

REAL ESTATE

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THE REAL DEAL

Real Estate News You Can Use

BY EVI COGHLAN



Raising the Bar

Last month's column ("Anatomy of a Teardown") was requested by members of the public. This column, written in a "perception versus reality" format, is one that many of my colleagues have encouraged me to submit. I dedicate it to them.

Perception: Real estate agents are on par with used car salesmen and telemarketers. They're a slick, dime-a-dozen group of interchangeable faces who make too much money doing a job that requires little skill and should rightly be replaced by the Internet.

Why else would many savvy and demanding citizens of Westport and Weston – who hire the best and highest-reputation, highest-cost attorneys when they need legal advice...who go out of network at their own considerable expense to consult with top doctors in New York City or elsewhere in the nation when they have a medical problem...and who retain high-priced financial counselors to advise them on their investments – hire the real estate agent who's desperate enough to offer a way-below-market commission when they put their houses on the market?

And why else would a buyer feel it's perfectly acceptable to spend many dozens of hours of an agent's time visiting properties and becoming educated about the market, and then – although not dissatisfied with the agent's representation – break a buyer agency agreement by purchasing a property introduced to her by that agent through someone else?

Sadly, those in my profession often get no respect.

In some ways, perhaps that's our own fault – since our ranks do include agents

who are slick...who waste buyers' time by not listening to their needs...who purposely overstate the value of potential sellers' properties in order to "buy" the listing...who use high-pressure sales tactics...and who don't do adequate due diligence when advising sellers and buyers.

Then there's the group who are pleasant and ethical enough, but who don't inspire confidence because they have no credible business experience or are nothing more than order takers. Truth be told, it's not that hard to get a real estate license. Everyone knows that.

If you're working with an agent like this, stop. You deserve better.

Reality: There is a core group of veteran agents – as well as a new breed of corporate refugees newer to the residential real estate game – to whom the preceding perceptions emphatically do not apply.

We are every bit as skilled and knowledgeable and professional in our field as your attorney, your doctors and your financial advisor are in theirs. We are not slick. We do not waste your time, or ours, by ignoring your needs. We will tell you the truth about the market value of a property that you want to sell or buy because that's the only way we know how to operate. We look to add value, not to take orders. And our due diligence, our technological savvy, our market sense, our marketing approaches and our negotiation skills will knock your socks off.

We are out there every day working to raise the bar and change the complimentary perceptions that the public often has of those in our profession. The industry's negative spin does not apply to us. We deliver more and we're worth more. We want to work with people who value substance, integrity, professionalism and results. All others may proceed at their own risk.

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