OPEN LETTER TO REALTORS

Once upon a time, I used to do business in Silicon Valley, California (Santa Clara County, San Francisco Peninsula, South Bay Area, East Bay Area). For 12 of my 16 years of operation there, I did no advertising whatever - not even phone book display ads. One of the reasons for that was because I had 6 or 8 award-winning realtors sending me work. I was their secret weapon. The top 6 or 8 realtors in Silicon Valley is like the top one realtor in the Peoria area. So maybe what I'm about to share is not for the average realtor here, but for the 1 or 2 who want to know what the top realtor in a market where a 2 br - 2 ba sells for $600,000 does to make sure his/her listings sell first.

When my wife and I had our first child together and decided it was time to move out of the land of fruits, nuts, and flakes and move back to cornfield county back in 1998, the first thing I did was contact the usual suspects - carpet retailers, realtors, property managers, those who had a constant need for quality carpet care results. It struck me as quite strange that realtors here did not seem to know what I was talking about. Maybe because I did business with so many realtors in California, I assumed that all realtors knew what I'm about to share with you. Maybe it was never more than the top 1 or 2% that appreciate what I'm about to say to you. Maybe there is just a lack of incentive. After all, 6% of $600,000 is a whole lot more than 6% of $100,000. Then again, at so little return for the same amount of work, maybe it's more important to use every weapon in the arsenal just to survive. I had realtors here tell me they don't do anything at all to "stage" a listing - not even have the carpets cleaned! I must have looked funny with my jaw hanging open like that. Let me share some true stories with you to be sure I'm speaking to the right crowd.

One of the local R.E. brokers who was having me maintain his office had picked up a rehab and flip at Lake Wee Ma Tuk. He did some remodeling which he finished on a Friday night. The appointment for me to clean the carpets was on Saturday morning. The house was sold on that Saturday afternoon.

A client called complaining that she had been trying to sell her house for 2 years, had gone through several listing contracts and her home was currently For Sale By Owner. She had me clean the carpet on Friday morning and it sold on Saturday. Coincidence? No commission there.

A few years ago, I ran across a guy who offered a unique way to sell a house quickly using private funding. I liked the concept, so I ran a ad to offer it locally. A local businessman responded with the same complaint - "I've been trying to sell my very nice home on main street for over 2 years; it's been through several listing contracts and is currently FSBO. I explained the plan to him over the phone and he was interested, so I made an appointment to visit the property and go over the details with him and his wife. I walked through the home to point out anything that might need to happen to get the home ready to sell in the next 2 weeks. I found several little things left undone in an otherwise very nice upscale home with wood floors, nice updates, 4 bedrooms - things

that a woman comes through and says, “Oh, there is something my husband will never get around to fixing, oh, that needs paint, oh that needs work”. They didn’t know me - I was new in town then - and didn’t really understand how the financing would attract buyers that quickly, so, they never signed a contract with me. I guess they took my advise and spent $300-$400 and a weekend to finish staging the home. It sold in 2 weeks.

You don’t need me to tell you that a home is sold to a woman. A man buys the garage. When a woman walks through a home and finds indications of deferred maintenance, poor maintenance, dog smell, cat urine, cigarette smoke smell, in this market, that house will never sell unless it’s cheap. A woman walks through and sees a cluttered place with no horizontal surfaces to put down a clip board and she walks out and never comes back. Most don’t have the imagination to see their stuff in a place that is already cluttered up with someone else’s stuff. Sometimes, if the place is not furnished the way she would furnish it or painted the color she would paint it, she walks out and never comes back. If the bathroom or the kitchen is a mess, then maybe so is the plumbing, the electrical, the furnace, and the air conditioner. But if everything is in order when she comes through, she is more likely to see the possibilities.

We don’t bring over a moving van and clear out 3 out of 4 items of personal property in each room, but that should be done. What we can do is make the carpet look well-maintained (even if that involves what we call a “resurrection”) and make the place smell fresh, even if it has been freshly painted or has cat urine that hits you in the face when you open the front door. I’m not saying you should sell a house with mold and mildew smell without disclosing a mold re-mediation problem, but I can kill the mold smell and the mold!

In fact, for those who see the potential, I can kill mold in a neglected bank-owned foreclosure property so workers can get to work (and buyers won’t be scared off).

What I’m saying is, there will be some realtors who will be curious enough to wonder why the difference between low-moisture cleaning (the way I do it) and hot-water extraction (truck-mounted “steam”) is like the difference between an average ’79 pickup and a new Mercedes. They’ll find the answer to that question in “Why Carpets Die Young” on this site. They’ll see what my clients have been saying about me in “testimonials” and they’ll wonder if they could use me as their secret weapon. Others will continue to show houses, not really expecting them to sell because of the economy.

School is about to start and if they’re gonna move, it will be before September 1. So call me before August 31, 2011 for a free, no-obligation room of carpet cleaning up to 200 square feet at home or in the office. Experience for the first time what carpet cleaning (developed in the 5-star hotels of San Francisco) is supposed to be like and take your business to the next level.

Brokers, download this PDF file and hand it out to your realtors!