

## Top agent to give others maximum benefit of training Jeff Stern to serve as career mentor with independent real estate firm



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**Jeff Stern became one of Winnipeg's top realtors while at Re/Max. Now, he's passing his knowledge on to others at Maximum Realty.**

JEFF Stern estimates he's spent \$100,000 over his career on professional development. It's probably one of the things that has led him to the top of Winnipeg's real estate industry.

Now, he's passing that knowledge on to others.

You may remember Stern from a few years ago. He was the Re/Max agent I profiled who created a virtual office of sorts in the back of his car, taking his real estate business with him anywhere he went. Due to the ever-changing wonders of technology, he's now shrunk that office into his pocket, but he's still looking for ways to be innovative and seek out new opportunities.

Just before Christmas, Stern left his longtime position at Re/Max to join Maximum Realty Ltd. After years of being a top producer with Re/Max, the move made many people in the industry question what Stern was up to leaving a multinational real estate conglomerate to join a locally owned, independent company.

The reason was two-fold. First of all, Stern says he has a lot of respect for Michelle Wells, broker and president of Maximum Realty. In a relatively short time, Wells has grown the company from a small business with a few agents into the largest independent broker in Manitoba. With 64 agents, Maximum Realty is one of the largest real estate companies in the city, rivalling many of its internationally owned competitors. "Michelle is an amazing woman," says Stern. "She runs a good company and I have a lot of respect for her and her vision."

The other reason for leaving a satisfying position at Re/Max was to challenge himself, both personally and professionally. Wells offered Stern the opportunity to impart what he has learned in the real estate business to new recruits just joining the industry. In his proposed role as a career trainer, Stern would teach real estate agents how to operate a business successfully.

"Michelle wanted to educate agents and raise the bar," explains Stern. "I never looked at myself as a trainer, but the rest as they say is history."

This kind of training has never been done by a real estate company in the city, he points out. Despite his fears of the unknown, Stern took a personal risk leaving the comfortable nest at Re/Max to cross uncharted territory at Maximum Realty. He says he phoned his clients and hasn't looked back.

"I have the chance to groom agents that are new -- you can't beat an opportunity like this," he says.

Before they are passed on to Stern, the new recruits at Maximum Realty Ltd. have to first go through the real estate course and get their licence. Then they are Stern's protégés for about a year -- meeting with him every Monday morning for 11 months.

About a dozen people will be participating in the training sessions, which began last Monday. And it's not just all new recruits either. Some seasoned veterans of the real estate business are taking part in order to beef up their skills.

"My mission is to teach them what has worked for me," says Stern. "If I can do this, anybody can."

Stern is a repeat Medallion winner at the Winnipeg Real Estate Board, which places him in the top 10 or 12 per cent of real estate agents in the city. His business continues to grow each year. His \$100,000 estimate on career-development spending includes flying to numerous cities to attend seminars and conferences, buying books and training tapes and investing in his personal development. Despite his new role as trainer and mentor, Stern remains focused on his real estate career and committed to his clients. "My business is first and foremost," he says.

But he is excited and committed to sharing his experiences with others in the real estate field. "I want to share what I've done and what I've learned -- I want to teach them everything," says Stern. "There's more than enough work to go around."