

Q. What causes you angst?

A. New ideas and implementation of our game plan tend to keep me up at night.

[ BY ELYSE UMLAUF-GARNEAU ]

> **STATS**

**J. Lennox Scott**

Chairman and CEO,  
John L. Scott Real Estate

Agents: 4,700

Offices: 141 in  
Washington, Oregon,  
and Idaho

Personal: Scott represents the third generation in the independent family company, which celebrated its 75th anniversary last year.

Pet Peeve: None.

Is there anything about the industry as a whole that causes you angst?

Right now, our value of service is being questioned. But professional sales associates have a great future. The key is to be trusted advisors and continually enhance competency with education and technology.

Are you concerned about being able to properly serve Gen Y clients?

I don't see a challenge. We're hiring Gen Y agents, we're up on technology, and we keep investing in our Web site. We have a high commitment to serving Gen Y.

Your firm celebrated its 75th anniversary recently. What are your plans for the firm's future?

Our approach is to live forward. We start making changes *today* for what we anticipate will happen years from now. So it's not a light switch, but a dimmer switch that keeps getting brighter. For

instance, we've been anticipating serving Gen Y for four years and now we're evolving into it.

What are some of the technology innovations that your company is considering?

We've been going through an evolution in the Internet world. We're on version 12.2 on our Web site, meaning we're at 12 years, two months. The next step is looking at applications, refinements, and improvements. The equipment, software, and bandwidth just keep getting better.

Because of that, we're surrounding each property with information on topics like taxes, community information, and schools. We just started including comparable sold home information. It's a quick indicator that consumers want to know. Before, you had to link off to different places for all of that, but now it's one stop. These options will continually improve with time.

Another development is online videos. Eventually, it's going to *Continued on page 29*



## Bookmarks

Continued from page 5

Cornell Food and Brand Lab, discusses why we overeat and how his findings are used by restaurants, food companies, and supermarkets to sell their wares.

### ■ **The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century**

By Thomas L. Friedman

"It's one of my favorites," Combs says. "I glance at it now and then to ground myself in the future of the country. The book looks at the world and how technology has flattened it. Everyone should read it. *Blink* and *The Tipping Point* (by Malcolm Gladwell) all go hand-in-hand with the future. We're heading toward a new world economy, and all of those books point to that."

### > **Zig Ziglar**

Author, salesperson, and motivational speaker

Many REALTORS®' bookshelves and cars contain Zig Ziglar's books and tapes. Ziglar, who was born on an Alabama farm more than 80 years ago, has written 26 books that focus on personal growth, leadership, sales, faith, family, and success. What is Ziglar reading for inspiration?



### ■ **The Way of the Shepherd**

By Kevin Leman and William Pentak

This inspirational book shares allegorical stories about the ancient secrets of the shepherd that offer a new perspective on leadership and management. "It's a powerful book and an easy read," Ziglar says. "I bought a copy for every member of my family."

### ■ **How Full Is Your Bucket?**

By Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton, Ph.D.

Positive psychology is praised in this best-seller that advocates encouragement as a motivational tool.

### ■ **The Light and the Glory: Did God Have a Plan for America?**

By Peter Marshall and David Manuel

"This is one of my favorites," Ziglar says. "For 100 years, more than 90 percent of our educational thrust was of a religious, moral, and ethical nature. Today, we are teaching relativity. Everything's relative. But God's possibles are greater than man's permissibles." ♦

Dinah Eng is a Los Angeles-based freelance writer.

## Corner Office/J. Lennox Scott

Continued from page 10

be video everything—full videos of neighborhoods and houses and instructional videos.

Another evolution will be the notion "Evernet," meaning up-to-date information will be available anytime, anywhere. With equipment in the field advancing, that means brokers and clients will have instant, current information all the time.

### What about issues or trends outside of technology?

One of the biggest is the shortage of affordable housing. We're right on the cusp of the echo boom generation or Gen Y. They were born between 1982 and 1995 and there are 75 million of them. They'll soon become first-time buyers. But we don't have housing for them in affordable price ranges, meaning under the median price. In our state, we're alerting the public about it and talking to state legislators about solutions.

### Recently, the Northwest Multiple Listing Service (MLS) stopped automatically feeding listings to REALTOR.COM®. What are your thoughts on this move?

REALTOR.COM® is a fantastic national marketing overlay. We're still putting our listings there and we see high value in it. The issue isn't about REALTOR.COM®, but we just don't view the MLS as an advertising consortium. It's not the choice of the MLS to send listings, but the brokers' choice to do what they wish.

### You've been a pretty vocal opponent of third-party aggregators.

We need to put it in perspective. The majority of our business is relationship-based, such as knowing people directly, past business, and referrals. Another portion of our business is driven by business development—open houses, advertising, the Internet, the office location, and so forth. Only a sliver comes from third-party online sources. The bigger point is that we already reach virtually 100 percent of all buyers in the marketplace through our own Web site and advertising efforts. We consider those other companies to simply be intermediaries. But it can be hard for our clients to understand why we don't post our listings in every possible place. The answer is: We don't need to.

### What are your thoughts on a national MLS?

The important thing to remember is that MLS membership is local with local relationships, customs, and governmental affairs. That won't change. However, creating a national MLS could be an enhancement to our current system because it provides one overall data source. This could save money and be more convenient for brokers. We currently have regional MLSs that are already covering multiple states, so we're heading in that direction as technology allows for it. It's an evolution.

### Your company has been an independent family business for 75 years. Do you expect that it will continue to the next generation?

That's my vision and dream, but I'm going to let my two daughters decide. My job as a dad is to help them find their own identity. I'm hopeful that one or both will come into the business. They get involved with the company at foundation events and conventions. When I grew up, my dad brought me to similar events and it sparked something in me.

### Did you ever want to do something else, or was it a foregone conclusion that you'd join the business?

If you consider that in elementary school I painted real estate signs and did lawn work for corporate houses, worked at a title company in high school, and wrote all my college term papers on real estate, you might think I was heading this way.

### Your foundation, the John L. Scott Foundation, is active in donating time and funds to children's hospitals in the Pacific Northwest. Why have you made philanthropy a priority?

One of the joys of living life is making contributions to others. This is our eleventh year being involved with children's hospitals, and in 2006 we helped raise nearly \$10 million for them. One ethos of our company is the importance of living life with purpose and passion. We experience that when we get involved with the hospitals. We were recently at Ronald McDonald House, where we cook dinner once a week. You get to interact with these kids and families, and it's great to be part of the community team surrounding them and helping them get through the tough times. We see their spirit and it's great to imagine what possibilities are ahead for them once they get past their crisis. ♦

Elyse Umlauf-Garneau is a Chicago-based freelance real estate writer.