

Real Estate Today

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We Listing Agents Could Do a Better Job at MLS Data Entry

By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

As we used to say back in Brooklyn, allow me to kvetch (complain) a little about my colleagues who do an incomplete job of data entry for their MLS listings. As you would expect, I do a lot of searching on the MLS, and I'm repeatedly disappointed by the failure of other listing agents to fully describe their listings.

You see, only certain MLS fields are mandatory. It's optional, for example, to say which floor the master bedroom is on, or how many square feet each floor measures. But it's so easy (and free) to give this information, so I don't understand why an agent wouldn't fill it in.

I did a little analysis today (Monday) before writing this column. Of the 23,827 active residential listings, 10,662 didn't enter floor-by-floor square footage (easily obtained from the county assessor); 3,559 didn't enter the measurements for the key rooms such as kitchen; 6,585 didn't indicate what floor the master bedroom is on; 8,336 didn't share where the laundry is located; and 8,085 didn't enter what direction the front of the house faces.

Beyond failure to enter such data, many agents failed to take advantage of a January rule change which allows a walk-out

or garden level basement to be entered as "Lower Level" instead of "Basement," which increases the "Square Feet" figure and therefore reduces the "Price per Square Foot" calculation. Of 3,347 listings with walk-out basements, fully 1,009 of them entered the square footage under "Basement" instead of "Lower Level." An even higher ratio (482 out of 1,156) of listings with garden level basements made the same mistake.

The number one job of a listing agent, in my mind, is to market the listing both to other agents and to the general public. The MLS is the best tool to reach other agents; Realtor.com is the best tool to reach the general public, over 75% of which uses the Internet to search for homes before they call a Realtor.

A popular upgrade on Realtor.com is "Showcase" service. This allows the listing agent to add extra photos, a headline, a virtual tour, scrolling headline, virtually unlimited description, and open house info. The agent pays a flat fee (\$193 to \$3,000 per year) instead of per listing for this capability. Few Realtors make full use of these features even after paying for them. For example, in a quick sample of 36 high-end Showcase listings, only three listings used all the free features. Only a third even took advantage of the free headline. It just amazes me that agents would pay for this service and not use it!



This Week's Featured Listing

Price Reduction Makes This House a Steal!

Back in March this home was listed at \$475,000. I have a reputation for pricing homes "at the market" instead of for some wished for price that won't appraise. Nevertheless, this house has not yet sold, and my seller has told me to reduce it to just **\$450,000**, which is way below what this cul-de-sac home with 3,227 finished square feet should sell for. Visit the website and see for yourself. It has a huge grassy backyard, and backs to the Washington St. greenbelt. Hurry, it'll sell quickly!



Tour this home online at: www.385WhiteAsh.com



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