

Real Estate Today

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How Important Is the Extent of Your Agent's Experience?

By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

When I was a new agent, I had a different attitude toward experience than I do now that I'm, shall we say, experienced. It has been interesting to see how my attitudes toward the importance of experience has changed as the tables have turned.



In some ways, the "newbie" offers real advantages to his or her clients. For starters, he or she is likely to have more energy and be more attuned to today's technology. They're more likely to be innovative, less locked into established ways of doing business. Some companies, notably Coldwell Banker, cater to new agents and offer them great training programs to get up to speed with technology and sales skills. That's where I was trained, and every time I create this ad using my Publisher software, I quietly thank CB's trainer, Rich Sands, for the Publisher class that I took from him. More "seasoned" agents are likely to be locked into hiring graphic artists and printing companies to prepare their ads, brochures, business cards, etc. Thanks to Rich, I'm able to do all that myself. If I had to submit this ad's copy to the newspaper, get a proof, send in changes, look at a second proof, etc., I wouldn't be sitting here on Monday writing Thursday's column. My column would be 2 weeks old (especially if I had to hire a writer, too) before it was published!

Next, factor in the all-important web presence. Newer (and often younger) agents

have the time (because they have few clients and little business) to acquire training and skills in this area. They may carry Blackberry phones which deliver email and web leads directly to them when they're away from their computer and are that much ahead of their seasoned competitors who may be less familiar with cutting-edge Internet and web technology and may be too busy to invest in acquiring that knowledge.

Where experience really works to the advantage of the seasoned agent is in negotiating offers and contracts, dealing with inspection issues and protecting their clients when unexpected problems arise. This experience doesn't come with years so much as with transactions. With the average agent doing a handful of transactions per year, a fast-starter like myself doing 30, 50 or more transactions per year quickly encounters and learns from a wider range of issues despite having fewer years under his belt. That's why my checklist for interviewing agents, mentioned in a previous column and archived on my website, does not include how many years' experience the candidate has but rather how much business they have done and how well they've done it.

Transactional experience also helps an agent apply and polish the technology and web skills that he or she has learned. For example, I'm far more skilled at using Publisher now than I was after taking Rich's class because of all the websites, ads, brochures, etc., that I have created in the course of my work listing and selling real estate.

***My advice:** Look for a good mix of updated skills and transactional experience.*

This Week's Featured Listing

Upgrades, Views & a Killer Home Theater

The professionally finished walk-out basement in this home is so outstanding that it was the subject of a color photo feature in newspapers (including the *Rocky Mountain News*) and magazines across the country. The 106-inch high-definition projection home theater system is included, with its stadium seating for 10. In the backyard is a flagstone patio with gas fire-pit, grassy area, play area for kids, and full-width wood deck with great city and mountain views. See the virtual tour on the website to fully appreciate this great home in Golden's Village at Mountain Ridge. **Open Sat. 1-4.**



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