

## Real Estate Today

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# 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](http://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](http://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

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

## This Week's Featured Listing

### 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.



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