

# Real Estate Tips



## REALTOR, SCHMEALTOR, THEY'RE ALL THE SAME...RIGHT? *By Sidney Jimenez / Your Realtor*

"I'm going to sell my home, but I won't pay those crazy commissions. All realtors are the same, so I'll just go with the cheapest one I can find."

Such a common statement made by people who want to sell their home, and yet such a common misperception! Not only do realtors offer different services, but some realtors are more willing than others to follow through on them.

Gone are the days of the booming sellers' market, when it seemed as if homes could sell themselves. Sellers were in great abundance and ruled the roost, and realtors came out of the woodwork to "help" sell homes when help wasn't really needed.

As nearly everyone knows by now, we're in a buyers' market, and with this shift in the balance of power, so too has the burden of selling shifted. What this means is that it's crucial to prepare your home to stand up to competing with the abundance of available homes for sale, as well as to market your home properly. How can your realtor do this for you?

At a bare minimum, they need to know how to operate effectively in a buyers' market; unfortunately and perhaps surprisingly, many of them don't. Your realtor needs to give serious thought to pricing your home, as well as to its curb appeal; he or she also needs to be savvy in drawing attention to your home's advantages and minimizing any negative factors. These may seem like minor details, but they could be the difference in when—or if—you can place a "SOLD" sign on your lawn.

Once your home is physically ready to be put up for sale, a well thought-out marketing plan needs to be implemented. Because there are thousands more homes on the market today than there were just a year ago, it's no longer sufficient to place your home on the Multiple Listing Service and just wait. Your home needs to hit the market and stand out from the rest, and your realtor should provide you with the details on exactly how he or she is going to make that happen.

For example, I offer multi-tiered marketing services. The Multiple Listing

Service is of course a basic component. However, I also send out marketing cards to everyone in my database as well as a personalized e-mail to hundreds of realtors I've worked with, specifically to showcase your home. I don't wait until they come looking for it—it's brought directly to their attention. In addition, I take advantage of enhanced **Realtor.com** Web pages, which push your home in front of thousands of other homes with just a basic entry in the Web site, and I also feature homes on my website, **SidneyJimenez.com**. Aside from the marketing plan, there are many other services provided to assist you in selling your home. Are you starting to believe that not all realtors are the same, and that you should expect better services? Hiring a realtor based solely on a tiny commission could be a big mistake, which brings up another important subject...

Discount brokers. These are people who offer to sell your home for a flat fee or have you pay for "additional" services as you see fit. Yes, they offer discounted prices, but you're almost guaranteed to receive discounted services. These brokers popped up everywhere when the sellers' market was hot. They lure in customers with a small up front fee, and keep them on a hook by getting them to sign a long-term contract—often six months to a year. During the contract period, most customers find they need those "additional" services—and that's when they find that any "discount" disappears. If you don't feel comfortable with a contract's timeframe, don't sign it! Better yet, stick with a reliable realtor who will offer you a contract that includes an "Easy Exit" clause—which lets you walk away if you're unhappy with their services.

Remember—all realtors are not created equally! Find one who is up front about the contract obligations and costs, but also will give your home a strong advantage in the marketplace. Selling your home is a monumental undertaking; you have the right to make the most of it!

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