

Taking sides

Taking sides is a problem that you will run into, no matter how hard you try not to. Even if you can keep yourself from falling into the trap, agents around you will be there and you'll have to deal with it.

While you *should* remain professional and merely do the best job you can for your clients and customers, you will run up against people who seem unreasonable - or even dishonest. You'll be in a position to "defend" your side of a transaction, and your person, against that other side.

Sometimes you'll present what you believe to be a reasonable offer and be met with hostility from the other agent. Sometimes you'll receive an offer that is insulting or otherwise unacceptable to your seller - but the other agent will take offense when you don't bring them an acceptance.

If both agents are in the same office, it can cause tension and hard feelings. So try hard to remain professional. Try not to inject your own feelings into the transaction, but to remain calm and merely present your party's side of the negotiations.

It isn't easy. For instance: I had a transaction that had closed when my buyer discovered some problems with the house that the seller had lied about on the property disclosure form. When my buyer asked to have the listing agent contact her seller and ask for some help repairing the problems - and that listing agent refused - I was angry. It caused a definite strain in the workplace.

So what if you're the one on the receiving end of such requests?

Grant them. Call or write your seller with the facts in a non-judgmental fashion. Merely state that the buyer is requesting help. Don't tell them how they should respond unless you have already heard the warning signs of a lawsuit - and it can be that serious. Do ask them to respond in writing, so you can give their answer to the buyer without injecting any of your own thoughts or feelings.

If you're the one whose customer is angry and it is not your seller, there's not much you can do except ask the other agent to cooperate. (That is, depending upon the laws in your State.) I was not at liberty to contact the seller myself, so my hands were tied. All I could do was listen to my buyer rant and rave. Boy did that lady know some words!

You can help monetarily, if there is enough at stake. When the seller refused to call a plumber for a minor problem I did call one myself and pay the \$100 or so to have the problem repaired.

When the opportunity arises, talk about possible conflict in your office meetings. Try to resolve to work together, present your party's side, and not judge the other party. It won't work every time, but give it your best effort.

Real estate is like life: you deal with a multitude of issues and a multitude of differing personalities all at the same time. Your job is to remain calm and follow your values - along with the State laws, of course.

If you run into one of these situations and don't know what to do, don't be afraid to ask for help. Go to your broker, go to an experienced agent you trust, or write me. Do NOT ask for advice from anyone outside the real estate industry, because they don't know real estate procedures and rules, and they could steer you wrong.

Onward to success,

Marte

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