetups & tweetups.
4. Get a vanity plate for your car (and/or a REALTOR® license plate frame).
5. Mail hand written client appreciation and thank you cards.
6. Direct mailers with a coupon or deal and social profile callouts.

EMAIL MARKETING

1. Send a weekly or monthly email newsletter.
2. Send e-cards to your contacts for birthdays, holidays, and special occasions.
3. Work with local businesses to co-brand an email offer (send to both your contact lists).
4. Create a free online webinar for homeowners (based on your expertise).
5. What's happening this weekend? Share weekender tips for your local area.
6. Share rate updates and info (work with a local lender; look to HRRRA's Affiliates Council).
7. Share seasonal homeowner reminders and safety tips (storm drains, garden tips, etc.); check out NAR's sponsored homeowner site www.houselogic.com.

BLOG/WEBSITE

1. Video/podcast a blog series on a specific topic/niche.
2. Offer client Q & A via a contact form, and highlight the exchange on your site.
3. Host a contest with prizes from local businesses.
4. Post articles about others (local businesses, places to eat, schools, etc.).

FACEBOOK

1. Create a Facebook Page for your business (separate from your profile).
2. Comment on or Like 3-5 posts from the Newsfeed daily.
3. Update your status with FUN and/or VALUE once a day.
4. Leave comments on local business pages or groups (no SPAM or self interest linkbacks).
5. Create a past client photo album with testimonials (get permission to tag).

TWITTER

1. Homeowner tips (easy repairs, projects, upgrades).
2. Local market information and updates.
3. Break news as it happens!
4. Make smart use of trending hashtags.

From "50 Do-It-Yourself Marketing Ideas for Your Real Estate Business" by Nicole Nicolay at www.mytechopinon.com



What's RPR[®] and how can it help me?

RPR[®]
REALTORS
PROPERTY
RESOURCE

The REALTORS[®] Property Resource, or RPR, is an NAR member benefit that is available to all REALTORS[®]. RPR is 100% owned by you, directed by you, and operated for the benefit of NAR and its members. This single source for nationwide parcel centric data will give members access to the most complete real estate data available, keeping the agent of the highest value to the consumer in any type of real estate transaction. Only REALTORS[®] can access the information available in RPR—there is no consumer access.

RPR Key Features

- REALTORS[®] will be able to conduct nationwide property searches and market-to-market comparisons.
- Advanced map search with overlays including market trends and demographics, draw your own search area feature, flood zone data, year build overlay and drive time or distance feature.
- High-touch valuation tools allow agents to leverage their personal knowledge of the local market to create the most accurate market analysis available.
- Use the home improvement calculator to create localized return-on-investment analysis of typical and custom remodels.
- Generate customizable valuable reports to share with clients and customers.
- Generate market-to-market analyses and demographic reports, for clients relocating from anywhere in the country .
- RPR provides detailed historical and current views of every property, including public record and assessment information, details of prior transactions and sales history, zoning, permits, mortgage and lien data, neighborhood demographics and schools, investment analysis tool, as well as the largest database of foreclosure information by county in the industry.

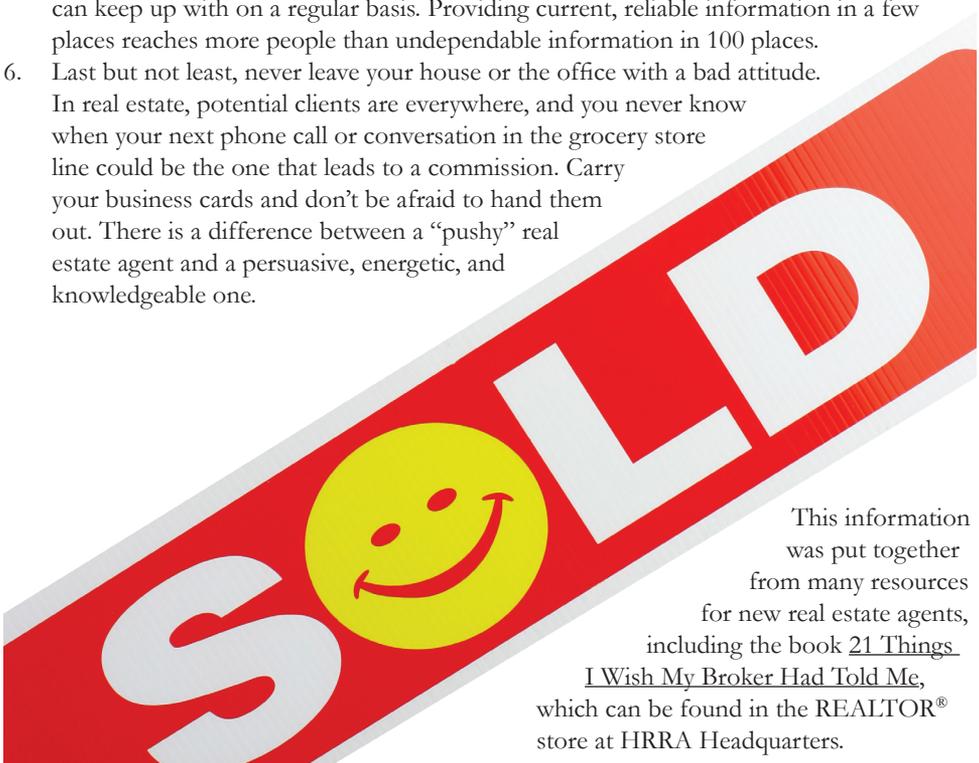
What to do first

- The most important things to do on your first visit are to set up your profile, set your Home Areas and try a search to see how it works.
- Go to login page: www.narrpr.com click “Create” and enter your last name and NRDS number, follow the steps to guide you through the sign-up process.
- On the MY PROFILE page: fill in as many details as you can, upload your photo and logo, and set your HOME AREA. Begin searching!

Keep up the Enthusiasm!

As a new agent, you have enthusiasm! You will work with any buyer regardless of their motivation or timeframe, you will market your listings almost anywhere, you answer the phone at all hours of the day or night, work seven days a week and check voicemails and return calls on vacation. You do these things to avoid the risk of losing potential customers. These overwhelming demands on your time and energy can quickly drain your enthusiasm. Your lifestyle should not accommodate a 24/7 availability to your clients; there is more to life than work, so find your balance. When you start to feel overwhelmed, remember these key things:

1. Your clients are about to make a big life decision, regardless of whether they are buying an \$80,000 townhouse or a million dollar home. You must be excited about the process of selling real estate and helping your clients, and if your service makes you memorable, it also makes you referable.
2. Making adjustments is par for the course in the real estate business. Tailor your style to the needs of your customers.
3. Learn your product: property! Read often, study a lot, network constantly and take advantage of the multiple resources that are available to you through your broker, and real estate Associations.
4. It is hard not to get caught up in the excitement of your first prospect. Keep things in perspective and try not to take it personally if it doesn't work out.
5. Pick only those marketing strategies that make sense for your business and that you can keep up with on a regular basis. Providing current, reliable information in a few places reaches more people than undependable information in 100 places.
6. Last but not least, never leave your house or the office with a bad attitude. In real estate, potential clients are everywhere, and you never know when your next phone call or conversation in the grocery store line could be the one that leads to a commission. Carry your business cards and don't be afraid to hand them out. There is a difference between a "pushy" real estate agent and a persuasive, energetic, and knowledgeable one.



This information was put together from many resources for new real estate agents, including the book 21 Things I Wish My Broker Had Told Me, which can be found in the REALTOR® store at HRRRA Headquarters.



HAMPTON ROADS
REALTORS®
ASSOCIATION



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