

No Substitute For Local Realtor

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If Google has its way it will control all real estate transactions, and reap all the financial reward, in 10 years time. Between Google, Zillow, Trulia and others there is a war to re-program your mind to believe that buying or selling a home is as easy as an I-Phone App.

Just as pharmaceutical companies have convinced many Americans that they are always sick and need chemical drugs to fix it, so internet technology companies are moving into people's heads and changing the way they believe across all facets of life. In the "It's all about me" narcissistic age, large corporations can make billions of dollars training you to think their way.

There is no substitute for your local Realtor. Take a minute to go off-line and stop worrying about your friend's latest Facebook posting. Do you really care what they had for dinner last night?

Buying or selling a home is an intensely personal business. While large I.T. companies can collect data and tell you what they think your home is worth, you must first understand that these numbers are not accurate, and often behind the time curve in your local neighborhood.

Wikipedia is not the ultimate source of knowledge, and Google doesn't know everything either. Make no mistake about it folks, this is about money. Internet technology giants have enhanced our lives, and also enhanced corporate kings who can now buy entire islands out of Hawaii.

Not only do web real estate sites want your business, they want to control real estate licensees too. I receive a half dozen emails per day from web addresses I have never even heard of offering me "Referrals" of homebuyers and homesellers in Anchorage for a modest slice of the commission earned, slices ranging from 25% to 40%. All this for throwing out an internet fishing line and simply hooking, and reeling in, a naïve customer.

Your local Realtor has first-hand knowledge of your neighborhood, access to all current MLS data and, most importantly, an intimate acquaintance with the immediate market. Your local real estate licensee, in short, has a "sense" of real estate that cannot come from a hard-drive somewhere in cyberspace.

I know that the next generation may be living in a virtual reality online, but let's remember that real estate is the earth, and your home is the physical structure upon it. Your yard is the soil, trees and shrubs - not a digital world. Before giving up your identity to some mysterious email address soliciting you with glossy portrayals of their almighty wisdom, do call your local Realtor to come visit and talk to you in person.

Dear Dave: Why don't Realtors present offers in person anymore? I recently missed out on an offer I made because there was a competing buyer. I think I would have had more luck if the Realtor presented my offer in person.

Answer: Good question! It has become a habit over the last few years for real estate licensees to skip over taking your offer in person to present it to a seller with their agent present.

This practice has been dropped in favor of emails and docuSign. I cannot even remember the last time a buyer's licensee brought an offer to me in person, let alone asked to present it to the seller. In fact, I don't even see the licensee, and probably would not recognize most of them, even if they sat next to me in a Restaurant.

The internet has definitely assisted the efficiency and speed with which transactions can be processed, but don't hesitate to discuss the "Personal Presentation" idea with your Realtor.

For the most part, emailed, docuSign contracts work out just fine. Indeed, some homesellers don't want to consider your offer any other way. However, if the bidding is competitive, or the details of your offer a little complicated, a personal presentation may make the difference. Real estate licensees should always be thinking ahead about how to serve your interest the best.

Dear Dave: I'm confused – My Realtor told me that I would be closing on the sale of my condo on Friday 24th February, but I didn't receive any money until 27th February. I had promised to also close on my new house on the 24th, but could not because I did not have the money from my condo. Everyone was mad at me - what did I do wrong?

Answer: The term 'closing' is misunderstood by many members of the public, and by some Realtors too.

'Closing' is what the parties to a contract do to finalize the deal. The buyer brings money to the title company and signs final mortgage documents that will enable the lender to fund the loan for the balance. The seller attends the 'Closing' at the title company and signs the Deed to transfer title.

However, in Alaska (unlike some other States), the transaction is not considered complete at that time. The title company must wait to receive 'good funds' from the lender, and then proceed to the Public Recorder's office to record the Deed, before ownership is considered to transfer to the buyer. In other words, the day of 'recording' is when the title company releases money to the seller, not at 'closing'. This is normally the next business day, in your case, Monday 27th February.

If you need funds from the sale of one property to consummate the purchase of another, be sure to have your Realtor coordinate the timing. Often, Title Companies can arrange for 'simultaneous' closings where wire funds are instantly transferred to enable both recordings on the same day.