



GROUP ESTES *realty*

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending." – Maria Robinson

Dear Friend,

March 2012

No matter how effective we are, how effective the life we live is, there are always some refinements we can make. And there are many ways to do so!

One way is to fold (re-fold perhaps?!) some organizational tools into our lives. And who better to get that inspiration from than Stephen R. Covey. In his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, he writes that affirmation and attitude are the keys to putting his seven steps into action, creating real results by merging self-dependence and effective interdependence. And while many of us read the book when it first came out, since I know how easy it is for me to drift, I wanted to share a refresher. Find out more in this month's flyer.

So what else do we have for you this month? Articles that we think may be of interest, of course. And a local market update. And this month's highlighted vendors. Read on!

We have been posting a myriad of articles that we think you may find helpful. They include everything from tax tips, to refinancing options for FHA loan holders – even if they're underwater, changes coming for new FHA loans, Warren Buffett's housing outlook, some of the fine print on the Home Affordable Refinance Program, an interesting article on multitasking and how it's not as efficient as we'd like to hope (with a very short, very telling example!), some budgeting for future pet owners to consider before falling in love, a comparison on U.S. and European competitiveness and what manufacturing has to do with it, ten commandments for being a smart consumer, social networking guidelines for job hunters, the remodeling jobs that may not pay for themselves when it's time for you to sell your home, and, let's take a breath! We also have an article on the increasing home sales and decreasing inventories – nationally and locally (Seattle is at a five year low vis-a-vis the number of homes on the market), a Nation's Housing article making sure we are aware that the Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act is not a shoo-in for renewal at the end of the year (and this is how primary home short-sale-sellers manage not to owe additional income tax on the amount of forgiven debt), coaching teens on Facebook etiquette, and more fees coming from the big banks, even as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau starts taking complaints about bank checking and savings accounts.

The short version on the local market is that inventories are down, down, down. Seattle Metro has actually edged below four months of inventory; in other words, if properties continue to sell at today's rate, in 3.5 months all of Seattle's inventory would be sold. Now of course we know that a lot of those properties are physically distressed so it's not as

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though buyers have a wonderful array of well-prepared and well-priced choices. However it is indicative of the resulting law of supply and demand that will kick in at some point. As buyers ready to buy get discouraged about their choices, and a lovely, well-taken-care-of property that is clean and warm and priced well comes on the market. Well if that property offers what the buyers want, you can just bet they won't be quite as cost conscious as they would be if they had lots of other well cared for choices. So we shall see! With the March close and the ability to evaluate the first quarter of the year as compared to both last quarter as well as the first quarter of 2011, that will show us where the trends are really taking us. For now, with the monthly numbers we have, prices are still edging lower, although not dramatically (and Seattle is actually up about 1%).

Please do check out our highlighted vendors below.

Spotlight Vendors for March:

Howard Maxfield - Plus One Inspection Services, Inc. - 425-316-8007 -
plusonehm@gmail.com
House Inspector

Ramyn Pezeschgi - Studio Ramyn - 425-890-0775 - ramynpeze@gmail.com
Hairdresser

Candi Foon - Integral Wellness Services - 425-413-6000 - iws@sunyata.ws
Coach -- Health and Wellness

Steve Greso - S.V. Greso Inc. - 425-788-9345 - sgresom@msn.com
Septic System work

Competitive Hardwoods - 206-527-0506
Flooring

And as I wrap this up for another month, please do consider joining us at one of our upcoming events in support of Northwest Harvest (and some fun for all of us!). We will be in Ballard on Saturday afternoon, April 14th; find out more at www.GroupEstes.com/wine. And look for your postcard in the mail in the next couple of weeks!

Sincerely,



Always looking for more ways to be of service ... if you know of someone who would appreciate the level of service I provide, please call or email me with their name and business number, and I'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.



What makes up effective people?

Experts say that developing a habit takes 21 days of repetition to turn an act into a ritual. While that number may condition you, the most important accomplishment is committing yourself to the changes that you want to see made. Effective people know what they want to do and do it.

In his groundbreaking book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, author Stephen R. Covey writes that affirmation and attitude are the keys to putting his seven steps into action, creating real results by merging self-dependence and effective interdependence.

Incorporate These 7 Habits into Your Life:

Step 1: Be Proactive

Learning to take responsibility for your actions and your life will ultimately result in more initiative and a vital “take action” approach to your life and work. Proactive people are open to change and adaptation.

Step 2: Begin with the End in Mind

You should always have goals in mind—it is important to put these in writing and remind yourself, every day, of what you are working toward. People without goals are like a ship without a rudder—they drift aimlessly and don’t get anywhere.

Step 3: Put First Things First

Once you have recorded your goals and aims, you can move toward accomplishing them by focusing on the most important aspects of your life and work. Failing to prioritize will result in wasted time and subpar performance.

Step 4: Think Win/Win

After you have put your individual business in order, you will need to focus on building a strong framework for group-oriented work. Thinking “win/win” means finding ways to satisfy each party involved in a project to keep everyone satisfied.



Step 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

Working together can be easy if you take this approach. Let every person have their say and don’t just listen—comprehend what they are saying. When it is your turn to speak, your voice will be heard and more appreciated.



Step 6: Synergize

Teams that exhibit diversity and varied strengths are much more effective than a group of carbon copies. Celebrate the different abilities of each team member and use the complementary skill sets to your advantage.

Step 7: Sharpen the Saw

Take time to do what you enjoy, take pleasure in what your success has built and recharge your batteries.



Setting goals



...and keeping them!

Without goals, how will you know where you're going? Will you even recognize it when you get there? Writing out your goals will act as a roadmap to success in your personal life and professional career.

There are two different goals you will want to chart: your short-term and long-term goals. Long-term goals are just as they sound: your ultimate aims. The short-term goals should be continuously conceived and executed every 90 days. At the end of each period, you should evaluate your results and establish new goals.

LONG-TERM GOALS

My long-term goals are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

These are important to me because:

I will accomplish this by:

SHORT-TERM GOALS

My short-term goals are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

These are important to me because:

I will accomplish this by:

Resources

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PlanPlus Online™

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Be effective.