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SECRETS TO CHOOSING A GREAT REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Bill Badgley, a managing broker with Badgley and Badgley Real Estate in Kirkland, came to the real estate industry in 2000, after a 22-year

career in the field of industrial bar coding. He and his son Jim have developed a thriving realty practice on the eastside, with an emphasis on turnkey services and assisting seniors with downsizing and selling their homes. His professional qualifications include:

- Licensed Managing Broker in the State of Washington
- Accredited Buyers Representative (ABR)
- Graduate of the Realtor Institute (GRI)
- Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES)
- Certified Relocation Specialist
- Top 1% of agents in Washington State and Nationwide

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What are the essential skills and experience to look for when selecting a real estate professional?

A CONSUMER RESOURCE ARTICLE
BY BILL BADGLEY

*Managing Broker, GRI, ABR, SRES
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The real estate market of today requires much of the successful real estate professional, and it is only those who “step up to the plate” for their clients who can consistently deliver great results. What does it take to be successful? Let’s take a quick look at some of the highlights:

■ **EXPERIENCE.** Experience is paramount, but it is only the beginning. After years of listing and selling homes, we look back and marvel that the inexperience of our first few years would never have worked in this current market. No amount of desire, passion, or “good guy feel” can substitute



for the knowledge and experience a qualified real estate professional can bring to their clientele in this very challenging real estate market.

■ **RESEARCH.** A qualified professional may have years of experience, but effective selling only begins there. The current market is challenging at best, and we have found that each home that we list requires considerable research to ensure that we have nailed the starting price—a price that will garner the buyer’s attention, but at the

same time a price that retains the highest possible return for the seller. A recent multi-million dollar listing that was priced and sold in three days at full price, actually took over 50 hours of research before we felt confident that we had landed on the right price. This research involved every aspect of valuation that we had ever employed, and pages of spreadsheet evaluation to arrive at the number that we were sure of. The sellers were ecstatic over the results of the sale, and the hours of research paled in comparison to their joy in the results.

■ **PURPOSE.** Years ago we took a hard look at our real estate business and made the decision to commit to selling the homes that we list. For many real estate agents, simply having the listing is enough—at any price. Many agents measure their success by the number of listings they have on the market. When we look at those listings, we discover that most, if not all, have hundreds of days on the market and no sale in sight.

■ **COMMITMENT.** Being a real estate professional means making a huge commitment to the client. The client's best interest is top priority—and if serving the client's best interest means that the financial outcome for the real estate

professional suffers as a result, so be it. The experienced professional knows that if they take care of the customer, their business takes care of them.

■ **ENDURANCE.** It's not unusual to experience hiccups or setbacks in the course of representing sellers and keeping their sales contracts moving forward. It is when these rough spots occur that a qualified agent steps up to the plate and keep batting. There are times when we lose sleep at night until we have resolved all issues and have everything moving forward again. The ultimate professional in this business will do no less.

■ **RESULTS.** This is the final arbiter of the professional. However, we find that most customers are reluctant to ask their prospective agent about their productivity. The professionals that are getting the job done are often selling their listings within 30–60 days, and they understand that this is the perfect window for the best sales results. Don't be afraid to ask the questions. How many homes has the real estate agent sold this year? Last year? What is the average number of days on the market for those homes that were sold? What was the price range of those homes sold? Where were those homes located? What was

done to prepare those homes for listing and sale? How well were their listings (homes) priced for the market, or how many price reductions did they go through before getting their listings sold? What is their average original list price to final sale price ratio? Are they willing to share the names and contact information of those seller clients with you to allow you to find out just how they performed?

There are a number of highly professional realtors in our industry who will serve you well, and there are also many more who have not risen to this level. The challenge before you is to measure any real estate agent you are considering against the parameters listed above. And don't settle for anyone who doesn't measure up!

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