

Not yet two years into the business, B.C. broker Dustan Woodhouse is racing his way to the top of the sales pack through a combination of hard work and dedication. He took some time out of his busy schedule to talk to *CMP* about what makes his engine run

going **OTR**

Picture being out in the middle of the B.C. wilderness with nothing but the thick swath of trees around you, trickling light in from an otherwise clear day, the occasional sighting of some wildlife, and, of course, the smell of burning oil and gasoline that spews from the exhaust of your dirt bike. It's something Dustan Woodhouse, a broker based outside of Coquitlam, B.C. experiences every weekend, first thing in the morning.

Sometimes he rides in what is called a hare scramble, which is a particular type of challenging off-road motorcycle race that cuts a narrow path through the wooded and rugged terrain, testing the overall skill of the rider, as well as their patience. Not only is it a 40 km track that leaves very few options for those that want to quit early, but in order to complete the full race you must complete two full laps of it, and in the quickest time possible.

"I do one full scramble a year to convince myself I'm not that old," says the 38-year-old Woodhouse. "It's brutal though, mentally and physically. While you're out there you wonder to yourself 'why am I doing this?' Once you finish it though the feeling of satisfaction makes it all worth it."

Woodhouse takes that same dedicated approach to brokering, riding non-stop through it all with a clear end target in his focus. In the case of the race, that goal is obviously the finish, but in terms of business, that goal is financial success. After just two years in the business, he is well on his way to realizing that goal, not only being awarded the Invis Rising Star Award in 2008, but also bringing home its No. 1 individual sales award for B.C. in 2009.

"It's all a numbers game," he says, before explaining, deadpan, that he "didn't exactly get the award for most balanced life."

What that means is Woodhouse is working from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week, 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and always on call.

"I remember it was Jan. 16, 2009, and I worked my goal backwards to see what I would need to meet it. Each month I knew what I needed to achieve the target, so I never said no to any event that was mortgage-related, and I just got out there, to investment groups, corporate events, you name it, aligning myself with excellent referral clients."

Woodhouse worked the numbers, saw 700,000 existing mortgages in B.C. alone and 1.1 million privately owned properties, and thought that even if the economy lagged, there was still plenty of opportunity.

"How hard could it be to get 100 deals in a year, which would be good for most people, right?"

And the hard work and long hours obviously paid off, but he also admits that while working towards business targets was the key to his success, it's also important to put things in perspective.

"For 2010, I should maybe focus on winning an award from my family, rather than my workplace," he says.

In the garage

Woodhouse is this first to say that he has no formal background in financials, but he did get his start as a small business owner, starting at





aren't the norm for him (he does send out the occasional gift certificate to good referral clients), service is.

"That's the beauty with this business – you take good care of the clients, they will take good care of you," he says. "Besides, I'm available 18 hours a day, seven days a week. I think that's more important to them than if I send a fruit basket."

For actual tracking, he resorts to a not-so-simple Excel sheet.

"I have a rainbow-like Excel sheet the likes nobody else has seen," he says. "You have to know where referrals are coming from. In one month I may do 17 deals, which doesn't sound like a lot, but I'll have 30 open files going."

Dealing with that number of deals on a monthly basis on his own probably explains the long work hours for Woodhouse, and one of the first things he mentions is that "I have no life

Quick Q&A with Wayne Kainu

+ What has been your biggest challenge?

Trying to communicate all the changes that are happening in the market to clients. There are very complex subjects, like rental add backs and offsets, that aren't just 10-second sound bites, and they need to understand what they mean. Explaining is something I have been doing ever since I started though, because my first month was when they got rid of zero-down, 40-year amortizations.

+ What is your unfulfilled ambition? Getting to that balance point between having too much money and too much time. It seems you can't have both. I want to get to the point when I have enough of each.

+ What is the biggest risk you ever took? At age 36, taking the mortgage broker's exam with little financial background, and making such a big change with a wife and two kids.

+ If you weren't a broker, what would you be doing? I would definitely be in property development.

+ Do you have any hobbies? The thing I do most now is getting up to Whistler and downhill biking with my son.

+ What words would you use to describe yourself? Driven and focused, but let's call it what it is – workaholic. Also, someone once told me I was their financial priest, in that they could confess all their financial sins to me. I liked that.

PROFILE

BROKERS

outside of mortgages.” This is followed closely by “I really need an assistant.”

He does say an assistant is in the works, which will give him more time to get back to the things that matter in his personal life – namely his family.

“My family is really the ones that make it all happen for me, and many a client has looked at me with surprise when I mention it to them, asking when I ever see them,” he says. “We make the most of the hours we do have together though, and that is important.”

Another thing an assistant will give him time for is a chance to “feel young” again with his dirt biking buddies, who have a big trip planned this fall.

“For my one buddy’s birthday we are either going to ride to Alaska or to Mexico on dual sport bikes,” he says.

Woodhouse talks about a group of riders that went from Canada to Mexico, riding 95 per cent of the time on off-road trails.

“We have the route and we’re just going to go for it, hoping to do it in 10 days,” he says, before adding with a laugh. “But we’ll see how that goes.” **CMP**



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