

Land real estate listings when sellers aren't biting

BY **BERNICE ROSS**, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2011.
[Inman News](#)

You walk into a listing appointment, have great rapport with the sellers, do a great job on your presentation, and when you're ready to close for the listing they say, "We're interviewing three other agents -- we'll get back to you."

What do you do?

The long-running seller's market of the last decade created a whole generation of real estate agents who lack solid closing skills. When there are too many buyers and not enough listings, no closing skills are needed.

As the listing agent in a seller's market, all you have to do is issue your counteroffers, make sure the buyers are qualified, and then take the best offer. Buyers are so desperate to purchase that their agents have little need to close as well.

Today's buyer's market is a completely different story. Experienced agents who cut their teeth on past markets where solid closing skills were required are the ones who are doing well today. Those lacking these skills are falling by the wayside.

When most people think of closing skills, they normally think about high-pressure tactics. While you can close clients with this approach, it often results in resentment or cancellation of the deal later.

To illustrate this point, consider the following responses to the objection outlined in the opening paragraph: "We're interviewing three other agents -- we'll get back to you." How would you have handled this scenario? Here are some examples of poor closing strategies:

1. The gracious loser

The sellers object, you stand up and thank the sellers for the opportunity to discuss the marketing of their home. You leave the appointment empty-handed and hope that they will call you back.

2. The defensive agent

"You're interviewing other agents? Our company is No. 1 and I'm the top-producing agent in this area. Why would you go with anyone else?"

The moment that you have to justify your position as to why you are the best agent to list the house, you have lost the battle. What this normally means is that you haven't fully demonstrated your value prior to your attempt to close.

3. The angry agent

In this scenario, the agent becomes angry or makes a sarcastic remark such as, "Call me when you're ready to get your house sold."

Powerful closing strategies

Strong closers almost always play offense rather than defense. If the sellers aren't ready to list with you and you try to force the issue without understanding their reasoning, you run the risk of alienating them. A strong closer understands timing. Going back to the original scenario, here's how it could have been handled:

The first step is to understand that questions provide you with the most powerful means to close. Each question leads the client closer to saying, "Yes." Before you can close, however, you must set the context.

To illustrate this point, on a listing appointment, you would have gone through a 90-day marketing plan, provided the seller with testimonials from your past clients, shown them how their property would be photographed as well as samples of the types of videos you shoot, plus doing a complete interview with the sellers to find out what is truly motivating them to sell.

If you completed all of these steps, you are then in the position to go for the close.

Agent: "Mr. and Mrs. Seller, after reviewing all the materials in my marketing package, do you believe I can get your property sold for the highest possible price in the shortest amount of time?"

Seller: "Yes, we do, but we made appointments to interview three other agents."

Agent: "You indicated that you must move in less than 90 days. If you would like to start marketing your property now, I would be happy to contact the other agents and tell them that you have decided to list with our firm."

This particular close doesn't always work, but when it does, you have just aced out your competition. It's one of the key reasons why it's always smart to be the first agent to speak to the seller.

Sometimes, however the seller won't be comfortable with canceling the appointments. Here's what to say.

Agent: "I really respect the fact that you want to keep the appointments that you made. Would you feel comfortable meeting with me after you finish talking with the other agents? That way, if you have additional questions or concerns, we can address them then."

This approach can help put you in front of the sellers when they're ready to sign the contract. Also, by laying out a detailed marketing plan including listing syndication, video syndication, plus all the other ways you normally market your listings, you set a high bar for other agents to achieve.

Also note that both closes open with a question. Questions give the sellers the sense that they are in control. This means you're not as likely to be perceived as being a pushy salesperson.

Ultimately, closing comes down to a pretty simple formula: "Here's a service -- would you like this service?" If not, "Here's another service. Would you like this service instead?" Beating the competition to the punch in terms of being the first agent to speak to a seller about listing the home for sale, having a well-thought-out and illustrated marketing plan, and asking questions are at the heart of going for the close.

Bernice Ross, CEO of RealEstateCoach.com, is a national speaker, trainer and author of the National Association of Realtors' No. 1 best-seller, "Real Estate Dough: Your Recipe for Real Estate Success."

Copyright 2011© Reprinted With Permission from Inman News