Overheard in the SkyClub: A real estate client lost forever

I love the conversations that are started just by virtue of being spotted wearing the Realtor pin or the Re/Max pin. If there's anything folks like to talk about more than cats or kids, it's their real estate dealings.

And it's no surprise that there are rarely conversations started about how *awesome* that experience was. It's usually a chance for this person to vent about what could have been different.

Today's conversation was fascinating.

The gentleman chatted me up after spotting my pin, the obligatory "what do you do?" question asked anyway. I always answer that question with "I'm an advocate for consumers in dealing with their property rights."

(A little different than your response? I'm loud and proud about my advocacy work in real estate — and by grannies, consumers need to know what we are out here doing that is #MoreThanHouses.)

He just bought his house in December, nine hours away from his previous home. He is a single dad, moving to get a better quality of life for his 13-year-old son. Simply seeking a place where he could let his child make buddies in the neighborhood and leave the house while safely spreading those wings.

He had searched high and low online for this next house. (Using what apps and websites? Zillow because it's intuitive and easy, realtor.com for better inventory — but using them in parallel. Realtors, y'all need to use these sites yourselves once in a while instead of always gnashing your teeth about them, so you'll better understand your clients.)

Anyhoo. He found *the one*. He inquired about the house. And all he wanted was the Realtor to *unlock the door*.

Not hard — right? Remember, until the future client understands *what* you do exactly, you're really not much more than a key service.

When he inquired about it, he thought he was contacting the listing agent but he had inadvertently gotten connected to someone who buys leads online. (Hey portals — yes, you! — the consumer wants the *listing* agent first. Not the random agent who forked over a credit card.)

You may ask, "Why did he want the listing agent? Doesn't this schmuck know that he *needs* a buyer's agent?"

Welp, he didn't need you because you hadn't yet shown any value.

This consumer is smart. Savvy. Has done real estate before. He's in a field full of code and program designers, and he is an implementer who creates solutions for service. He negotiates multi-million dollar deals.

A house is, to him, smaller than his job and not as complicated.

So when he got hooked up with an agent who was *not* the listing agent, and they didn't disclose to him *how* they got ahold of him, and then…you knew it was coming….forced him to sign paperwork while he was just trying to get into a house (before any relationship had been established)…the stage was set for a story that's a little less than the perfect romance.

The agent? Didn't return emails quickly. Didn't want to talk on the phone. Didn't work with the amount of care and diligence needed to get the house he wanted.

He missed out on *the* house because the agent got in the way.

(Now, before you start a fight with me in the comment section, consider the fact that — whether or not this agent was working hard — this is what her *client* thought. So just don't start up with me.)

He found another *the* house, which was new construction. What value did the buyer's agent provide at this stage? Perhaps be his eyes and ears in this new state? Get builder info for him?

Nope. Nada. Zilch. Got on the contract and then didn't show back up until closing.

I asked if he had gotten a home inspection. He did. His *lender* recommended someone because the agent was MIA.

His follow-up comment was that in his field of work, when you are setting up an account with a client — it's a relationship. You know you're going to have issues and problems — but you tell them upfront what might happen, and then when something does happen, you work through it.

You never hide. You always do the work. You build a relationship that shows value before anyone ever has to ask or question it.

My follow-up question was, "Would you ever use this agent or office or brand again?"

You already know the answer. The agent's lack of care and attention has cost this brokerage a future client — and all of the wonderful people he meets in every SkyClub from here on out.

I know that my team and I will be discussing how we can best communicate to prospective clients *how* we got ahold of them and what we can provide in the way of value that goes above and beyond what we are already doing.

We need to improve every single day.

This consumer — and every consumer — deserves nothing less.

Leigh Brown is a full-time residential Realtor, speaker, coach and smartass. She works in the Charlotte, North Carolina, market with Re/Max Executive Realty and can be reached @leighbrown on all networks.

Email Leigh Brown

Source: click here