

## Ten good reasons to use a REALTOR®

By Erin K. Witt

Buying or selling a home can be stressful—on your emotions, your time and your resources. One of the best ways to ensure your real estate experience is a positive one is to use a REALTOR®. Here are ten reasons why:

**Reason #1: REALTORS® are real estate specialists.** Not all real estate professionals are created equally. There are numerous licensed real estate professionals, but only members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) can call themselves REALTORS®. This association of about 1 million brokers and agents provides a Code of Ethics to standardize professional behavior, and it offers advanced educational opportunities to its members.

**Reason #2: REALTORS® lower your risk as a buyer or seller.** Entering a real estate transaction without a REALTOR® as an advocate is “buyer beware”. If you have a REALTOR® by your side, he or she will make recommendations that will assure that you are buying a home that is safe, environmentally sound and priced fairly according to the current marketplace.

**Reason #3: REALTORS® work for you at their own risk.** REALTORS® are not paid in advance for their services. Therefore, it's in your agent's best interest to work quickly, diligently and use all his or her resources to help you meet your goals. But don't be surprised if your agent asks for a commitment from you in the form of a contract.

**Reason #4: REALTORS® understand the current market.** Real estate professionals have invaluable market experience that can't be learned overnight. Rising and falling interest rates affect the number of available homes for sale and their prices within weeks or days. As neighborhood experts, experienced agents can help you with home buying strategies and proposals that will get the right house at the best price and terms.

**Reason #5: REALTORS® have inventory.** Do you want to find a home quickly? With a REALTOR® by your side, you will. According to NAR, over 80 percent of existing homes in the United States are represented by real estate brokers. REALTORS® cooperate with each other through a listing service that allows them to share their current inventory with each other. Your agent can also show you homes outside of the BLC™ listing service inventory, including for-sale-by-owner homes, new builder homes and institution-operated homes.

**Reason #6: REALTORS® have information you don't have.** BLC™ listing service data entry can take from one to 10 days, depending on the listing agent, his or her broker and the rules and technology of the BLC™ listing service. By the time the home is posted on the Internet, it could already be sold—so when you shop for homes on the Internet, you may not be seeing the most current inventory. That's why

many agents network with each other. Your agent will tell other REALTORS® about you and your wish list, in exchange for information about upcoming homes for sale which are not yet in the BLC™ listing service or the Internet.

**Reason #7: REALTORS® understand the complexity of the transaction.**

Less than a decade ago, a home could be bought with a two-page contract. Now, consumer-mandated seller's disclosures, environmental and structural reports and other legal documents have turned the home transfer into a complicated process. REALTORS® work with contracts daily and can fully understand which points are harmful and/or beneficial to you. From helping you make a reasonable offer, to providing for the discovery and disclosure of material facts, your agent can also correctly interpret information for you.

**Reason #8: REALTORS® work for you—and the transaction.**

Your agent not only represents your interests, but also works on behalf of the transaction. Naturally, buyers and sellers have different interests. You want to buy for the lowest price, and the seller wants the most money for his home. Agents must be skilled negotiators to ensure a fair deal for both sides. Typically, the buyer is the one in control. You can instruct your agent how far to go in negotiations on your behalf. One day, you'll be glad your agent helped you keep your cool when the seller refused to leave that old chandelier.

**Reason #9: REALTORS® offer flexible services.**

New real estate industry trends allow the consumer to pick and choose real estate services based on what brokers offer in the marketplace. Some offer full-service brokerage services. Others offer menu services and are paid accordingly.

**Reason #10: REALTORS® save you time and money.**

It is becoming increasingly important to have the assistance of a REALTOR® to expedite the home search process and save time and money for both buyers and sellers. A REALTOR® is very helpful in doing market research to help you set a realistic selling price, pre-qualify potential buyers and help negotiate the best price for your home. The agent will save your time by taking calls from people who are interested in the home and make appointments for potential buyers to view the home when you are away or at times most convenient for you.