

Satisfaction guaranteed Web fuels Lifetime Achievement success

By Amanda Okker

RE/MAX Times Associate Editor

VANCOUVER, British Columbia – Les Twarog doesn't want to waste anyone's time – including his own.

"I tell my clients that if they're not happy, if I don't live up to their expectations, I'll cancel the listing and move on," Twarog says. "Very few have taken me up on that offer."

The Lifetime Achievement Award winner with RE/MAX Crest Realty (Westside) in Vancouver, the third-largest metropolitan area in Canada, closes more than 100 transaction sides a year. He guarantees top service – and puts it in writing.

The Les Twarog Guarantee, posted on his Web site at www.6717000.com, goes beyond offering clients an "out" and outlines exactly what they can expect of him and his four-person team, which includes his wife and business partner, Sonja Pedersen.

It goes so far as to promise this timeline:

- an MLS listing within 24 hours
- "just listed" postcards to 5,000 homes within seven days
- a listing on www.realtylink.org with eight photos within 10 days
- a sale within 12 weeks.

How can it possibly hold up?

"Few other agents offer the kinds of services I provide," says Twarog, an 11-year RE/MAX Affiliate. "I tell my clients that if they list with me, they're benefiting from my Web site, a Web site for their property and tons of print advertising. I spend more than \$20,000 a month on Web sites and advertising."

The self-described technology buff has developed a 5GB, 40,000-page Web site (compared with fairly standard 20MB to 30MB sites). Real estate agents comprise 80 percent of his 2,000 daily-Web site visitors.

"I track this stuff and know exactly what activity is on my Web site," says

Twarog, who began building his online presence in 1998. "Realtors know they can find information here they can't easily get anywhere else."

Twarog's sales have grown 15 percent to 20 percent annually for the past four years, and he says technology has had the greatest impact on his business.

"Before I was set up, it sometimes took me 24 to 48 hours to respond to e-mails and inquiries. I couldn't begin to offer all the online services that have streamlined my business," he says. "Now I answer e-mails and text messages immediately on my PDA wherever I am. I'm always reading up on the latest technologies, and I work so much more efficiently."

He keeps track of his contacts – more than 10,000 agents and customers – with CardScan, a program that scans business cards and stores them in a database. He uses AgentOffice for RE/MAX to manage his business. Multiple servers keep all his team members' computers networked, and he relies on his PDA to stay connected.

"All the programs and systems are in synch, and that's a huge time-saver," Twarog says. "CardScan links with Outlook, Outlook links with AgentOffice. I don't have to enter data into each one."

Believing he provides a unique level of service, Twarog's commission fee is slightly higher than most of his local competitors. He often prepares properties for showings on his own dime, having carpets cleaned, hiring a maid service and giving the walls a fresh coat of paint.

"I believe in the adage that you're worth what you charge," Twarog says. "My team is successful, because, whether it's with technology or service, we're always a step ahead."

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CONNECTED: Tech wizard Les Twarog and his wife and business partner, Sonja Pedersen, have built a team that closes more than 100 transaction sides a year.

Twarog's Web site includes:

- MLS listing details, floor plans, aerial views, sales histories and more on hundreds of buildings in the downtown Vancouver area
- Links to sites Twarog creates for each downtown building, which total more than 400
- Interactive maps
- Resources for buyers and sellers
- A link to homefeedback.com, where sellers can read comments from real estate agents who've shown their property