

How to Respond to Agents Who Send You Letters or Ring Your Doorbell

There is a such a shortage of listings on the MLS right now that many agents (not mine) are flooding neighborhoods with letters claiming to have a buyer looking for a home there. Should you believe such letters, and how should you respond?

I know this is happening because recently I listed several homes (two of which sold in a few days for full price or higher), and the sellers told me about the letters they had received. I was given one of those letters, and it turned out to be valid. (The agent sold a nearby listing of mine to her reported buyer.)

I realize, however, (and so should you) that sometimes this approach is used by agents as a technique to get in your door and list your home. The agent can always explain that the buyer they spoke of bought another house.

So what is a good way to respond when you get such a letter (or visit) from an agent?

If you are thinking of selling, I recommend that you call the agent and invite him or her over. The more agents the better, because they will then have seen your house if you end up putting it on the market.

The agents will probably come to "preview" the listing for their buyer, which is fine. If they

bring the buyer, all the better. Regardless, you should not list your home in order to sell it to their buyer. Rather, tell the agent that you won't list with anyone until they have a chance to submit a for-sale-by-owner contract at a 2.8% commission. If they can't produce a contract under that arrangement, then I wouldn't recommend listing with that agent, because they may have been bluffing about the buyer, and you want to demand com-

plete integrity from any agent you end up hiring.

Since your visit from each agent will, in effect, prove to be a listing presentation, you need to be prepared to interview them and not just listen to their presentation. To assist you with that process, I wrote a column in 2010 listing 18 questions to ask a potential listing agent. That column was so popular that I gave it a URL of its own, The18Questions.com. Use that column in your interview, and feel free to call me to verify any statistics agents provide about their own success as a listing agent, since doing so requires MLS access.

Believe it or not, we are in a sellers' market right now, with listings — if they are priced right — going under contract very quickly. I urge you to subscribe to my blog (JimSmithBlog.com) where you will not only get this column before it is printed, but also get my monthly market activity reports.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Eagle Ridge Home With Awesome Foothills View

If you would love to have a mountain view from your bedroom -- and from your kitchen sink -- this is your home! This 4-bedroom, 3-bath home is perched on a west-facing ridge within the city of Golden, in walking distance (1/4 mile) to Shelton Elementary and almost as close to the new light rail terminus at the "Taj Mahal". The Apex Open Space trailhead is also within the neighborhood! There are two sizes of homes in this 1990's subdivision, and this is one of the larger sizes. Although the backyard is small and unfenced, it backs to a scrub-oak hillside sloping down to a trail which takes you all the way to downtown Golden and beyond, and there are no big trees to block the fabulous foothills view now or in years to come. It's a quiet neighborhood, too -- listen to birds instead of traffic here!



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