

Here Are Some Ways Agents Can Save Money — at Clients' Expense

Like all business persons, we Realtors need to be smart about our spending, but the money-saving practices of some listing agents can impact the quality of service received by their sellers.

1) Don't join a Realtor association. Joining the National Association of Realtors is optional — sort of. If an agent joins a firm which is a member of the local Realtor association (in our case, the

Denver Metro Association of Realtors or DMAR), he too has to join the association. Only members of a Realtor association can call themselves a "Realtor," which is a trademark. This costs about \$500 per year. Agents can save money by joining non-Realtor brokerages such as Your Castle Services or Brokers Guild Classic.

Not being a Realtor saves the agent money and doesn't really cost

the client in any major way, now that non-Realtors can have their listings appear on both the MLS and on Realtor.com. But I feel it is important for agents to support their trade association, which fights in Washington (and locally) for property rights, the mortgage interest deduction and countless other issues which benefit our clients. And an agent who saves money on dues may be

scrimping in other ways which *do* have an impact on the service to their clients. Such as...

2) Don't use Centralized Showing Service. This service is a god-send to agents but also to their clients. It costs \$35 for each listing, but there is no better way to serve the showing needs of our clients. They are open 7 days a week, including most holidays, answering phones and setting appointments

from 8 am to 9 pm (6pm on Sundays). Showings can also be set 24/7 on their website. They have great feedback systems, too, and can work with the special needs of any and all sellers, such as no showings during "nap time." I love it, and find it can be frustrating when an agent saves this expense by listing their private number for showings and I can't be sure I'll get a timely response to my showing request.

3) Don't give out your cell number or include it on the MLS. In this business you hurt your seller if you can't be reached at all reasonable hours by them or by interested buyers. I feel strongly that all agents should have smartphones with unlimited calling, texting and data so they are as reachable as possible.

4) Take off evenings and weekends. Okay, maybe I'm a workaholic, but if I'm going to make a healthy commission on my listings, I think I owe it to my seller to be reachable after 5 pm and on weekends. I un-

derstand that agents with families want to have "balance" in their lives, but I think you can live a balanced life and still answer your cell phone when it rings with a call from your client or a prospective buyer.

5) Keep listings off the MLS so that you make double the commission. I've written about "pocket listings" before. If the motive for keeping a listing from other agents is to make more commission for yourself, you are putting your interest above your clients, which is illegal and unethical. Only by putting a listing on the MLS does it open up the possibility of competing offers.

6) Don't use CTM eContracts. What a blessing this service is! Fortunately, most agents now subscribe to this service, even though it costs about \$300 per year. My only complaint is when agents allow clients to click on "font" signatures. It's so easy to have them sign by mouse, finger or stylus so that you can know they actually signed it themselves.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

At Golden Real Estate, We Like Going the Extra Mile

In the column above I wrote about the basics. But there's more to earning our commissions than simply not being cheap. At Golden Real Estate, we like to go beyond that, finding new ways to earn clients' business, often at additional expense.

1) We provide a free moving truck and free moving boxes. We get used boxes from clients after they unpack and make them available free to future clients. We also provide our truck free to the clients of other agents if they purchase one of our listings. (Our truck goes the extra mile, too!)

2) We don't just take good photographs, we take HDR photographs so that every element of every photo (including windows) is properly exposed. We also shoot narrated video tours of every listing and post that video on YouTube.

3) We buy URLs for each listing so that buyers can get additional information by going to an easy-to-remember website.

4) Our "for sale" signs hang from attractive wooden sign posts with solar-powered lighting.

5) We provide free staging consultations so that your listing shows well to prospective buyers.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Brick Ranch in Applewood with RV Parking, Workshop

This meticulously maintained and super-clean home at **2142 Beech Ct.** sits on a large lot with privacy fence, 10'x16' workshop, oversized 1-car garage plus generous off-street parking big enough for an RV. You'll appreciate the hardwood floors and updated kitchen with Corian countertops. Vinyl windows with a lifetime transferrable warranty were installed in 2005-2008, including for the basement windows. With its fully finished basement, this home has 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and 2,612 finished square feet. Take a narrated video tour at www.Applewood-Home.info, then come to our open house, Sat. 1-4 pm.



Serving the West Metro Area

Jim Smith

Broker/Owner

Golden Real Estate, Inc.

DIRECT: 303-525-1851

EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com

17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

WEBSITE: www.GoldenRealEstate.com



Like us on Facebook at

www.Facebook.com/GoldenRealEstate1

