Real Estate Today

Here’s a Checklist for Selecting The Best Listing Agent for You

By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Previous columns have addressed how to select the best listing or buyers agent, and you can read those columns online at www.JimSmithColumns.com. This week I have created a checklist / work sheet that sellers can use to help them in that critical process. After all, your single biggest cost in selling a home is the commission you pay to your listing agent, which he or she then shares with the buyer’s agent. You want — and deserve — to get your money’s worth from this investment.

Since space is limited here, I have placed this checklist online as a printable one-page document which you can download from JimSmithColumns.com, and I will only describe its contents here. For a future column I will create a similar checklist for selecting a buyer’s agent.

The checklist, which is “under construction” as I write this column, covers the following topics:

- Agent’s background and track record in your particular neighborhood.
- How does the agent market his/her listings online and conventionally?
- What’s his style of doing business — team? open houses? easily reachable?
- Will he/she negotiate commission?
- Value added considerations — staging, moving assistance, etc.
- References — questions to ask previous clients of this agent

Every time I write about commissions, I get some of my colleagues very upset. It’s also a touchy issue legally, because anti-trust laws apply. Therefore, I will not advise you on commission in this space, but you can call or email me (below), and I’ll discuss the issue with you privately.

Follow-Up on Title Insurance

Last week’s table comparing seller’s title insurance reflected poorly on companies which don’t offer re-issue rates when the previous policy was issued over 3 years ago. Here’s how the same companies would compare on a $400,000 sale in which the seller refinanced just over 2 years ago for $200,000, instead of just over 3 years ago for the same amount:

**Seller’s Policy (w/ Owner’s Extended Coverage)**

- Ascendant Title $895
- Chicago Title $755
- First American Heritage Title $1,100
- Guardian Title $1,100
- LandAmerica $1,272
- Land Title Guaranty Co. $1,099
- Mesa Title (Golden) $925
- North American Title $793
- Security Title Guaranty Co. $1,094
- Stewart Title $980
- Title America $1,200
- Land Title Guaranty Co. $1,099

*$1,092 if previous policy was for purchase, not refinance.

Golden Home Overlooks City, Table Mountains

This home is special in many ways — great city & mountain views, an eat-in kitchen with granite counters and high-end stainless steel appliances, including a 5-burner Jenn-Air gas cooktop. A recently finished walk-out basement has guest quarters and second family room wired for home theater. Upstairs there are four bedrooms. A main-floor study overlooks the covered porch. That’s a 3-car garage, too. All in all, a great home for the money! See the website.

Tour this home online at: www.311WhiteAsh.com

*500,000*