REAL PROPERTY AGREEMENT FORM DTD-01

~~STANDARD PURCHASE CONTRACT~~

THIS IS **NOT** A STANDARD DEAL

DOMINATE THE DEAL

The Real Estate Deal Maker's Playbook

The undersigned agrees to find houses nobody else knows are for sale, buy them **for pennies on the dollar** with other people's money, and get paid five different ways for keeping the good ones.

Jesse Wright

JESSE WRIGHT — AUTHOR, INVESTOR

X

THE READER — FUTURE DEAL MAKER

INTRODUCTION

The Problem, The Promise, and The Path

Let me make you a promise.

By the time you finish this book, you will know exactly how to make money in real estate — even if you're starting with almost nothing, even if you're working a full-time job, and even if you're convinced that you showed up to this party fifteen years too late. I'm going to walk you through a clear, repeatable plan that can replace your W2 income (if that's what you want), and build lasting, generational wealth along the way — the kind of wealth your grandchildren will still be arguing about someday.

I also promise we're going to move fast, because I remember what survival mode feels like. When you're fighting to pay the bills, keep food on the table, and hold everything together, nobody hands you a month's worth of vacation days to go learn a new business. You've probably already noticed the cruel math of it: if you spend your time working, you have no time to grow, and if you stop to grow, you fall behind on the earning. Most people live inside that trap their entire lives.

That trap is exactly why I wrote this book. What I'm handing you is a shortcut built from real-world experience, hard-won lessons, and actual deals I've done myself, with my own money, in my own market. As we go, I'll walk you through those deals with the real numbers attached. Some of these stories make me look smart, and others make me look just plain dumb. Spoiler alert: the dumb ones are the fun ones — and they may or may not involve squatters, a real brawl or two, and one situation that came a little too close to a Mexican standoff for most folks' comfort.

How I Got Hooked

In 2013, I was twenty-three years old with $10,000 in the bank — finally debt free after paying off my car and a few lingering bills. It wasn't much, but it was enough to keep me up at night with one question: how do I make this money grow?

Foreclosures were everywhere back then. I found a property listed for $20,000 and negotiated it down to half that price. I bought it, fixed it up with the help of my family, and placed my very first tenant.

Then the rent checks started coming in, and I was ruined for ordinary life forever.

I wish I could tell you I quit my job the next morning and never looked back, but that isn't what happened. For my first five years, I moved slow. I bought my second property in 2014 and my third in 2015, all while working regular jobs, collecting the rent, and letting the idea of a different kind of life sink its hooks in a little deeper every month. Then came two years where I didn't buy anything at all.

In 2018, I bought my fourth property, and that was the year everything changed. I couldn't stand the idea of working for anyone else ever again, so I finally jumped in with everything I had — and after that, I was off to the races. I started flipping houses and wholesaling deals, and I bought everything I could get my hands on. Some properties I kept as rentals, some I flipped, and sometimes I sold the opportunity itself to another investor and let them do the work. Eventually I built a business selling turnkey properties — fully rehabbed, tenant-occupied, professionally managed — to investors who wanted the returns without the grind. After I sold my first few turnkey rentals and closed my first few wholesale deals, my mom and stepdad joined me in the business, and they're still my partners in the turnkey rental business today. I've been living and breathing this business every single day since.

I'm telling you all of this for two reasons. First, everything you're about to read has been paid for: every lesson in this book cost me money, time, or sleep before it became a lesson, and you get it for the price of a book. Second, if you're working a full-time job right now, remember that I bought my first three properties while working mine. You can start this business from exactly where you're standing.

Why Most People Never Start

After thirteen years of doing this — and years of watching other people try — I can tell you the truth about what actually holds beginners back: a lack of action. Most people already know more than enough to start.

Most people tell themselves they need one more piece of information before they're ready. One more book, one more video, one more weekend seminar. Years go by while they "get ready." What they're actually doing is hiding from the fear of the unknown, and the information is the hiding place.

The second obstacle is time, and I take that one seriously. You cannot learn and earn at the same time if the learning is bloated with filler. That's why this book is as simple and direct as I could make it. I'm going to show you only what you need to know to take action and start seeing results, and I'm going to trust you to go do it.

Why Most Advice Fails

You've probably heard the standard prescriptions: "look for rentals that hit the 1% rule," or "save up until you can buy a house with cash." That advice worked fifteen years ago. In today's economy, with interest rates higher than they've been in years and inflation doing far more damage than the experts like to admit, that advice will quietly bankrupt your future while allowing you to feel responsible the whole time.

Let me show you the math they never put on the brochure.

We've all heard people like Dave Ramsey talk about mutual funds returning 12% a year. On paper that sounds like a win. Invest faithfully for forty years, watch it compound to $2.5 million, retire victorious. Now zoom out. In 1980, the average home in America cost $76,400. By 2020, that same average home cost $374,500 — nearly five times more. If that trend continues, and it likely will, your $2.5 million won't feel like $2.5 million when you finally get to touch it. It will feel like $250,000 to $500,000 in today's dollars.

That's a decent chunk of change, but it falls far short of a changed life. Forty years of discipline for a participation trophy is a bad trade when what you actually wanted was to retire early, travel the world, and leave a legacy for your children. If you want to retire well — and retire young — you need massive growth, because moderate returns will leave you right where that math says: behind.

That is where my method of real estate investing comes in. You need a constant flow of deals that hand you one of two things: ongoing, increasing returns through the five income streams that come from holding real estate (I'll break those down in a moment), or big chunks of short-term cash through flips and wholesale deals when the immediate boost is worth trading the long-term benefits for.

You're not hunting average deals. You're hunting the kind that jump your net worth by tens of thousands of dollars at a time. If you're earning 8–10% in today's economy, you are actually losing ground, because inflation is a silent force grinding down the real value of your savings every single year, however abstract it sounds on the news. If your money isn't growing faster than inflation, it's shrinking, no matter what the account statement says.

This book is your roadmap to those deals. I'll show you how to find them, how to fund them, and how to flip them when that's the right move. More importantly, I'll show you how to build lasting wealth by holding the ones that keep paying you month after month, year after year.

The Real Solution: Make Money by Holding AND Flipping

There are really only two basic moves in this business. You can HOLD a property, which means you buy it, rent it out, and keep it for years while it pays you. Or you can FLIP it, which means you turn it into a pile of cash quickly and move on to the next one. Every strategy in this book is a version of one of those two moves, and the best investors use both.

Holding is where the real wealth gets built, so let's start there. When you buy the right rental property, you get paid five different ways at the same time, and most people have only ever heard of one of them:

- **Short-Term Equity Capture.** Equity is the gap between what a property is worth and what you paid for it, and "capturing" it means buying at a discount. Think of buying a $100 gift card for $60: the moment you hand over the $60, you're $40 ahead, even though you haven't done anything else yet. I'm going to teach you to buy houses the same way, for less than they're worth, so you've already made money on the day you get the keys.
- **Cashflow.** Every month, rent comes in and the property's bills go out: the loan payment, the taxes, the insurance, the repairs. Whatever is left over is called cashflow, and it lands in your pocket whether you worked that month or spent it fishing. This is the money that eventually replaces your paycheck.
- **Tax Savings.** The government wants somebody providing rental housing, so the tax code rewards the people who do it. Depreciation (a deduction you get every single year just for owning the building) and 1031 exchanges (a legal way to sell a

property and roll the profit into the next one without paying tax on it yet) let you keep far more of what you make than a paycheck ever will.

- **Appreciation.** Houses get more valuable over time. Remember the numbers from a few pages ago: the average American home went from $76,400 in 1980 to $374,500 in 2020. When you own houses, that rising tide is lifting YOUR boats. It isn't guaranteed year to year, but over a decade or two it quietly stacks your net worth while you do nothing at all.
- **Principal Paydown.** A chunk of every rent check goes toward paying off your mortgage. In plain English, your tenant is buying the house for you, one month at a time. Stay in the game long enough and you own it free and clear, and somebody else made most of the payments.

Now let me show you all five stacked together in one real deal from my own portfolio, with the actual numbers.

I bought two run-down houses, one for $25,000 and one for $60,000, and spent about $50,000 fixing them up. Add that up and I was "all in" for $135,000. When the work was done, the bank sent out an appraiser — the person whose job is to put an official value on a property — and he valued the pair at $292,000. The bank agreed to lend me 75% of that value, which is a routine loan on rental property. Seventy-five percent of $292,000 is $219,000. So the bank handed me $219,000, I paid myself back the $135,000 the whole project had cost me, and I kept the extra $84,000. And because borrowed money doesn't count as income, I didn't owe a dime of taxes on any of it.

Read that paragraph again, because it's the whole thesis of this book in one deal. I got every dollar I'd spent back out, I put $84,000 of tax-free cash in my pocket, and I still owned both houses. The rent keeps paying me every month, the tenants keep shrinking the loan, the depreciation keeps shrinking my tax bill, and as values rise, my net worth rises with them. That is what I want for you.

Flipping is the other move, and it's how you build up cash fast. The simplest version is called wholesaling: you find a great deal and sign a contract to buy the property at a great price. Then, instead of buying it yourself, you sell that contract to another investor for a fee. You are getting paid for being the person who found the deal, without ever owning the house or swinging a hammer, and those fees run anywhere from $5,000 to $100,000 or more depending on the deal and how well you negotiate. Most real estate investors would say wholesaling belongs in its own category, and that "flipping" only means houses. I'm filing it under flipping for simplicity's sake, because that is truthfully what you're doing — you're flipping paper instead of property. The classic flip is the one you've seen on TV: buy low, renovate smart, and sell high, sometimes within a few months.

And the best part is that you don't have to pick a lane. I'm going to show you how to build one system that feeds all three strategies — holding, flipping, and wholesaling — so every lead that comes your way gets turned into whichever kind of profit fits your situation at the time.

What This Book Will Teach You

Whether you want to flip houses, build a rental empire, or retire early on passive income, this book will show you how, step by step.

We'll start with where to look and how to build your deal pipeline, which is the heartbeat of your entire real estate business. From there, I'll show you how to market like a professional, analyze deals with total confidence, and negotiate offers that get accepted. Then we'll get into money: how to fund and close deals even if all you've got is a credit card — or nothing at all. And finally, I'll hand you the exact strategies I've used to build long-term wealth for myself, my investors, and my coaching students. Near the end, I'll also show you how to use AI agents to take on the more difficult parts of this business — the admin, the follow-up, and the paperwork that wear most real estate professionals down.

Each chapter moves you one step closer to financial freedom, and each one ends with something concrete you can go do the same day you read it. (When you're ready to put this book to work, the current version of my direct mail letter — along with links to every tool I name in these pages — lives free at **dominatethedeal.com/toolkit**.)

You're holding a playbook, not a textbook, and you're about to become the deal maker.

Let me show you how.

CHAPTER ONE

Where to Look

Let's get one thing straight before we go anywhere: you can do this.

Your biggest enemies in this business are fear of the unknown and the limiting beliefs you've been dragging around, and both of them outrank money and time by a mile. So throw them out the window, drink the Kool-Aid, work the system, and watch your numbers grow.

I can say that with a straight face because incredible deals exist right now, today, in your market. You won't find them by doing what everyone else is doing, though. Let me show you what everyone else is doing, and then let me show you why that way is wrong.

Why Direct-to-Seller Is the Golden Path

Imagine two auctions.

At the first auction, entry is free, and there are hundreds of properties up for grabs. There are also thousands of people in the room bidding on them. It's chaos, and your chances of walking away with a great deal are slim, because every property gets fought over by a crowd of hungry and sometimes desperate buyers.

That first auction is the MLS. If you're new to the term, the MLS — the Multiple Listing Service — is the giant database of homes for sale that real estate agents use. It's what feeds the listings you scroll past on Zillow. When people say a house is "on the market," they mean it's in that room, and the entire world has been invited to come bid on it. Everyone is fishing in the same pond.

Now picture the second auction. Getting through the door costs $2,000 to $10,000, so only a handful of bidders bother to show up. Inside, the deals are real, the prices are amazing, and the sellers are extremely motivated. Many of them are facing hard deadlines, and if they can't sell fast, they could lose everything.

That second auction is direct-to-seller marketing: reaching people who need to sell before their house ever shows up on the open market. The entry fee is your marketing budget, and it's the best money you will ever spend, because the second auction is where the life-changing deals get made. That's the room I want you in.

Most investors spend their whole careers playing the MLS game, or they sit around waiting for wholesalers — the deal-finders you met in the introduction, the people flipping paper — to feed them scraps. The real wealth builders go straight to the source. They find motivated sellers who need help NOW, before anyone else even knows the property is available. That's how you win.

This book will walk you through a whole menu of marketing strategies, from high-tech systems to grassroots networking, and in the next chapter we'll assemble them into a machine. To get you moving today, I want to hand you my two personal favorites first: one that has fueled some of my biggest wins, and one that costs nothing but your time.

My Two Go-To Methods (We'll Cover More Later)

1. Direct Mail (Pay to Play — but Worth It)

Direct mail is my bread and butter. A letter landing in the right mailbox is how I've caught some of my biggest wins, and I still get calls today from the very first letter campaign I ever sent. Yes, it costs money. I didn't start with a massive budget, and you don't need one either. What you need is to know who to mail and how to stand out.

Done right, direct mail is precision work. You send the right message to the right people — motivated sellers who need a solution to a painful problem — and when your letter lands in front of that person, they actually read it, they call you, and sometimes they thank you for sending it.

Every dollar you spend on direct mail is you paying the entry fee to that second auction, the room with fewer bidders and more motivated sellers.

2. Facebook Marketplace and Local REI Groups (Completely Free)

This one surprises a lot of people. As I write this chapter, I am going under contract on a property I found on Facebook Marketplace for around 40 cents on the dollar — in plain English, I'm paying about 40 cents for every dollar that property is actually worth.

I check Facebook Marketplace and my local real estate investing groups every single day. People post off-market leads (houses you can buy that were never listed on the MLS), problem properties, and distressed sales in those groups constantly. Most investors never set aside daily time to scan for them, and that's a mistake I am happy to keep profiting from. I reach out to every single one of those sellers.

With a little consistency and hustle, you can start finding and negotiating solid deals in a matter of weeks. Show up daily and do the work, and opportunities will surface faster than you expect.

So you now have two strategies you can start using today. Even the best tactics will die, though, if your mindset kills the deal first, and most deals fall apart in the investor's head long before they ever reach a negotiation. That's why, before we unpack the exact step-by-step of direct marketing, we need to talk briefly about how to think like a deal maker: how to handle rejection, build confidence, and stay consistent when results don't come overnight.

The Mindset You Need to Win

Deal makers think differently, and the first shift is this one: sellers do not think like you.

You may believe that nobody on earth would ever sell a house dirt cheap. The sellers you'll be talking to are living a different story. They're going through divorces. They've inherited houses they never wanted and can't maintain. They're staring at repair bills they can't afford, or at demolition notices from the city. What they need is a lifeline, and to someone drowning, a lifeline is worth more than top dollar.

Here's a true story from my own business. I once bought a house from a woman whose home was scheduled to be demolished by the city, and the cruel part is that she was going to be billed $10,000 for the teardown of her own house. Other investors had offered her $5,000 or $7,000 and then ghosted her. I offered $10,000 and closed fast, which left her $20,000 better off than if I had never shown up — the $10,000 I paid her plus the $10,000 demolition bill she never had to pay.

After the sale, she told me no one else had been willing to help, and she thanked me for being real and being there when she needed someone. I put $30,000 into the property, rented it for $1,100 a month, and it appraised at $82,000. She won, and I won. That is exactly what this business looks like when it's done right.

The second shift is that you have to believe this works, and that it works for you specifically. Thousands of ordinary people, me included, have done exactly what you're setting out to do, and every one of us started as a beginner. The requirements are showing up, staying consistent, and following the steps. (Installing this mindset is the first thing I work on with my coaching students, because no tactic can save a deal that dies in your own head.)

Mindset Shifts That Make a Deal Maker

- **You can do this.** Fear of the unknown and limiting beliefs are the only enemies that matter. Throw them out the window, work the system, and watch your numbers grow.
- **You're solving problems, not buying houses.** The seller's problem is your opportunity, and you're there to help.
- **Sellers are not you.** Assume their values, fears, and motivations match yours, and it will cost you money.
- **Rejection is normal, and volume wins.** This is a numbers game: the more lines you cast, the more deals you catch.

Ready to Start Looking?

Now you know the truth about where deals come from: great deals are created — through smart marketing, consistent action, and the right mindset — far more often than they're found. You don't need anyone's permission, and you don't need years of experience. A willingness to start and a strategy to follow are enough, and you now have both.

Here's your assignment, and you can finish it before you go to bed tonight: open Facebook, join two or three real estate investing groups in your area, and spend fifteen minutes scanning Marketplace for problem properties. That's the exact daily habit that regularly puts 40-cents-on-the-dollar deals under contract for me.

In the next chapter, I'll show you how to turn that spark into a system: a repeatable, reliable marketing machine that puts off-market opportunities in front of you every single week, so the deals start coming to you instead of you chasing the deals. Let's go build it.

CHAPTER TWO

Build Your Marketing Machine

If you want great deals coming to you consistently, motivation won't be enough. You need a machine — a repeatable, reliable marketing engine that runs even when you don't. While you're sleeping, sitting at your day job, or on vacation with your family, the deals should still be working their way toward you.

This chapter is the blueprint, and everything in it has been proven with my own money, in my own market. If you implement even a fraction of what you learn here, you will see results.

One quick definition before we start, because I'm going to use this word a hundred times: a lead is a potential deal — a seller who might sell, plus the information you need to reach them. Marketing is the business of making your phone ring with leads. Now let's break down the tools, the tactics, and the timing that will turn you into a lead-generating machine.

Choosing the Right Marketing Channel

When you're starting out, the sheer number of strategies can drown you. Should you cold call? Send letters? Build a website? Post on Facebook? Pay for leads? Drive around looking for ugly houses? Relax. Here's how I want you to think about it.

Start with whatever gives you the best shot at volume, based on your time, your budget, and your comfort level. There is no one-size-fits-all answer here. Some methods are free but eat your time, and others cost money but scale beautifully. Your goal is to pick one or two — ideally one free method and one paid method — go deep, and stay consistent. Over time, you'll end up using most or all of the methods in this chapter.

We'll cover the full range, starting with the most powerful and working our way down, and I'll tell you exactly what I use personally and why.

Direct Mail (My #1 Lead Generator)

If you're serious about making money in real estate, master direct mail. Sending physical letters to homeowners might sound old-school, but it remains the single most effective way to generate motivated seller leads consistently and at scale.

Direct mail lets you reach thousands of property owners in a non-intrusive way, speak directly to their pain points, and set the stage to be the only investor they're talking to. A well-written letter, delivered at the right moment, starts every conversation warm: the seller read your words, decided you sounded trustworthy, and picked up the phone on their own terms.

I've made millions of dollars through direct mail, and to this day I'm still getting phone calls from the very first campaign I ever ran. Done right, direct mail is like planting seeds. Some deals sprout right away, others take weeks or even months, but if you stay consistent, you'll build a harvest you can count on.

List Building and Stacking with DealMachine

Leads are not created equal, and the key to successful direct mail is targeting the right people. That starts with your list — literally a spreadsheet of property owners' names and addresses, chosen because those owners have a genuine reason to sell. The people you want to reach look like this:

- They're behind on their property taxes.
- Their house is falling apart.
- They live out of state, far away from the property (investors call these "absentee owners").
- They're facing foreclosure.
- They inherited a property they don't want.

Every one of those is a distress signal, and the more distress signals an owner shows, the more motivated a seller they're likely to be. That's why I use a strategy called list stacking.

I pull multiple types of lists from DealMachine, a lead-sourcing tool built for investors: the tax lien list (owners behind on taxes), the absentee owner list, the pre-foreclosure list, and more. Then I "stack" them, meaning I cross-reference the lists to see which owners appear on more than one. If somebody shows up on the tax lien list, the pre-foreclosure list, AND the absentee owner list all at once, that is a person you want to reach this week.

One list worth a special note is the code violation list — owners the city has cited for problems with the property. That one is the rare list DealMachine doesn't carry well. A tool called PropStream does carry it, and does it well, but PropStream doesn't currently support AI agents very well. So here is how I handle it: I pull the code violations directly from the city or county — most municipalities keep that list public — and then stack it against my DealMachine lists.

These days, an AI agent can do all of the stacking for you. It can pull the lists straight out of DealMachine — of every tool I've used, it's the easiest for an agent to pull lists from — grab the code violation list from your city or county, cross-reference everything, score every owner by how many lists they show up on, and hand you the names to reach this week. You never have to open a spreadsheet. We'll talk more about that in Chapter 16.

Track Every Campaign

Dan Kennedy, one of the world's greatest direct-response marketers, put it this way: "If you don't track your results, you're not marketing. You're gambling."

Every marketing campaign must be measurable. That's why I assign a unique phone number to every list I mail, using tools like CallRail or smrtPhone. Each number forwards to my cell, calls are recorded where that's legal, and the number that rings tells me exactly which list generated the call. That means I can calculate my response rate and my ROI — return on investment, the profit measured against what the campaign cost me — and I can test which letters, headlines, and envelopes perform best.

When you know what works, you scale it. When you know what doesn't, you stop paying for it. That is how you grow with confidence, and that is how you win.

Podio: A Home for Your Leads

Once the calls start coming in, you need a system to stay organized, because deals get lost over something as dumb as a forgotten follow-up call. The tool for this is called a CRM — customer relationship management software, which is a fancy name for a smart filing cabinet that holds your leads. I use one called Podio. Every lead gets logged, every conversation gets tracked, every follow-up gets a reminder, and every note about the seller's motivation and the property's condition lives in one place.

Your setup doesn't need to be complicated, but you absolutely need a place to manage your leads. Podio is what works for me. Besides being completely customizable, it works especially well with the AI agents I've built for my business. If you aren't familiar with AI agents, you can think of them as a staff that works for their owners around the clock and never forgets anything. They have the ability to scan my entire CRM and keep me updated on who needs a follow-up and when. They can also add information to it or pull information out of it at any time, and then do whatever I need done with those documents: build a rent ledger, find a lease, draft the email. We'll get into all of that in Chapter 16.

Direct Mail Psychology

Great direct mail follows a psychological sequence that guides your reader from curiosity all the way to picking up the phone. The framework I use — the same one most successful direct-response marketers use — is called AIDA:

- **A = Attention**
- **I = Interest**
- **D = Desire**
- **A = Action**

First, you grab their attention, usually with the envelope itself: a handwritten address and a real stamp spark curiosity, and that curiosity keeps your letter out of the trash long enough to get opened. Next, your opening line builds interest by telling them immediately why you're writing and why it matters to them. From there, you build desire: who you are, how you can help, and why they should trust you over the next person. Finally, you give a clear call to action — call me today, or hang onto this letter until you're ready.

Every sentence in your letter has exactly one job: get them to read the next sentence.

Before the tactics, picture something with me. You're walking back to your front door with a stack of mail in your hand — bills, credit card offers, flyers — and you sort it on autopilot. Within a few seconds you've decided what's worth opening and what goes straight in the trash. Most of us make that call in milliseconds. Now think about the letters you do open. They're the ones that look personal or important. That's exactly the reaction we want your mail to trigger in a seller: the moment your letter hits their hand, they should pause and wonder, "Who is this from?" That flicker of hesitation is all you need, because once the envelope is open, the letter can do its job.

Here's how I apply those principles to real estate marketing:

- **Hand-address your envelopes.** When someone sees a personal envelope with real handwriting that indents the paper and a first-class stamp, it triggers something familiar: this might be from someone I know. That flicker of curiosity keeps your letter out of the trash. Fake handwriting fonts printed on the envelope will backfire — people can smell an envelope pretending to be something it isn't, and the moment they do, it's gone. If you can't handwrite them yourself, hire it out. I pay stay-at-home moms to hand-address, stamp, and stuff my envelopes, which normally runs me about fifty cents per envelope, and the response rate makes it worth every penny. Handwritten letters are, hands down, the number one marketing tool for earning attention and trust. And if a hand-addressed campaign sounds daunting, know that the envelopes are the only part that has to be done by hand. Almost everything else — matching each letter to the right name and property address from your list, personalizing the whole batch, and getting it ready to print — is exactly the kind of work an AI agent can handle for you in a few minutes.
- **Use the right stamps.** Purple Heart stamps are my favorite, because they look personal. They're Forever stamps, which means they cost the same as any other first-class stamp — 82 cents apiece as I write this in 2026 — and they never expire, no matter how much rates rise after you buy them. The flag-style first-class stamps look strikingly similar to the stamps used on presorted junk mail, and in the mind of a busy seller, those stamps scream "this is junk." Go with the Purple Heart. It stands out, it feels personal, and it will never be mistaken for a used-car-dealership letter.
- **Use #10 envelopes.** That's the standard business envelope, the size people associate with personal or important mail.

Square and colorful “birthday card” envelopes read as promotional junk in disguise — unless it’s actually their birthday, people assume a bright envelope is a gimmick and toss it. You want your mail to feel important, so stick with the #10.

- **Grab attention in the first line.** I open with “Are you interested in selling your house at [address]?” and then immediately introduce myself.
- **Position yourself as small and local.** Sellers want to talk to someone like them — a real person, a neighbor who understands their situation and their neighborhood — instead of a faceless national chain. When you present yourself as approachable, human, and local, you build an instant bridge of trust. This is one of the most overlooked secrets in real estate marketing: the more real you are, the more people want to work with you.
- **Tell them to save the letter.** Most sellers won’t be ready the day your letter arrives, and that’s fine, because some of the most profitable deals I’ve ever done came from people who called me YEARS after receiving a letter. Why did they still have it? Because I told them to keep it. Near the end of every letter, I include a line like: “If now isn’t the right time, just hang onto this letter and call me when it is.” That one sentence gives the seller permission to pause and a reason to keep your contact information. People have told me they clipped my letter to the fridge or kept it in a drawer, and one caller had found a letter their late spouse had saved in a nightstand. The letter you send today could be the deal you close a year from now. That’s the long game, and it’s why you always ask them to save your letter.
- **Always include a P.S. that adds value.** Mine usually says something like: “I like to network with as many investors as possible, so even if you aren’t interested in selling, feel free to give me a call anytime. I’m pretty plugged in to the [my city] network, and I’d be happy to refer contractors, property management, and so on if you ever need anything like that.” That small addition does two powerful things. It shows you’re some-

one with genuine connections who wants to help, and that kind of goodwill goes a long way in this business. It also gives the reader one more reason to save your letter, and I've had countless people call me months or years later for this exact reason.

If you want to go deeper on direct mail in general, the two books I recommend most are Dan Kennedy's *No B.S. Direct Marketing* and *The Ultimate Sales Letter*. And if you want a copy of the exact letter I use for most of my campaigns, it's in the free toolkit at **dominatethedeal.com/toolkit**.

Postcards (Why I No Longer Recommend Them)

You're going to hear plenty of investors and gurus push postcard campaigns. The appeal is obvious: they're cheaper to print than letters, there's nothing to stuff or address by hand, and you can blast tens of thousands of them into a market with almost no friction. For years, the standard math said a well-written, well-targeted postcard would pull a response rate — the percentage of people who actually call you — somewhere between 0.5% and 1%, and at that rate the sheer volume could make up for what postcards lack in personal touch.

I no longer believe that math holds. In my opinion, if you run postcards today, you'll end up spending three to four times as much per lead as you would with the hand-addressed letters I just taught you, if not more. Think about why. A postcard shows up already exposed — the seller reads it as advertising at a glance, because there's nothing to spark the "who is this from?" curiosity that gets an envelope opened. It lands in the same mental trash pile as every other ad, while your handwritten letter sits in the small stack of mail that looks personal and important.

If you're an established investor with a big budget and you want to test postcards in your market anyway, that's your call. Track the campaign with its own phone number, exactly like I showed you earlier, and let your own numbers make the decision. But if you're a new investor with limited marketing dollars, the extra expense simply isn't worth the risk. Every dollar you'd spend on postcards will work harder inside an envelope with real handwriting and a Purple Heart stamp on it.

Facebook Marketplace and REI Groups (Free, and It Works)

You met this strategy in Chapter 1, and here's the full playbook. Scan your local REI Facebook groups and the real estate section of Facebook Marketplace every single day, and reach out to as many sellers as possible — even when the asking price seems too high. I regularly negotiate Facebook Marketplace deals down to 50% of the original asking price.

One critical detail: when you message a seller, skip the preloaded default message that says "Is this still available?" Sellers see that button-tap all day long from casual browsers who never respond to their replies, so many sellers assume anyone using the default message is wasting their time. A personalized, intentional message breaks that pattern and signals that you're a real buyer. Mine is usually something like this:

> *"Hi, I'd love to see this property if it's still available. I'm a cash buyer and I really like this neighborhood for holding rentals."*

That kind of message communicates intent and professionalism. It takes a small amount of extra effort, and that effort is exactly why it stands out.

A few final tips for responding to listings inside REI groups. If you message someone who isn't your Facebook friend, your message will likely land in their "message requests" folder — a hidden inbox most people never check. So work around it:

- Leave a comment on their post asking them to DM you.

- Include your phone number or email in the comment, if you're comfortable with that.
- Send the poster a friend request; if they accept, your message shows up in their regular inbox.
- Watch your own message-requests folder, in case they try to contact you without friending you first.

These steps might seem small, but they make a huge difference in whether your message ever gets seen. When it comes to off-market deals, speed and visibility win.

One more play inside these groups, and this one builds you a deal pipeline that runs on its own. Before you start, set up a dedicated email address just for deals — and consider a dedicated phone number to go with it, like a free Google Voice number. Then, any time an investor posts a deal in one of your groups, comment on it: ask for more information, and drop that dedicated number and email right in the comment. Do this on every deal you see. Over time, the wholesalers in your market will add you to their lists, and deals will start landing in that inbox every single week. That stream becomes an asset you'll use for years — deals to buy and hold, deals to joint venture, deals to wholesale to your own buyers. And because it all runs through the dedicated number and email, your personal phone stays quiet. If you want to take it a step further, an AI agent can monitor that number and inbox for you, pull the details out of every deal that comes in, and either add each lead straight into your Podio CRM, send you a daily text listing them, or both — so the stream feeds your pipeline without you ever sorting through it. In case you're wondering whether one little comment can really turn into money: one of the most profitable deals in this book — a three-house package you'll see in Chapter 8 — happened because a wholesaler spotted my number in a comment exactly like that.

Networking and Word of Mouth

Want deals without spending a dime? Build relationships. Real estate is a people business, and the more connected you are to your local network, the more deals will naturally flow your way. Many of the best opportunities are never listed publicly — they're whispered from one investor to another, and if you're not plugged in, you'll never hear about them.

Here's how I do it:

- **Attend REI meetups.** These events are one of the best places to connect with other investors, contractors, lenders, and service providers. Skip the corner-standing: ask smart questions, offer insights, and look for ways to help others. When people see you as a contributor, they remember you when they have a deal they can't take on. And if you feel like you have nothing to offer yet, you can still bring value by being a connector. Spend a day researching and compiling a list of reliable contacts — HVAC installers, affordable painters, investor-friendly closing attorneys, property managers — and become the person who solves problems with useful introductions. In many cases, that's worth more to the room than money or experience. Be the person everyone knows they can call when they need a recommendation.
- **Grab coffee with new wholesalers.** I love connecting with newer investors who are still learning the ropes. I share negotiation strategies, help them structure deals, and teach them what to look for, and in return they send me their best opportunities. By helping them succeed, I've built strong pipelines of off-market properties.
- **Collaborate with experienced wholesalers.** Some wholesalers already have established systems and lists. You won't connect with everyone, but building a relationship with just a few key players can provide a steady stream of high-quality leads, and those relationships often grow into long-term partnerships.

Focus on giving first — your time, your knowledge, your resources — before asking for anything. The return on generosity in this business is massive, and when you build real trust, the deals come naturally.

Pay Per Lead (Scalable, Expensive, and Worth It If You Play It Smart)

If you want a more hands-off way to generate leads — something you can scale without licking stamps or handwriting envelopes — then Pay Per Lead (PPL) might be a good fit. PPL means exactly what it says: a marketing company finds motivated sellers, usually through online ads, and you pay for each seller lead they hand you.

PPL costs real money, and it performs unevenly from market to market. I've tested it across multiple states. In Broward County, Florida, it flopped. In Jackson, Mississippi, it worked surprisingly well. Like most things in real estate, your results will depend on your market, your follow-up system, and how disciplined you are with your budget.

I use a company called MotivatedLeads.com, which lets you set a bid amount per lead, usually somewhere between $75 and $500. And here's where most people go wrong: they try to be the top dog, bidding high in every county and hoping to get flooded with leads. Unless you've got deep pockets and a team ready to chase every opportunity, that approach burns through your budget fast.

I take a more surgical approach:

- **Choose your target counties carefully.** Cover one or two counties where you're confident you can close deals quickly and profitably, and leave the rest of the state alone.
- **Stick with the minimum bid (usually $75–$100).** You'll still get leads, and you'll be paying less than the guy throwing $200–$300 per lead at the wall.
- **Study the "qualified lead" criteria.** Every lead is a purchase, so know what you're owed. With MotivatedLeads.com,

you get a credit back if a lead is disqualified — for example, if the property is already listed on the MLS, if it's a mobile home without land, or if it doesn't meet your stated criteria, like being a single-family residence. Those refunds stretch your budget and keep you from flushing money down the drain.

- **Be prepared to work the numbers.** Here's the hard truth: you may have to go through 20 to 40 leads to get your first signed contract. The upside is that one deal can easily return 500% to 5,000% of what you spent, or more if you hold the property for long-term gains.

Treat PPL as a tool, because that's what it is, and like any tool it works best in the hands of someone who knows their numbers and follows up relentlessly.

Driving for Dollars (D4D)

If you love being on the move and enjoy keeping your eyes peeled for hidden gems, Driving for Dollars might be a great addition to your arsenal. This method is exactly what it sounds like: you drive through your target neighborhoods looking for properties that show signs of distress —

- overgrown grass,
- boarded windows,
- mail piling up,
- tarps on the roof,
- general signs of neglect.

When you spot a property like that, you're looking at a potential deal that most investors are too lazy to find. And you can work the whole process right from your truck using the DealMachine mobile app: pin and tag properties as you drive by, skip trace the owner instantly — skip tracing means looking up the owner's phone numbers, mailing address, and email, and DealMachine includes it for free — build a custom mailing list inside the app, send a professional postcard with one tap, or call the owner on the spot. (A one-off postcard to a specific distressed house is a different animal from the blast campaigns I warned you about earlier.)

Driving for Dollars has never been a major part of my personal strategy. But I know plenty of investors who swear by it and have built their entire business around it, and if you're already paying for DealMachine, your only added cost is the gas you burn. It's an especially smart play in tight markets where the mailing lists are saturated and every other investor is chasing the same names. If you're willing to hit the pavement and look where others won't, D4D can lead to big-time opportunities.

SMS Marketing (Use Extreme Caution)

With the overwhelming number of gurus out there teaching people to blast text messages for real estate deals, I would be remiss to leave SMS out of this book. But before you even think about it, hear my warning.

Yes, text message marketing can work, and some investors have landed deals with it. It is also one of the most legally risky lead generation strategies in existence unless you are 100% compliant with consumer protection law. The Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) regulates how and when businesses can contact people by phone and text, and it requires prior express written consent before sending marketing messages to a cellphone. In plain English: pulling a list, skip tracing the numbers, and firing off "Are you selling?" texts to strangers can put you on the wrong side of federal law.

Real estate investment companies have been hit with lawsuits and hefty fines for doing exactly that, and many of them were small-time investors who thought they were simply following an online guru's advice. TCPA violations can cost $500 to $1,500 per message, even if the person never responds. Send a few hundred texts and you could be staring at a six-figure penalty. It has happened, and it keeps happening.

That's why I don't use cold SMS marketing, don't recommend it, and don't teach it. The legal risk is too high, and this chapter has already handed you safer ways to generate more leads than you can handle. If you're ever tempted to try SMS anyway, sit down with an attorney who knows TCPA compliance before you send a single message. That one hour of legal advice is some of the cheapest insurance in this entire book.

A Website That Vouches for You (SEO with Carrot)

Now, back to the fun stuff: your website. A solid website builds trust. When a seller is deciding whether to call you back, they will often type your name or your company into Google before they ever pick up the phone. You want them to find a clean, professional page that confirms it: this person is legit. If they find nothing — or worse, an outdated, broken site — that seed of doubt can cost you the deal. Credibility is everything.

For a simple, easy-to-build, investor-focused website, I recommend Carrot.com. They specialize in SEO for real estate investors — SEO means search engine optimization, the craft of getting your site to show up when people search Google — and their templates are built to rank, with the exact language and structure that motivates sellers to take action. Follow their onboarding, add some local and personal customization, and you'll start showing up in local search results.

Will your website bring in a flood of leads? Probably not. But even one solid lead a year from your website can become a deal worth tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars, especially if you hold the property. And the credibility boost when a seller looks you up and finds a polished, helpful, trustworthy site is hard to put a price on. A good website is a 24/7 credibility machine: it works while you sleep, it backs up your mail campaigns, and it builds trust before you ever speak a word.

The Cost of Not Marketing

One last word about paid marketing. If you're feeling hesitant about spending money on it, I get it — I've been there, and the idea of spending hundreds or thousands of dollars without a guaranteed return is scary. But let me tell you something scarier: the cost of not marketing is almost always higher. When you don't market, you're invisible. Nobody can call you, work with you, or bring you a deal, and in this business, invisibility is the enemy of momentum.

Let me tell you about my first real paid campaign. I spent $2,000 on direct mail, and I was scared — my voice was even a bit shaky when the first call came in. But I fumbled through the call, booked a showing, walked the property (it was extremely distressed), and offered the seller $5,000. They accepted. I signed the contract right there, pulled from a stack of freshly printed ones I had decided to keep in my truck.

That same day, I called a local investor and assigned the deal — remember from the introduction, that means selling my position in the contract — for $4,500 more than I had in it. My marketing money came back the same day it went to work, with $2,500 of profit on top.

Then another deal came in from that same campaign. Then another, including two properties I still own today. In total, that single direct mail campaign has earned over a quarter of a million dollars, and it all started with a $2,000 decision.

You don't need to have it all figured out before you start; you need to move forward. Try, stumble, learn, and adjust, and this business will reward you more than you ever thought possible.

Here's your assignment for this chapter. You need one free channel and one paid channel, and if you want my straight recommendation, start with my two favorites from Chapter 1: Facebook as your free channel and direct mail as your paid one. Block fifteen minutes on your calendar for a daily scan of Marketplace and your local REI groups, and start building your first stacked mailing list. If a different pairing truly fits your situation better — say, networking as your free channel, or pay-per-lead as your paid one — that works too. What matters is that you commit to both channels today and take the first physical step on each. Your machine gets built one bolt at a time.

In the next chapter, we'll dive into what happens once the phone starts ringing. You'll learn exactly how to talk to sellers, what questions to ask, and how to start turning those leads into deals. Let's keep building.

READY FOR THE REST OF THE PLAYBOOK?

You just read the foundation: the mindset, the five wealth levers, and the marketing machine that makes your phone ring with motivated sellers. The rest of the system — negotiating like a pro, funding deals without a bank, creative structures, wholesaling, BRRRR, long-term wealth, and the AI agents that run it all — is waiting in the full book.

Get the full book — paperback or Kindle — at a.co/d/0cpSCoP6 or by searching "Dominate the Deal" on Amazon.

And when you're ready to work deals with Jesse looking over your shoulder, book a free call at **dominatethedeal.com** — you'll leave with a plan whether you work with him or not.