

Do You Equate Real Estate Agents with Used Car Salesmen? Think Again!

Every now and then I encounter someone with a very low regard of my profession. That person may have good justification for their attitude toward my colleagues — and for applying their judgment against every member of that profession, including me.

Perhaps they were harmed in a real estate transaction one way or another, or believe they were treated unethically or rudely. Perhaps they felt the agent did not earn his or her commission.

You probably have your own list of grievances against real estate professionals, much as you might against other professionals.

But today I'd like to share why I think my profession — despite its occasional "bad apples" — is a lot better than some portray it.

First, however, I want to apologize to used car salesmen for this column's headline. In our culture

the used car salesman has (unfairly) become a metaphor for dishonesty and misrepresentation. I use the expression, however, only as a metaphor and not because I share that opinion of car salesmen. I've bought enough cars, new and used, to know that it is not a valid generalization.

Having said that, however, let's compare that profession to mine.

One similarity is that both of us are paid on success and not on effort. Even a successful agent like myself spends time and money day after day on sellers and buyers without getting paid for that time and expense. Just like selling cars — unless they're on salary.

However, a car salesman always works for the dealership — it's understood by you that he's not on your side. True, you can hire an auto broker, as I do (ask me for a recommendation)— but few car

buyers do that. For the most part, we go to a dealership and work with a salesman whose goal is to sell you one of his dealership's cars for as close to the list price as possible, for which he's rewarded.

In real estate, most buyers are represented by agents who have a fiduciary responsibility to negotiate in their buyer's best interest. Even when the buyer is not our client, we are legally, not just ethically, required to treat the buyer fairly and with full disclosure of defects..

We can be disciplined and even lose our license for not putting our clients' interests ahead of our own, or for not disclosing all material facts. I'm not aware of a similar penalty in most other professions.

Cooperation with other agents is a hallmark of our profession. Imagine that you went to a dealership, and the salesman could sell you a car from any lot in town. Because of the MLS, we can do the equivalent of that with homes.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH,**
Realtor®

This Week's Featured New Listing

5-Bedroom Arvada Ranch Home on 3/4 Acre Lot

This 1979 brick ranch at 7539 Secrest Court is located just north of the Westwoods Golf Course. Quaker Acres Park is just a short walk to the west. Equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle trails abound! The 3/4-acre lot gives an open feeling of being in the country and provides for an unobstructed view of the front range mountains. The home features hot water baseboard heat (3 zones), and an oversized 2-car garage with separate workshop. There is a laundry room on both floors, and one washer and dryer are included. The master bedroom features a walk-in closet with separate dressing room, plus a 5-piece master bathroom. Call Kristi Brunel, 303-525-2520 for a showing, or come to this Sunday's open house, 1-4 pm.



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