

How to Shine in This Job Market

Originators can stand out among their peers when looking for the next opportunity

By Dave Chung

If you're a mortgage originator thinking about your career, the ever-changing job market and recent layoffs in the industry may leave you wondering: How can I enhance my personal brand at my current company? How can I make myself more valuable to employers? How can I stand out in an increasingly competitive job market when I am seeking a new opportunity?

With the right tools and strategies, originators can stand out from their peers. Homebuying is a process like no other, fraught with stress and excitement all at once. Getting through that process is no small feat — and mortgage originators play a pivotal role in ensuring success. The most successful originators invest time and effort to carefully evaluate each borrower's financial history to determine the best loan options. For this reason, mortgage companies seek out high-caliber, caring candidates to join their teams.

The job market may fluctuate along with the economy, but the right opportunity is out there for every mortgage originator, especially with demand expected to grow. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the market for loan officers is expected to grow by 11 percent between 2016 and 2026, contributing an additional 24,500 jobs.

Wondering how you can stand out as one of those sought-after candidates, as well as among your peers in the workplace? Followings are some tips, tools and strategies.

Empower and educate

A variety of tools exist that can make mortgage originators more effective in their roles, setting them apart from peers and making them more attractive to employers. Communications technology, for instance, can help them help connect with clients more efficiently.

More specialized tools, available through all credit-report resellers, can empower originators to get the best possible loan for their clients and better evaluate the person behind the numbers. These specialized mortgage software tools give savvy loan originators a leg up, helping them provide clients targeted advice so they can improve habits now and sustain positive credit behavior in the future.

Lenders and loan originators alike are in a unique position to educate clients, so naturally many companies want to ensure they employ the best and the brightest. Understanding credit scores is basic industry knowledge. Borrowers generally don't have the same level of understanding, however, nor do they know how to improve those scores.

Be a trusted adviser by educating your clients on how their actions now can affect their scores in the future. Even better, anticipating how credit can evolve over time shows industry acumen that employers actively seek.

These actions not only help you show value to your client, it also leaves clients better equipped to build credit and qualify for the best loans, so you can expand the pool of qualified borrowers and give consumers a pathway to access their dream home.

Relate and cultivate

While technology continues to transform the way mortgage professionals conduct business and connect with borrowers, it will never replace the value of human interaction. Many customers aren't sure where to start when it comes to the homebuying process or even in understanding their credit profiles.

Mortgage originators who exhibit the ability to relate to their clients and show them that their concerns and questions are being addressed are successful and get the most

referrals. In a service industry like this, performance rates are a strong indication of skill.

Acquire referral relationships with real estate agents and customers by demonstrating a service- and results-oriented approach. Real estate agents want to send their clients to originators who will go to bat for them and reliably get them a good loan — even when others can't or won't.

Helping a customer qualify or save money on their loan is a great way to encourage referrals. Originators should try to avoid falling into the trap of not making this a priority or not asking for referrals after helping a customer.

Network and socialize

Mortgage originators should take time to meet peers in the field, as well as build on previously established relationships. This means attending trade shows, networking mixers, casual industry gatherings and more.

Meaningful and professional interactions can lead to fruitful referrals in the future — for both clients and job opportunities — so don't miss the chance to reinforce existing relationships. Remember, despite the digital

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age, word-of-mouth is still one of the most powerful ways to look for a job and learn about tools and tips that can give you an advantage.

Social media is an ever-growing and ever-changing vehicle for communication, not just with people, but also with brands and companies. Originators can optimize their visibility during the job search by elevating social media pages. Many companies post job listings directly on their LinkedIn pages, so making sure your profile is up to date will help further showcase you as a buttoned-up professional.

Up-to-date headshots, work history, recommendations and endorsements from past colleagues and industry-related activity (including liking, commenting and sharing news) all increase the chances of landing that prime spot. While marketing yourself as the best fit for future employers is crucial, it's just as important to evaluate the hiring companies and ensure they are the best fit for you.

Mortgage originators should look into the companies they're interested in to get a sense of their culture and whether employees enjoy

the experience of working there. Does the prospective employer prioritize the clients' dreams of homeownership and see them as people, or does it only see clients relative to the company's bottom line?

Researching company values and seeing if they align with your own goes hand in hand with networking, so dig into your connections to see if you're familiar with someone who will share their perspective on working there. You also can check company-review sites like Glassdoor to learn more about a company's growth and to peruse employee reviews.



Despite the rise of online and mobile banking, many customers still want to work with mortgage originators in person, especially when making significant financial decisions, like purchasing a home. By following the above tips, you can prove to current and prospective employers that you have the ability to deliver results, putting you and your employer ahead of the competition as you make homeownership a reality for more people. ■