How to personalize the homebuyer journey and exceed customer expectations

Compared to a few decades ago, purchasing a home today is more of a digital experience. Home buyers have easy access to online educational tools and resources, making them hands-on and proactive with their home search.

In the 2018 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) reported 44 percent of buyers started their home search online, while only 17 percent began by contacting a real estate agent. This evolving shift doesn't have to be a threat to real estate brokers or agents, but rather an opportunity for the industry to continue to push for a better customer experience.

Preferences are priority

The majority of buyers (52 percent) in the NAR survey said they most valued having an agent help them find the right home. Interestingly enough, a recent survey by Owners.com, a technology-driven real estate brokerage, reported that 49 percent of buyers said finding the right home was the most difficult step of the process. While many brokerages allow customers to inquire about the number of bedrooms or the desired price range, it's up to the experts to get ahead of the curve by considering more niche preferences.

Owners.com utilizes Preferences, a comprehensive search tool that sorts properties by specific options like walk-in closets or a kitchen island. “Our home is one of the most meaningful (and expensive) purchases we make. So finding the right one that meets all (or most of) our needs should always take precedence,” says Dario Cardile, Vice President of Growth at Owners.com. “By effectively capturing and matching all the available properties with the buyers’ specific preferences, agents can help save them time and the stress of feeling dissatisfied with the process.”

Agents at your service

It’s no secret that evolution and innovation are critical for businesses to survive. Consumers are always looking for the next best thing. In order to be revered as the best, businesses need to keep innovating — and real estate is no exception. It’s not only important to think about how your brokerage can evolve their tech, but also how agents can continue to exceed customer expectations. Searching for the one is often like taking a part-time job, especially when buyers aren’t fully supported by their agent. The journey to home ownership is intimate and requires a high level of personalization for a smooth, successful transaction.

Offering a more accurate, streamlined buying experience not only attracts new customers but can also increase client retention. Customers appreciate when companies put effort into carefully molding their experience; their desires should always be the top priority for agents. Brokerages are creating different procedures to ensure agents have a strong grasp on what their clients want in a home. Owners.com is also changing the game by having agents provide property Tour Reports shortly after each showing, which includes pictures, property and neighborhood details, and the customer's thoughts about the home. Having the convenience of reviewing such insights from each tour allows the agent and buyer to remain on the same page, and work more effectively to find the one.

"While today's buyers are certainly more informed, they still want to feel supported throughout what can be a demanding and stressful process," explains Cardile. "Today's real estate brokerage is responsible for reinventing the customer experience by providing more unique tools and services that ensure agents fully understand the vision each buyer has when they think of home."

Home buying isn’t a one size fits all journey. Brokerages have a responsibility to ensure every customer experience is unique to their desires and interests. Creating these personalized, impactful experiences fosters closer relationships between buyer and agent, and makes for more satisfied customers.

Owners.com *is a customer-focused brokerage dedicated to delivering highly personalized services. At the forefront of the real estate revolution, Owners.com and its affiliates offer a complete real estate solution that includes unique digital experiences, local real estate expertise, and financing and closing services that strive to anticipate and fulfill the dreams of home buyers and sellers.*

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