

Some Thoughts Regarding Characteristics to Look for When Hiring a Realtor

Recently one of our broker associates, Debbi Hysmith, while serving as a listing agent, encountered a buyer's agent who was particularly abrasive. This agent accused the seller of being dishonest and hiding material facts about the home, which Debbi knew to be false. In that agent's communication (which Debbi forwarded to the seller as required by law), this agent used language that was accusatory and unkind.

The sellers were so offended by the agent's communication that they were going to refuse all further requests and basically allow the contract to fall. But Debbi chose to remove emotion from the equation, put on a friendly face, and encouraged the sellers to look beyond the wording to respond to what was, in fact, a reasonable request.

In calming down the offended seller, Debbi explained that one never knows what experience a buyer may have had in the past and we should do our best to just stick to the facts of the request. The transaction was saved because Debbi was (as is her nature) friendly, helpful, respectful, and had good communication skills. In the end, both seller and buyer enjoyed a successful and happy closing — all because the listing agent was *friendly*.

This caused me to consider the importance of hiring a friendly agent like Debbi. While experience is valuable and should be considered when selecting an agent, it's important to choose based on other factors, including personality. Remember, the person you use to buy or sell your home is representing you in the deal. While having lots of experience is important, it's not everything.

Here at Golden Real Estate, we have nine broker associates with varying degrees of experience. However, because we are a small — some might say "boutique" — brokerage, the more "seasoned" among us provide effective supervision and mentoring to the less experienced brokers at Golden Real Estate. Meanwhile I've noticed that some of our "least seasoned" agents, in fact, have enviable people skills. In that respect, I could probably learn from *them!*

So choose someone *friendly, relatable* and *real* (like Debbi) with whom you can have honest conversations. You'll be spending a lot of time with your agent, communicating frequently via text, email, and phone. Your agent will be representing you at open houses and over the phone talking to potential buyers and their agents. If your agent is a poor communicator, the transaction will be less efficient and could cost you money (if not a closing) because the options are not effectively communicated to both sides.

There are three other important characteristics I suggest looking for when hiring an agent, whether to buy a home or sell your current home — or both. The

first of these is *authenticity*. If you're like me, you probably have a good BS meter, and you never want to work with someone who exaggerates, lies, or otherwise misrepresents who he or she is or their record of success.

I'm reminded of a quote from Earnest Holmes, who wrote, "It isn't possible for a man to conceal himself. In every act, word or gesture he stands revealed as he is, and not as he would have himself appear to be. From the Universe, nothing is or can be hidden."

Another trait that I'd look for in an agent is a *good sense of humor*. Combined with a friendly attitude, a sense of humor can save a deal that otherwise might go south. As we saw in Debbi's story, how an agent

presents an option is just as important as the option itself.

The third trait may be the most important. You want your agent to be a *good listener*. Need I say more? (Are you listening? ☺)

In that regard, find an agent you can *trust*, who *asks questions*. Most Realtors have access to the technology to get your property seen and sold, but it takes a human being to understand and work for your best interests. You need someone who *listens* and *understands* all of the complexities of your situation and is *honest* and *transparent* about bringing all options to the table. Ultimately this is *your* transaction and *you* should call the shots.

Licensing Law Has Something to Say About This...

Your agent is working for you, *in your best interest*. This is not just a good idea, it's spelled out in licensing law. You and I may use the word "agent" loosely, but when speaking legally, the term takes on special meaning. Let me explain.

Real estate brokers and broker associates can work with consumers in three different ways. One is to have *no client relationship* with the broker, in which case the buyer is a "*customer*," not a client. An example of that is when a listing agent encounters a buyer at an open house, and that buyer is not working with another agent. Some listing agents will first enter an agency relationship with that buyer and double-end the transaction as a "*transaction broker*," giving up their agent relationship with the seller and becoming a neutral facilitator of the transaction. An "*agent*" works exclusively for the benefit of his client with "utmost good faith, loyalty and fidelity."

At Golden Real Estate, unless the listing agent has a *pre-existing bona fide* buyer agency relationship with

the buyer, our brokers are required to treat the buyer as a customer and not enter into a client relationship. We don't permit our agents to sacrifice their agency relationship with the seller for their own personal enrichment, but we also have incentives that they can offer to buyers who are willing to be a "customer" rather than a "client." These incentives take two forms.

First, our company policy is to offer a variable commission to our sellers. That means that we *discount* our listing commission when we don't have to *share* our commission with a buyer's agent. Buyers can use that differential to their advantage. Second, since we have our own moving trucks, movers, moving boxes and packing materials, we can offer *totally free moving* (including gas for the truck) to a buyer who, by being a "customer," allows our agent to earn a bigger commission.

These two incentives usually suffice to make a buyer comfortable with being a customer, allowing us to retain the "agent" relationship with our seller.

Just Listed: 5-Bedroom Arvada Ranch on 0.97 Acres

This secluded ranch home at 7050 W. 61st Avenue sits on a cul-de-sac just minutes from downtown Arvada. The 0.97-acre lot has a 900 square foot detached garage, a large out building previously used to raise geese, and a shed for extra storage. Ditch water is used for irrigation. There is a holding pond and pump system installed for irrigating the lot. The home was recently painted and new gutters and roof were installed. The garden level basement was recently finished, including upgraded electrical and new carpeting. You can take a room-by-room narrated video tour (including drone footage) at www.ArvidaRanch.info. Contact your agent or listing agent Jim Swanson at 303-929-2727 for a private showing.



Get this column in your inbox every Thursday. Send your request to Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com.

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