

THE TOP 5 AWESOME TRAITS



OF THE BEST REAL ESTATE AGENTS



(#2 WILL SURPRISE YOU)



INTRODUCTION

Sure, buying or selling a home is exciting. But if you have the wrong real estate agent, it can be a living nightmare.

After all, this is a big decision... potentially the largest financial deal you make in your lifetime. So, this is no time for costly mistakes.

Choosing the right agent, one who knows the process top to bottom, will go a long way towards putting your mind at ease. So, let's get the first question out of the way.

“Should I use a friend or relative?”

In a word? No!!! Your newly licensed cousin Monica who lives 7 towns away may be your favorite relative, but submitting an offer or listing a house through her could be like hiring your 2nd grader's math teacher to be your accountant.

Unless your cousin's a top-rated, full-time agent who's a specialist in your neighborhood, you could be entrusting your hand-earned cash (and long-term mortgage debt) to a sweet but naïve neophyte. Chances are you'll fail to close AND be getting the evil eye from your cousin at the next family reunion.

“But can't I sell my condo without a real estate agent?”

You *could*. You could also drink paint thinner, but *that* wouldn't be a good idea, either. Working with a top-rated agent who is reliable, experienced and trustworthy can help ensure that you get top dollar for your home, or that you buy a property for the best price.

“What should I look for in a real estate agent?”

Good question! There are A LOT of agents out there. Each of them has their own unique qualities that make them a potential choice. *But which skills and strengths are the most important ones?*

Here they are, The Top 5 Awesome Traits of Ridiculously Good Real Estate Agents:

#5

COMMUNICATION

Remember the game of Telephone, where the first person whispers a phrase like “Mary had a little lamb, it’s fleece was white as snow” in the second person’s ear? By the time it got whispered to the 27th person, they heard the phrase as something like, “Jerry hates his mother’s lamp, so please remember the Alamo.”

In relationships and transactions, communication is key. Hire an agent who you communicate well with, and who is willing to answer all questions that you might have about the process.

Do you prefer text messages? Emails? Phone calls? Singing telegrams? Make sure you and your real estate agent agree on the preferred method of communication. If you would rather text than talk, or if email is your first choice, make sure your agent is on board with your preferences.

Ideally, an agent’s style should match your own. This goes not only for how they communicate, but how they talk and operate as well. If you’re a techie person, you’re going to get frustrated by an agent who still carries a pager. *(Hot Tip: If an agent still carries a pager in 2020, they probably also have dial-up internet service. Take a pass.)*

Ideally, An Agent’s Style Should Match Your Own.

Time is often of the essence when buying or selling a house, and you need to know the best way to communicate with your agent. The first thing you’ll notice when you start looking for a real estate agent is how responsive they are. In the age of smart phones, there’s no excuses for an agent not to respond within a reasonable period of time during business hours.

Home sellers should ask their agent how he/she plans to market the property and attract potential buyers. Besides the MLS, where else will your home be featured? What’s the advertising budget? Does the marketing meet your expectations? Will it be enough to make your home stand out in a crowded market?

If you’re a home buyer, you may need to see dozens of houses before you find one you want to buy. Select an agent who won’t waste your time showing you properties that don’t match your list of must-haves.

Discuss all these things with your potential agent before hiring them. Don’t let poor communication turn your buying or selling experience into a game of Telephone!

#4

EXPERIENCE

Great real estate agents don't just appear overnight like your Amazon order. Most have been on the job for many years. The knowledge they've gained has prepared them for the challenges ahead. Like a masterful Sherpa, they guide clients along the jagged cliffs of the real estate landscape, avoiding hidden pits and venomous lawyers.

Experience can't be taught. Always ask a potential agent how long they've been buying and selling properties. Ask how long it generally takes to find their clients a new home, and also the average timeframe to close. A good track record is important. Choose an agent who has a history of not only securing homes for buyers quickly, but also has an extensive background marketing homes through the MLS, outdoor signage, traditional media, online advertising, etc.

Usually agents who have years of experience also have a strong professional network. If you're a seller, you'll benefit from having them bring in prospective buyers. If you're a buyer, their network lets them know what hot properties may be coming on the market.

An agent's job is to do the research, legwork, and much of the heavy lifting required to help buy and/or sell a home... so that YOU DON'T HAVE TO. They should be able to show you an analysis of comparable sales as well as price history and inventory of homes currently on the market in your area. Don't be afraid to request the asking and sales prices for their past home sales. A top agent will be happy to provide that for you.

Bad joke break:

Guy in bar: What's your sign? Agent: Sold.

Never overlook the importance of an agent with an eye for what appeals to current buyers when it comes to showcasing your home. YOU may still be in love with the lime green shag carpet in your man cave, but is it scaring off potential buyers?

An agent's suggestions for home improvement or home staging can make the difference between seeing a FOR SALE in your front yard, or a SOLD sign. While staging or improvements may cost money, they often enhance your chances of a quicker sale at a higher price. (Your agent can tell you what improvements give you the most bang for your buck).

Choose an agent who has experience working with buyers and sellers of similar properties. For example, if you're looking for a loft downtown, make sure you're working with an agent who has the lowdown on lofts in the city, rather than Craftsman cottages in the 'burbs.

#3

LISTING, NEGOTIATION, AND CLOSING SKILLS

SELLING A HOME

Let's face it, everyone selling their home hopes for a bidding war that jacks up the price and gets them top dollar. We're inclined to go with the agent who suggests the highest listing price. But even in a red-hot seller's market, that's usually a losing strategy.

Beware the agent who wants to list your home at a price too good to be true, because chances are... IT IS. It could be a sign of an agent's inexperience, or worse, MANIPULATION.

Like a wizard fresh out of Hogwarts, a deceptive real estate agent mesmerizes you into believing that your home warrants a higher price tag. He knows that's exactly what you want to hear! So you hire him, and contemplate how you'll be spending all those extra \$\$\$ after the sale. A few weeks later, the wizard magically reappears to inform you that you need to reduce the price because your house is overvalued. Then, poof, he's gone again.

What the....? You just got conned with the old Bait and Switch! If you've ever been swindled out of \$20 playing Three-card Monte, you know the feeling. Only there's a lot more than \$20 at stake here!

Go With The Agent Who Actually Closes Deals.

Pricing a property too high from the get-go usually means it takes longer than it should to sell. And if it does eventually sell, it's typically for less than what it SHOULD have sold for. Why? Because the longer your home sits on the market, the more likely that potential buyers are going to wonder what's wrong with it. After all, if it was a great property it'd sell quickly, right?

The best listing agent is not the one who tells you what you want to hear. You want the agent who backs up the price with comps, stats, and other local data. And once offers start coming in, you want the agent who negotiates fairly, ethically, and professionally. One who always keeps your best interests in mind.

Above all, go with the agent who actually closes the deals.

BUYING A HOME

Remember Rocky Balboa's trainer Micky, who taught Rocky the ropes of what it takes to be a world heavyweight champion? That's what you need. Someone who will be in your corner, calling the shots and having your back throughout the whole process.

That agent will possess all the skills needed to negotiate price, dictate terms, help line up property inspections, and prepare for closing. It's critical that after an agent finds the right home for you, he/she makes sure that the deal closes.

They should be adeptly handling ALL the irons in the fire... from making certain the buyer has loan pre-approval to checking tax records to confirm the property is free of liens. Does the appraisal reflect the home's true value? Were there problems revealed in the home inspection that need to be addressed before closing?

Your closing will be delayed, or even jeopardized, if someone isn't taking care of all those pesky details. If you're not sure that your potential agent will be able to negotiate competently or close the deal successfully, move on!

#2

COMPATIBILITY

That's right, we're putting Compatibility OVER Experience.

Experience is definitely important, but it's not as critical as finding the agent who's the right match FOR YOU. An agent may meet all the qualifications you've set out, but what if the two of you just don't "click"?

Most successful romantic relationships are the result of two people having "good chemistry". Well, the same is true of your real estate agent! If you're not compatible, chances are it's going to be a rocky "marriage".

Choose an agent who you believe you'll get along with, someone who shares a similar outlook on life, personality, and core values as you. You're going to be spending a lot of time together, so it's important to work with an agent who you enjoy being with.

Every agent has their own strengths. Some agents may be great with nervous first-time home buyers, whereas others work well with more experienced and investment-savvy clients.

Bottom line, you need an agent who not only works FOR YOU, but also works WITH YOU.

And did we mention that buying or selling a house can be crazy stressful?

During the process, you may experience many ups and downs. Things can go wrong. Emotions can run high. Panic can set in. You need an agent who recognizes that part of their job is to help relieve your anxiety. To reassure you and explain things simply and clearly whenever necessary.

*You Need An Agent Who Not Only Works FOR YOU,
But Also Works WITH YOU.*

Pay close attention to how he/she listens and asks YOU questions. You want someone who is reliable and trustworthy, relatable and real. Someone you feel understands what you want and will put your needs first.

Look for passion, positivity, sincerity, and honesty. It's important to vet your agent, but ultimately it may be intuition or a gut feeling about an agent that seals the deal. **Don't be afraid to let both logic and emotion help make your decision.** If something doesn't feel right or if you're just not in sync with your agent, then they're probably just not the right match for you.

#1

LOCAL MARKET KNOWLEDGE

That's right, this is the #1 trait to look for in a real estate agent. They can have all the experience in the world, but they need to know the market where you're buying or selling a home. That's because every neighborhood is different. Are you buying in the suburbs? The city? Downtown? Near the ocean?

All real estate is local. Your agent should be as well.

You need an agent who knows everything about the neighborhood, who has analyzed the housing market there, is current on the inventory, has a broad understanding of the schools, medical facilities, and local issues.

How do you know if your agent has good local market knowledge? Ask them! Try questions like, "What's the average time for houses to be on the market in my area?" "What's the average sales price?" "Are houses typically selling above, at, or below asking price?"

All Real Estate Is Local. Your Agent Should Be As Well.

Go beyond the basic questions about schools. Also ask them about local government, police and fire stations, shopping, entertainment, traffic concerns, even weather. Really pick your agent's brain about everything that's happening. Now's the time... BEFORE you buy.

The other big advantage to having an agent who specializes in a neighborhood is they may be able to match you with people they know. For example, your agent knows a young couple looking for a nice 3-bedroom home with a pool and guess what... you just happen to be selling a 3-bedroom home with a pool! Or if you're a buyer, your agent may know sellers who haven't put their home on the market yet, so you may get first crack at an incredible deal before the masses get wind of it.

Keep in mind that the most visible agent in town (you know, the one whose face you see on bus kiosks, benches, and shopping carts) isn't necessary the best. Often, you may not even be working directly with them, but instead passed off to a member of their team.

A good agent will have a list of the most reliable and well-respected service people in the area. They should be able to recommend great local contractors, electricians, photographers, plumbers, landscapers, gardeners, moving companies, etc. (That's right, you don't have to rely on Yelp for EVERYTHING).

CONCLUSION

So, other than the fact that Jerry hates his mother's lamp, what did we discover today?

Here's the wrap-up:

- Communication is key. Ask questions. And don't stop asking until you get answers you're satisfied with. Get an agent who's responsive and who "speaks your language." If they aren't communicating well with you, chances are they're not communicating well with the buyer/seller's agent, the lender, the escrow officer, or the attorneys either.
- There's no substitute for experience. A seasoned agent has already made all those rookie mistakes, so they're not learning on your dime. Experienced agents bring a wealth of knowledge to the table. Look for the proven track record and the consistently glowing reviews from past clients.
- The perfect agent will be a creative marketer, a skilled negotiator, and a master closer. Don't get mesmerized by the agent who promises you untold riches, then underdelivers. Put your trust in agents who arm themselves with comps and stats. Always go with the agent who actually closes deals.
- Not all agents are the same. Hook up with one who matches your style the best, who shares your core values, who you enjoy being with. At the same time, resist the temptation to hire your friend or a relative if they're not suited for the job or don't know your market.
- Just as the mantra for buying real estate has always been "location, location, location", let your mantra for hiring a real estate pro be "local agent, local agent, local agent". Choose an agent who knows the neighborhood. If you want to buy your dream home or sell your house for the best price, you need an agent who's been around the block.

So, there you have it. The top 5 awesome attributes that your real estate agent should possess. You don't have to settle for an agent that's just "ok". Believe me, it will cost you time, money, and possibly your sanity. Go with an agent who has all 5 of these traits and you'll be kicking back on a Barcalounger instead of kicking yourself for hiring the wrong real estate agent.



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