



Keller Williams Realty thrives in spite of tough market

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Published: August 25, 2008

At a time when other real estate companies are tightening their belts, Keller Williams Realty has taken a different tack.

And it's paying off.

"We've been in a very challenging marketplace for residential sales," says Kevin Chadwick, owner/operating principal of the company's South Tampa, Brandon, Plant City, Apollo Beach and Bloomingdale offices.

"But Keller Williams has taken the high road, and was recently named No. 1 in residential sales in Hillsborough County by the Kenst Report, a service which monitors sales data through the local multiple listing service.

"According to Kenst, Keller Williams has sold more homes through June '08 than any other real estate company in Hillsborough County. That's a real big deal, considering five years ago, people were saying, 'Keller Who?'

"We're very proud of that, especially in view of the recent real estate market."

What's been the reason for the company's success?

"Keller Williams continues to invest in its agents," says Chadwick, "and that's paying off in agent sales and company profits. When other companies have cut staff, reduced space and resources, Keller Williams has increased it."

Chadwick notes that while the number of real estate agents in the Greater Tampa Association of Realtors has decreased by about a third over the last 18 months, the number of agents in Keller Williams has increased by about the same number.

"Throughout the county, agent numbers are down," he says, "but Keller Williams is increasing its agent force. Not only is it increasing the number of agents it is hiring, it's making sure that those agents have access to the latest technology and tools available, and then encouraging those agents to learn to effectively use the technology so they can market their properties successfully and find the right property for the right buyer during a time when there are an unprecedented number of properties to choose from."

The company recently has opened three Keller Williams universities where agents can take

classes on the newest trends and adapt the latest tools to sell more homes in the current marketplace.

"We are fortunate to have two training directors, James Shaw in South Tampa and Lisa Spencer in Brandon, whose primary focus is on preparing our agents to be as effective as possible and to deliver the latest information to our agents so that they'll be at the top of their game," Chadwick says.

"Our company has been digging deep in its coffers to provide our agents with cutting-edge technology and the most current resources. It's stepped up the tools that agents need to compete and win in today's marketplace: technology, Internet marketing and agent specific training."

The company's own national listing service, KWLS, is another tool the its agents can use to market their homes, Chadwick says.

"The KWLS has ramped up and has become a remarkable tool for agents to use. They can access listings anywhere in the country, whether nationally, regionally or locally," he explains.

All of these things are paying off, Chadwick says.

"While market shares for other Tampa Bay area companies are dwindling, Keller Williams' share has doubled over the last three years," he says. "That's incredible, considering its market share was around 7 percent about three years ago and it's at 12.95 percent today, according to GTAR and the local MLS board. And that's about double from a time when real estate was in its heyday."

Chadwick is proud that Keller Williams is thriving at a time when the market is so tough.

"Across the country, real estate markets have unprecedented inventory levels as well as slowed sales. But Keller Williams is bucking tradition. Unlike other companies, it's seeing growth in numbers and profits.

"The company took a chance and it has paid off. And the real winners are the home buyers and sellers."

For information on Keller Williams Realty, call (813) 875-3700 or visit www.tampaagenttraining.com.

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