

With the Market Shifting in Buyers' Favor, Selecting the Right Listing Agent Is Key

Last week, I wrote about what skills and knowledge you should expect your real estate agent to possess. This week, with the shift to a buyer's market, I want to write about the importance of selecting the right **listing agent**.

You will want to know their level of experience, competence and success in selling homes similar to your own, hopefully within your city or neighborhood.

Like you, I monitor the real estate activity where I live. The best way to do that is to ask an MLS member like my broker associates or me to set up a "neighborhood alert," whereby you receive an automated email from the MLS whenever a home in your area is either coming soon, newly active, price reduced, newly under contract, newly sold, or even newly withdrawn or expired without selling. If you'll send an email to info@GoldenRealEstate.com, I will make sure the most appropriate broker associate (or me) responds to set up an alert like that for you.

In my own neighborhood, I'm always astonished how many homes are listed by agents I've never heard of. As I write, there are 36 active or coming soon listings within 2 miles of my home, represented by 33 different agents from 27 different brokerages. No agent has more than two listings. And despite practicing real estate here for 22 years, I only recognize the names of 10 of them.

This is typical of every city. Where did the sellers find all those different agents to list their homes?

Many, I suspect are friends and family — every agent's #1 competitor.

In some cases, the seller had already gone under contract for their replacement home elsewhere and was convinced by the listing agent of that home to list their current home. If that agent is on the other side of the metro area, that is not the best decision, because that agent will be unfamiliar with your neighborhood, lives far away, and is unable to show the home on short notice, answer questions from buyers, or keep your brochure box well stocked.

Every homeowner, it seems, gets letters or finds a note taped to their door from a broker claiming to have a buyer for their home. That tactic may earn him or her an interview, but I'd bet dollars to donuts that the broker then says, "Unfortunately, that buyer found another home, but I'm sure I can find you another buyer if you list with me. Sign here."

Let's say, however, that you want to **interview** listing agents and make a rational hiring decision. Good idea! Let me suggest some questions you might want to ask, some of which might not be obvious.

First, however, you need to **choose the agents to interview**. I suggest basing your search on their location and experience in your neighborhood or city. Second, study their listings to see their geographic distribution and how well their listings are presented on the MLS.

Since this column is printed in 24 weekly newspapers around the metro area, my broker associates and I

may not be the best choice based on that first criterion, but, with my access to the MLS, I can identify the best candidates for you to interview.

You can also do this on your own by visiting www.Nestfully.com, the consumer-facing website of Denver's MLS, where you can search for active listings in your area. Click on one or more of them to see how well the listing agent described the home on the MLS. Did they list all the rooms, not just bedrooms and bathrooms, and did they provide dimensions and descriptions of each, or just enter the mandatory fields?

Always keep in mind that the best indicator of how a listing agent will serve you is how they have served previous sellers.

Looking at those listings will answer the most important questions which you'd ask in person, but you won't have to take their word — the truth is there in front of you. You'll learn, for example, whether they did point-and-shoot pictures or had a professional photographer shoot magazine quality photographs, and whether they created a narrated video tour or just a slide show with music.

Having chosen who to interview that way, ask these questions of those you invite into your home for an interview:

What commission percentage do you charge? Keep in mind, there is no standard commission. It's totally negotiable, and the industry average is in the mid-5's, not 6%. It used to be that that commission included the co-op commission paid to a buyer's broker. As I explained in a previous column (which you can read at JimSmithColumns.com), that has been reworked so that the seller offers whatever buyer agent compensation he or she wants, and that amount, if paid, is deducted from the listing commission — same net effect, just reworked to comply with the NAR

Settlement prohibiting shared listing commissions.

See whether the agent volunteers that they reduce their commission when the seller doesn't have to pay the offered compensation to a buyer's agent. That's standard with my broker associates and me. If you have to ask for that provision, consider it a red flag. They hoped you wouldn't ask.

Ask the agent whether he or she will discount their commission if you hire them to represent you in the purchase of your replacement home. That, too, is standard with my broker associates and me.

Hopefully the brokers you interview will have researched the market and will make a well-supported recommendation of listing price. **Beware of agents who inflate their suggested listing price so you will list with them.**

When setting the appointment, ask the agent to bring a spreadsheet of their sold listings with dates, days on market, listing price and sold price. They can produce that spreadsheet quickly on the MLS. (If they don't know how, that's a **big red flag!**) Here's an example (mine):



Agent Production & Inventory Report										
Smith, Jim (ID: 026879)										
Date Range: 01/01/2024 to 09/09/2024										
Production Section	# of Listings	List \$ Volume	Closed \$ Volume	Avg List Price	Avg Closed Price	Avg SP % P				
Total Closed / Entire MLS	30,572	\$26,111,226,603	\$25,784,060,988	\$856,258	\$850,911	98.75				
Listed / Closed	1	\$695,000	\$675,000	\$695,000	\$675,000	97.12				
Listed / In-House Closed	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00				
Listed / CoOp Closed	6	\$6,231,000	\$6,466,555	\$1,038,500	\$1,077,759	103.41				
Listed / In-House / Closed	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00				
Coop Listed / Closed	2	\$1,185,000	\$1,175,000	\$592,500	\$587,500	99.10				
CoList / CoClosed	3	\$3,570,000	\$3,196,000	\$1,190,000	\$1,065,333	89.51				
Total	12	\$11,681,000	\$11,512,555	\$973,417	\$959,380	100.27				
Production Detail										
Listed / Closed	Listed ID	Street Address	City	List Price	Closed Price	List Date	Closed Date	DOM		
	6370932	10840 71st	Arvada	\$695,000	\$675,000	07/05/2024	08/01/2024	4		
Listed / CoOp Closed	Listed ID	Street Address	City	List Price	Closed Price	List Date	Closed Date	DOM		
	0206673	533 High Point	Golden	\$698,000	\$698,000	07/11/2024	08/30/2024	17		
	0620736	6714 Field	Arvada	\$798,000	\$798,000	08/21/2024	08/21/2024	24		
	2808414	7885 Quail	Arvada	\$750,000	\$750,000	06/22/2024	06/26/2024	5		
	060718	6127 Holman	Arvada	\$995,000	\$1,150,000	02/28/2024	03/27/2024	4		
	0807943	1509 Jenise	Golden	\$1,495,000	\$1,495,000	01/11/2024	02/16/2024	5		
	0696102	1922 Mt Zion	Golden	\$1,495,000	\$1,584,555	12/07/2023	01/04/2024	3		
CoOp Listed / Sold	Listed ID	Street Address	City	List Price	Closed Price	List Date	Closed Date	DOM		
	0693765	15233 65th #F	Arvada	\$830,000	\$830,000	06/13/2024	07/13/2024	6		
	0612538	60 Carla	Broomfield	\$555,000	\$545,000	10/24/2023	09/27/2024	197		
CoList / CoClosed	Listed ID	Street Address	City	List Price	Closed Price	List Date	Closed Date	DOM		
	6522386	14997 Zion	Golden	\$1,000,000	\$1,125,000	03/05/2024	03/18/2024	5		
	2526997	4021 Moore	Golden	\$525,000	\$561,000	01/08/2024	02/26/2024	6		
	0646537	2203 FORD	Golden	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	07/11/2023	02/16/2024	30		

Kim Taylor's New Listing in Cedaredge

What an ideal location for your new home! This oasis at **24051 Parkwood Lane** sits on 2.29 acres at the end of the road, adjacent to farmland, with great views of the San Juan Mountains and the Grand Mesa — and it is just minutes from downtown Cedaredge. The 2,352-sq.-ft. home with 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, an additional den/office, attached 2-car garage and beautiful wrap-around deck is just the beginning! Outbuildings include a 60'x24' metal equipment and RV storage building, a 20'x10' workshop with 120 and 240 volt electric, a 16'x10' storage shed, a 24'x17' tractor barn, a chicken coop, and a fenced backyard for your pets. This home was strategically designed to take advantage of passive solar with floor to ceiling windows across the south wall of the living/dining area. A truly amazing place! Come take a look for yourself. If you are new to Cedaredge, it is a very welcoming community with lots to do. Check out Pioneer Town, the Grand Mesa Arts & Events Center and the Grand Mesa itself, just 10-20 minutes up the road for outdoor recreation at its best. The Gunnison River is just 15 minutes down the road for fishing and boating. All in all, it's a great place to live! You can find more details and lots of pictures at www.CedaredgeHome.info, then call **Kim Taylor** at **303-304-6678** to request a private showing.



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