



April 2010

Is Training Better In Person or Online?

There's no question that training is the foundation of a successful real estate career. But is Web-based learning as effective as classroom training?

'Classrooms are the best, hands down.'

"Most sales associates are social people," says Rick Wohlfarth, president of Wohlfarth & Associates in New York. "They thrive and learn by communicating with others, listening to new ideas, and sharing information."

"Classroom examples and interaction can't be replaced by reading a computer screen," says Gea Elika, ABR®, founder and principal broker at Elika Associates in New York. "A classroom also provides restraint if you're tempted to go to the refrigerator or deal with unexpected phone calls."

"In-person training is much more effective than online," says Rajia Ackley, CCIM, CRB, president and CEO of Coldwell Banker Ackley Realty in Kissimmee, Fla. "Most sales associates already have a general knowledge and understanding of the industry. What they need is the sales manager's motivation, enthusiasm, and coach-like qualities to propel them toward success."

'Online training has its place.'

"Online training is a great supplement to in-person education," says Anthony Vulin, broker-manager at Keller Williams Los Feliz in Los Angeles. "We have many role-playing videos associates can watch over and over online."

"You may miss out on role-playing opportunities, but some topics are well-suited for online classes, including training on computers, databases, and social networking," says Kimberly Clark, GRI, broker-owner of Bayside Realty Consultants LLC in East Dennis, Mass.

"Our sales associates have access to online training through our intranet 24/7," says Travis John, owner of RE/MAX Gold Partners in Apopka, Fla. "If they miss an event, they can go online to catch up on what they missed."

'Let the salesperson decide.'

"Everyone has different study habits, so it should really be up to the individual sales associate," says Scott Caballero, ABR®, GRI, broker at Caballero & Associates Realty in San Antonio. "Both have positives: You have fewer distractions in a classroom, but an online class offers more flexibility."

'Accountability is the greatest concern.'

It's not how sales associates learn, but what you ask them to do with their knowledge afterward that's most important. "Having an accountability program is the key to an effective training system," explains Rob Hatchett, regional vice president of Chattanooga and Huntsville, Tenn., for Crye-Leike, REALTORS®.

"The process of prospecting for buyers and sellers is similar to going on a diet. We all know what we need to be doing—we just need a partner who's going to make us do it. If your sales associates don't have that, they're probably not doing anything with what they learned."