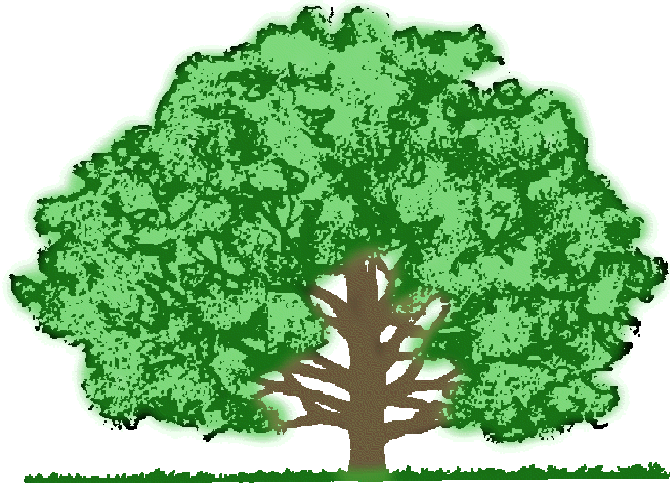




Classified Ad Secrets

Excerpt From Solid Oak Marketing For Real Estate Investors



**By Don R. Campbell
Best-Selling Author of
Real Estate Investing in Canada**

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Classified Ads

To many real estate investors, classified ads are the bread and butter of their business not only for attracting renters, but also creating leads for many other purpose such as attracting JV partners, realtors, vendors, buyers and even contractors.

The good news is that these ads are relatively inexpensive, the not so good news is that because they are so inexpensive to place, many investors don't put that much of an effort into writing a good ad.

One day in Atlanta, I had a discussion about classified ads with about a dozen senior level real estate investors / marketers. Each one of these investors was at the top of their game, creating substantial amounts of success in their business. The discussion started out first with my **“Solid Oak”** strategy for business success, and as we analyzed each of these people's businesses we found that each had a minimum of 6 **“Solid Oak”** legs holding up their business, and a number of them had much more.

The other similarity was that they ALL used classified ads as one source of leads, but it was never the one they relied on the most. And as the discussion continued on to classified ads, we all came to the agreement that:

Classified Ads Are The Toughest Ads To Write

Why? Because they need to be short, they need to be tight, then need to envelope all aspects of a large ad (attention getting, emotional, benefit laden, with a call to action) in a small space with not a lot of 'formatting options.'

WOW, small ads are the toughest to write? Yes, when you create the ultimate classified ad, it will take effort, thought and some creativity to ensure that you answer all of the critical questions discussed earlier in this Program.

However, what we all agreed on is that classified ads are a lifeblood of a real estate investor's business and can never be ignored or done haphazardly.

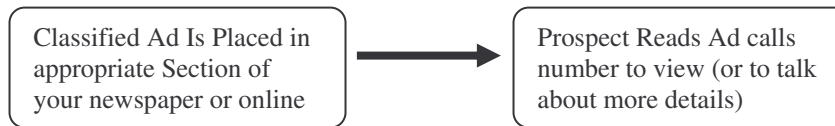
Fortunately, as discussed earlier, marketing is a science, and we have developed some winning formulas for you to use as you develop your own personal classified ad goldmine. This portion of the Program will take the guesswork out of the equation and all you need to do is be creative with your specific details.

2-Stepping Your Way To Success

For all you country music fans, I apologize, the 2 stepping I'm discussing has nothing to do with dancing – it has everything to do with business success.

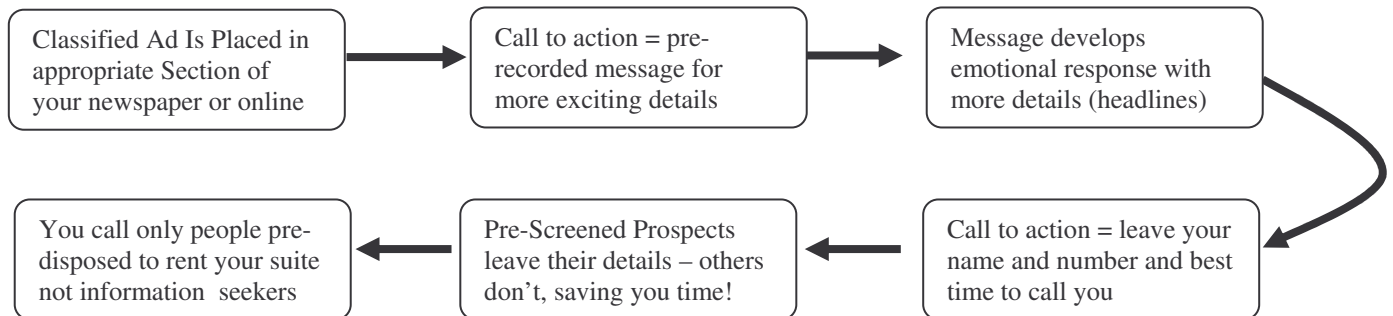
The classic model of a classified ad is a 1-step model. The ad is placed and the prospect (renter, buyer, vendor) picks up the phone and says, "I'm interested." There is 1 call to action in the 1-step model. This model does work in some cases (attracting renters in a low vacancy market). However you will find, as a sophisticated investor, that a 2-step model will give you better results with less 'wasted effort.' In the 2-Step model there are 2 calls to action in the system, thus filtering out the people who aren't really interested.

Classic 1-step model (the most common way of using classified ads):



"Solid Oak" 2-Step Model

A 2-step model is really quite fascinating, it allows you to get a very detailed message to your prospects, with minimal cost. Here's how a typical 2-step marketing strategy would work for attracting a renter:



YES, in the 2-step model you will find that you are taking a smaller number of direct telephone calls, however, you will also find that the people you speak with are very interested in hearing what you have to say, and are primed to see your suite. What a pleasure it becomes, dealing with the pre-qualified people only.

You may feel a bit uncomfortable at first, only talking with a small number of responses to your ad, however if they step up and rent the suite (or whatever action it is you are advertising for) you must remember that you have just saved yourself a ton of time and Time is Money in this business. And always ensure you do your Gross R.O.I. calculation!

As you progress through this process, you may add a third or fourth filter. Depending on what the purpose of your ad is, (attracting investors, vendors, buyers etc) you may wish to consider putting in a 'Special Report' as a part of your system, or how about a web-site. You can create your own funnel for each ad, testing the addition and subtraction of these components until you find the optimum results

To help you understand the proven formulas to writing classified ads for real estate investors, I have included the text of an interview that Australian real estate expert Steve McKnight did with me when I was recently training his investor clients in Australia. In this interview, you will discover the step-by-step system that you will use to develop your own Classified Ad Goldmines, each of which will provide a source of strength to your "Solid Oak" support called Classified Ads. You will want to read this next piece with a highlighter.

Marketing & Classified Ad Interview

with Don R. Campbell

By Australia's leading real estate expert Steve McKnight

1. What makes your marketing methods so effective?

Well, we only use strategies that we've proven with our own testing - and this has taken a lot of time and money to perfect. We've put our money where our mouth is! Marketing is not only an art form but also a detailed science. A science with proven formulas, unbreakable laws and unquestionable truths. Once you "crack" this code it is like you never have to worry about renters, buyers or motivated sellers again. The key is using these exercises and formulas to put your own signature on your ads..

2. Let's really get into it. My subscribers are all in real estate, what are your thoughts on the current advertising in that industry? What can your strategies do for them?

I apologize up front to people in that industry, but I must be brutally honest. The real estate market is one of the worst when it comes to effective marketing. In fact, I would be totally embarrassed with 90% of the real estate marketing that's out there. Generally, it seems that the current marketing is either "Image based" or based on "What's the least amount I can spend?" And this leads to what we call the big SO WHAT! Which equals a huge waste of money for the advertiser.

3. What do you mean by the big "So What?"

This is one of the strategies your subscribers are going to want to write down. Here's the deal: It's imperative that AFTER you write your marketing piece, you go through it line by line. After you read each headline, sentence or paragraph ask yourself if your reader can say "SO WHAT!" after it. If they can, get rid of it or re-write it.

Here's the reality of this strategy. Your marketing must be focused on THEM not yourself. What benefits are they going to receive etc. I'm sorry to say but your prospect doesn't care if you are a "Million Dollar Club Member", they don't care that you are the "salesman of the week", they don't even care whether your ad is new or old. All they care about is themselves. If you insist on putting in a lot of potential "SO WHAT" lines in any of your ads or marketing, you're going to lose their attention extremely fast! So Strategy Number One for your subscribers is to read their current ads and ask the big question SO WHAT!

4. That's a great tip, so in the real estate industry you're saying that a lot of the ads are a big SO WHAT. What does that do for my subscribers?

Well, because the marketing is so poor, and most people seem to be following a poor marketing strategy, your subscribers are in a fantastic position! In fact, it will be quite simple for your listeners to stand-out, even if they use only this one SO WHAT strategy. Stand-out, get noticed and be prepared to handle the calls professionally!

5. What do you recommend our subscribers do to get the best results?

Well, whether they're trying to rent or sell their investment property, the first and foremost thing subscribers should do is to look at their competitor's ads. Then the most effective thing they can do is "THE OPPOSITE" of what everyone else is doing. Now, we should let your subscribers know that this point is the first key to effective marketing: In order to have effective ads, they must "**Rise Above The Noise**"- make themselves stand out. I grant you, this is a simplified version of the strategy, but it is the foundation from which all the other strategies are built. In fact, this "Rise Above The Noise" strategy is something we discuss on an ongoing basis because it's that important.

6. Classified ads are where most of my subscribers will be placing their real estate ads. Do you have specific strategies you'd recommend for this?

Definitely! In fact, because of size and other limitations classified ads are **the toughest ads to make work**. We have cracked the code on these as well and would be glad to share some of our proven strategies your readers can start using right now. There are 4 key elements to making your classified ads work effectively. Some of these elements go directly against so-called conventional wisdom. But all of our tests prove if you

use only 2 or 3 of the elements then you'll only get 50% of the response you'd get if you used all four. So please be creative and use all four of the following key elements whenever possible!

7. O.K., let's get specific. Using a "house for rent" ad as an example, share with us your 4 key elements.

Gladly! Before we get started I must remind your subscribers to rip out a page of the publication they're going to advertise in... then review the competition's ads. Most of you will be using the local daily newspaper. Take a quick look at the ads - no matter what city or town you're in invariably the ads all look the same. Now you know exactly what NOT to do. So let's get right to what you need to do:

Classified Ad Key #1 is your ad MUST, MUST, MUST have a GOOD headline. Your headline is the ad for the ad. If you want people to read your ad give them a reason to!

8. When I call with my ads, the newspaper is always trying to sell me their special deals and sometimes say, "We think that ad sounds funny", is this what you mean?

YES! That's exactly what I mean. Remember, these newspaper reps filter the information based on what they think "may" be successful. But remember, they are not putting their money on the line, you are. Their job is to just sell ad space. If you end up following their 'recommendations' you'll get lost in a page of similar ads, and you end up looking like everyone else again... and that will guarantee you poor results.

We've tested and found that there are 4 things you must have in your classified ad headline.

- a. **It must be written in ALL BOLD but NOT All-Caps (all caps is harder to read)**
- b. You must not use any abbreviations in the headline
- c. **You must stand-out from other "headlines in the section" in other words don't listen to the person taking your classified details.**
- d. Use one of these two types of proven classified ad headline styles:
 - First one is an "Eye-Catcher" headline. For example "MUST RENT. GOING TO CUBA" (Everyone wants to read what that's all about!)
 - Second type of headline is a "Benefit Headline" "Finally A Place To Call Home". VERY effective, most renters don't just want a suite they want a "HOME." The people who don't want a "home" you probably don't want them as renters. This headline is a good first filter to weed out the people you don't want.

9. All right, now we've got the headline written what's next?

As you read other classifieds, you'll notice that they are very short and stilted and in fact they often need some interpretation. **Classified Ad Key #2 is "The Ad Must Address The Reader's Needs (Wants)"** What your subscriber's ad should do is make it easy on the reader. Here's how to do that:

- a. **Become Your Target market.** In this example, think back to when you were renting, what were you looking for in a home? Lots of storage, bright, clean, good location etc. Figure out what the reader wants and give it to them!
- b. **Use sentences and adjectives.** For example: Bright & newly renovated 2 bedroom unit. Private, quiet, family-oriented (use these types of words liberally). It costs a little more but in most cases with a properly written ad you can ask more than market rent and get it! So it is a small investment to make for a huge return.
- c. **Write As If You're Talking With One Person Not A Group.** Use the word 'YOU' right in the ad. For example "Enjoy your private fenced back-yard", or "You'll love the huge walk-in closet." This will make them draw a picture in their mind with themselves in your property, this is the first stage for "closing the sale." It also makes it easier for them to "sell it" to their spouse or partner. Make it easy for them!
- d. **Remember the newspaper has pre-screened your prospects.** Unlike many other forms of advertising, classified ads are very specific. You know, without question that the readers are looking for a rental property, in your specific area, the newspaper with their headings has already narrowed it down for you. So don't waste time (and money) giving them these obvious details. If the property is under the "North West Units/Condos for rent", there is no need to state 'N.W. unit' in the ad. And

you may not even need to put in the address if the area (in this example North West) is small or descriptive enough. That's what I love about classifieds, the newspaper filters my audience and all I have to do is give them what they're looking for! These readers have a "Burning Desire For Your Product" or they wouldn't be reading the section you placed your ad in.

10. Now that's a lot of info. When I started using those 4 steps they made a big difference in my classified ads. What is your classified ad key #3?

Well #3 is where we really "step-outside the box." **Classified Ad Key #3 is MAKE IT AS LONG AS IT NEEDS TO BE.** This step often sets some people's hair on end, because they've been taught that classified ads are supposed to be short. Well through all of our years of testing we have discovered that there is false economy in keeping the ad as short as possible. In other words it may be cheaper but more often than not it is money wasted. So make your ad stand-out! Make it as long as you need to tell your story from the reader's point of view.

But here's a critical point... make sure you write the ad TIGHT, not SHORT. And this is the toughest thing to do with small ads. Make sure every word counts! Another important point is to use the ads to boast about the BENEFITS of the property (not the features). Use adjectives BRIGHT kitchen, PRIVATE ensuite (this one is funny because who has ever heard of a NON-PRIVATE ensuite) Cool, landscaped back-yard. Your goal is to draw a picture in their mind's eye. Your classified ad is your one shot sales presentation, always be clear and sell the sizzle not the steak!

11. Now you said that you had 4 Classified Ad Keys. What is the Final One Our Readers Need To Pay Attention To?

This is the hidden secret I've only ever previously shared with my REIN™ Clients, so your readers are really getting a "secret gem" here. When I discovered this 4th key, it immediately increased the response to my classified ads by 40 to 50%! And I still don't see anyone else using it, which means your readers will have an immediate advantage over their competition. **The 4th Classified Ad Key is "You MUST leave them with a FEELING or EMOTION."** Now, talk about contrarian thinking. How many classified rental ads have you read that leave you feeling good? EXACTLY, it's just not done... until now!

How do we create this emotion? It really is quite an art, but here are the basic rules for renters or buyers. Remember there are a few key Emotions to focus on they are Love, pride, fear, guilt & greed (great for motivated vendors). I like to focus on the positive so my marketing always accentuates the positive aspects:

- a. Use words like HOME, COMFORT, ENJOY, RELAX
- b. Create A Picture In Their Mind of the AREA. "Only blocks from parks and bike paths"
- c. **Create A Picture In Their Mind Of Their New Lifestyle: "Warm Days On Your Private Deck - Warm Nights By Your Fireplace"**

The goal is to create a strong desire to live in this new lifestyle. So target your description at the type of people who you want to rent to.

12. Well, now our readers have everything they need to write killer classified ads... don't they?

There is one additional point your subscribers need to include in their ad and that is a CALL TO ACTION. Make it urgent that they call so they don't miss-out on this lifestyle. A good closing line goes something like "WON'T LAST AT ONLY \$595 Call BOB TODAY @ (their telephone number)" Put in a person's name, personalize it. Or to increase the response, use a pre-recorded message where you describe in great detail the property and all the "Hot Buttons." The line for this is "for more exciting details call the pre-recorded message (24 hrs) at 555-1212. These lines work all the time!

Thanks Don, what a wonderful opportunity my subscribers have now. The 4 proven strategies to making their classified ads effective and responsive. I just want to say that I, Steve, have been using Don's strategies for many years now with amazing results. The key is to test your ads until you find out what works best for you and your market. Not all ads will pull the results you want, but since I've used Don's strategies my results have been amazing!

Sample Classified Ads

These samples are designed to give you ideas on how YOU can best write your own ads and create amazing results. It is important to remember that it is not the quantity of calls you receive, but the quality of the prospects who call. Too many investors get caught up in a numbers game, trying to maximize the number of calls they receive... the ultra-successful investors focus on writing ads that pre-filter callers so as to save time, energy and money.

Use these below as templates and use the exercise below to create your own masterpiece. Make sure you follow the strategies as detailed in the Classified Ads Secrets Report available in the Insider's Reports section of the REIN Web sites.

Attracting Buyers for a current or future property

<p>Stop Before You Sign Another Rent Cheque</p> <p>FREE Special Report explains how you can make the jump from renter to home owner, even if you have poor credit. Call 555-1211 today for pre-recorded message</p>	<p>Attention Renters</p> <p>Discover how you can jump the hurdle from renting to home ownership. Pre-recorded message explains How to order your FREE Special Report call 24/hrs 1-888-888-8888</p>	<p>Stop Paying Rent</p> <p>If you have always dreamed of owning your own home rather than paying rent for the rest of your life, now's the time. Call for your FREE Special Report. Pre-recorded message 1-800-000-8000</p>
<p>Rent-To-Own</p> <p>No qualifying , immediate occupancy. 3 bedroom 2 bath immaculate home on private cul-de-sac with fenced yard. Only \$955/month Call Bob 555-1212</p>	<p>No Qualifying</p> <p>Owner Financing or rent-to-own. # nice homes to choose from. Free recorded list, call 555-1212 today</p>	<p>Having Trouble Qualifying?</p> <p>Beautiful 3 bedroom home available right now. No qualifying! FREE Recorded message gives details call 555-1212</p>

Attracting Buyers for a current or future property

List a buyer's hot buttons. Remember, in this exercise we are attracting buyers that require assistance in their purchase.

<p>List of Hot Buttons. Their Wants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 	<p>My Buyer's List Classified Ad</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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Sample Classified Ads

Attracting Motivated Vendors

Often these types of ads don't bring in a flood of telephone calls, but because they are so inexpensive, you don't need many calls to make the ads enormously profitable . These ads can be placed not just in the main newspapers but also the local cheaper papers. Here are some ideas, use the exercise below to develop your own

Any Condition	Consider it Sold!	No Commissions or Fees
New Company looking to buy houses in your area. Call Bob today @ 555-1212	I buy houses quickly with no hassles. Looking for 2 properties this month. Call Bob 555-1212	We'll buy your house, not sell it for you. You choose when you want to sell and we'll buy it from you. Call Bob 555-1212

Attracting Motivated Vendors

Motivated Vendors are tougher to attract through classified ads, however once you tap into the source, you will find a consistent List, and will be one of your many **Solid Oak** support legs. Remember, we are attracting vendors who don't want to list and are motivated to sell today.

List of Hot Buttons. Their Wants:	My Motivated Seller Classified Ad
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

Sample Classified Ads

Attracting Renters

Many investors rely solely on their classified ads to attract renters... well that can be a big mistake. Classified ads are a critical component but always ask, what else can I do? (That extra 10%!) The best results come from major broadsheet papers as well as the small town local papers. Run your ad to attract the types of people you want – use the ad as a filter. Less calls from a qualified renters is what you're looking for.

<p>Sleep With Me I'm a near new, Fully serviced 3 bedrm, 2 bath apartment. I can be yours for only \$798/month. Call 555-1212 for details on recorded message FREE DVD Player Owner Financing or rent-to-own. # nice homes to choose from. Free recorded list, call 555-1212 today</p>	<p>Finally a Place To Call Home Sit in the cool of your fully fenced back yard as you enjoy the sunset. Quiet, yet close to schools, shopping LRT. 3 bedrooms + den including private ensuite. Bright Clean lots of storage. Only \$740</p>	<p>FREE High Speed Internet Relax while your ceiling fan cools you off after a hard days work.. Newly renovated 2 bedroom suite feels like home when you walk in. Heat included with FREE Interent as a bonus. Only \$980/m Call Bob @ 444-5585</p>
<p>Call Me First No question, this newly renovated 3 bedroom suite is perfect, so you don't have to read the rest of the boring ads. Close to everything you need. All for only \$790/m Call Bob 555-1212</p>	<p>Secret Agent Returning To Motherland Comrade: due to crisis, I must rent the 1300 sq ft top floor of my NW residence. 3bdrm, 2 bath, 5 appliances. Renovated to tastes of diplomats. Only \$875. Must call by Friday 555-1212</p>	<p>\$10,000 Lottery Bonus! That's right, when you move into this suite you will receive a FREE Lottery ticket for every week you live here... for as long as you want! When you win it's all yours to keep! Newly renovated 3 bedroom home available right now only \$995. Call 555-1212</p>

Attracting Renters for a vacant suite

List an "equity building" tenant's hot buttons. Remember, in this exercise we are selecting only tenants that will increase the value of our property by treating it as if it was their home.

List of Hot Buttons. Their Wants:	My Classified Ad
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____