

Each real estate broker and agent serves as a constant ambassador for the entire Memphis market, and that's an ever-present, valuable professional responsibility. You are information gatekeepers, who help shape your clients' perceptions. Are you a positive ambassador? Here are some things to keep in mind:

- How you communicate with your clients can strongly affect their perceptions of all brokers and agents and the Memphis market. What makes your communication good is the ability to focus your message, make it meaningful to your audience, and – above all – make it persuasive, credible and memorable.
- Use striking testimonials (from clients or colleagues) or statistics when you can to lend positive support to the Memphis market.
- Communication is more than what we say. We also communicate through nonverbal signals, tone and inflection and appearance. Ensure that you're using positive body language at all times and that your body language supports your verbal messages. If you appear less than enthusiastic about the Memphis market, clients won't believe it really is a great time to buy.
- When listening to your message (and watching you), your clients are subconsciously grading you in four areas:
 1. **Credibility:** Do you have the authority and expertise to say what you're saying?
 2. **Honesty:** Are you telling the truth?
 3. **Commitment:** Are you putting yourself and your resources behind what you're saying?
 4. **Empathy:** Do you really care?
- Studies show that “negative” words and ideas crowd out “positive” words and ideas in our minds. When we hear a negative word, it's what we most remember. This means it's important for you to speak in positive terms and remove all negative words from your language. This includes remembering not to repeat or introduce negatives words.
- Avoid jargon when possible. Your clients probably won't understand it and will mentally tune them out. Remember, jargon is defined as any word or phrase your audience doesn't use on a daily basis.
- Format your message so it's simple, easy to understand and positive.
- Be proactive, not reactive, when communicating with clients. Tell them all they need to know before they ask. And always ask if there's anything else you can do for them.
- Everything you say is “on the record” -- that means a client or reporter can repeat anything you say, even if it's in casual conversation that doesn't seem to be part of an official communication.
- Encourage clients to visit HopOffTheFence.com for more information.

Key Messages to Consider

- Last year (2007) was the fourth-best year on record for home sales in the Memphis-area market.
- Interest rates are at or near historic lows – near the lowest point recorded in 30 years. This makes buying a home now even more affordable for more individuals.
- Inventory levels are higher, giving buyers abundant choices and expanded negotiating leverage.
- Memphis is one of the nation's most affordable housing markets and is one of the few markets where housing is undervalued according to a report by National City. In addition, PMI Mortgage Insurance Co. consistently ranks Memphis as one of the most affordable markets in its quarterly Economic Real Estate Trends report.
- Housing prices in Memphis are stable, experiencing more measured increases every year as opposed to steep increases found in markets like Phoenix, Las Vegas, and South Florida. This means homeowners enjoy a more consistent return on their investment and don't have to worry about the market experiencing significant downturns.
- Over the past decade, the Memphis-area housing market has experienced a 37% increase in average home sales prices.
- In the quarterly PMI Economic Trends report, Memphis is consistently ranked as one of the markets least at risk for overall declines in home values.
- The average homeowner has accumulated wealth of more than \$180,000, compared to \$4,000 for the average renter.
- Memphis is home to numerous corporate headquarters and other companies that maintain a large presence in Memphis. That, coupled with the high quality of life available here, makes Memphis a destination of choice among transferees from across the nation.
- Citing the stable value and comparative affordability of Memphis real estate, *Business 2.0* magazine has ranked the city number 6 on a list of 10 cities ripe for investors looking for markets ready to bounce back.