Turnabout's Fair Play:

10 Commandments for Agents

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Managers study how to attract and keep agents. They learn how to do recruiting presentations that they hope are mesmerizing to their candidates—so mesmerizing that they'll say yes when offered a position in the company. They don't rest on their laurels; they hone their skills so they're better managers, trainers, and coaches. So, I'm going to turn the tables, and ask you agents, *what do you owe your manager?*

My eighth grade teacher, Mrs. Taylor, had wonderful sayings that she would drop on us at opportune times. These either kept us attentive or scared the you-know-what out of us! They included, "Time passes. Will you?" and "to each his own, as she kissed the cow." (Well, some were better than others). The saying I'm remembering now, though, was, "Turnabout's fair play". In other words, if you mess with Mrs. Taylor, you will get the appropriate treatment! And, if you cooperate and get your work done, you'll get appropriate treatment, too. So, let's apply that idea to the relationship and expectations of agents and managers.

Are Mutual Expectations Exchanged in the Interview?

The real estate industry is the only industry I know that hires with a "trust me" from both the manager and the agent. No mutual expectations here, just

promises! It may have worked in the past, but it won't work in the future. A challenging market means we'll have to do things differently. Right now, managers, make a list of what you expect—and have a right to expect—from an agent. Draw up a Mutual Expectations agreement. Go over that agreement *in the interview.* Get it signed. Doing it after you've hired the agent is way too late! (There is an example new mutual expectations agreement in the 3rd edition, just published, of Up and Running in 30 Days, the new agent's business start-up plan).

Consequences of the Mutual Expectations Agreement

Managers: are you worried about retention? This is one of the best retention tools in the world—hiring agents who promise to go to work! Your experienced agents will love the fact that you're not hiring dead-wood to just get in their way and pull down the reputation of the company. Your new agents will get right to work, because they understand that is the expectation. Will you miss hiring a few people? Sure--the ones that didn't intend to go to work.

Ten Commandments to Get the Best from your Manager

From working as an agent for 8 years, and managing agents for almost two decades, I've drawn some conclusions about the 'turnabout's fair play' that I believe agents owe managers. I've also listed these in the third edition of Up and Running, because, I believe if managers are willing to give 100% support through training and coaching each agent to success, agents need to give it their best, too. Here are agents' ten commandments:

1. Do the work.
2. Don’t argue.
3. Don’t make excuses form not doing your start-up plan.
4. Don’t tell the manager you’ve been in the business two weeks and you have a better way.
5. Do thank your manager frequently.
6. Do tell other agents that you appreciate your manager’s efforts.
7. Do tell other new agents you meet in other companies that you have a great manager.
8. Don’t bug other people in the office to find another answer because you didn’t like your manager’s answer.
9. Don’t change the Up and Running plan because you “don’t like it”. (You just don’t like lead generating, do you?)
10. Don’t miss a coaching appointment!

I’d love to hear what you think of my ‘ten commandments.’ Are there others you think are important? Managers: Why not make your own ten commandments and discuss them in your interview process. Then, turn the tables and ask the agent about his expectations of you and the office. Agents: Before you hire on, get in writing exactly what your manager is going to do to assure your success, so you won’t have disappointments later. Getting agreement on what we both expect before we decide to work together is key to a happy partnership. The only surprises I want you and your agent to have after you start working together are *good ones!*

Side note: Managers: My belief is that you owe it to your agents to coach each one, regularly and professionally, in starting his or her business. That shows your 100% commitment to each person's success. To do that, I've created the Managers' Up and Running Coaching System for New Agents, which includes the agent's game plan, Up and Running in 30 Days, with its new 3rd edition coaching companion, Managers: Putting Up and Running to Work. This challenging market, and your new agents, plus your consumers, expect a lot. That takes 100% mutual commitment from both parties. Armed with the game plan and coaching expertise, you will assure the agent's first-three to six month production is not disappointing to either the agent or you.

Carla Cross, CRB, MA, is president of Carla Cross Seminars, Inc., and Carla Cross Coaching. She is an international speaker in real estate productivity. Carla is the author of 6 internationally published books and several productivity-producing programs for real estate agents and leadership, including the third edition of Up and Running in 30 Days. See her programs at www.carlacross.com, or contact Carla at 425-392-6914.