

Michael Saunders & Company

Licensed Real Estate Broker

Exceptional People & Properties

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Choosing the right real estate agent to sell your home

When the real estate boom of 2004/2005 was running full tilt, it almost seemed like anyone who could draft a contract—and produce a pen to help everyone sign it—could sell your home. Often in just minutes.

These days a home can languish on the market for months—maybe much longer—if the associate you choose lacks the experience required to understand the shifting dynamics of today's market. Or launches the relationship by overpricing your home just to win your business.

Here are a few suggestions to help you choose an associate who will definitely operate in your best interests:

- For starters, never hire someone you meet by chance—be it on the golf course, at a social event, or during an open house—until you've diligently scrutinized their credentials, experience and track record. It is always wise to entrust the disposition of one of your most precious assets to a seasoned, well-tested professional; one who not only commands an in-depth understanding of trends and preferences in the local market but also keeps up-to-date with the latest in technology, real estate law, lending practices and other industry regulations.
- It is not unwise to ask friends and family members to suggest a good associate, based on their own buying or selling experiences. But choosing a friend or family member to actually sell your home can go a long way toward straining the relationship. No doubt you each want to help the other, but do they truly have the experience and wherewithal to manage a sale before the listing goes stale and the house gets perceived as overpriced or problematic?
- Be sure to ask exactly how they plan to set the price on your home and how they propose to market it effectively. If their response sounds tentative, murky, or ill-defined, thank them for their time, show them the door and keep looking. Pricing is everything in this market, followed closely by focused marketing.
- There's a good chance the person you select will be attached to a large, multi-office real estate company. What is the reputation of the company, its length of experience and share of recent sales? Ask what sort of industry affiliations and marketing programs they have in place to attract a continuous stream of qualified buyers for homes like yours.
- Make sure the company has a strong and proven presence on the Internet and is linked to other real estate intensive Web sites. Eight out of ten buyers now start their property search on the Web. Are you prepared to limit your reach to the two buyers who don't?
- Exceptionally strong foreign currencies—combined with low interest rates and excellent values in our correcting market—have many international buyers seriously interested in purchasing in Southwest Florida. Does the prospective associate have a plan for reaching out to them and does their company have mechanisms in place 24/7 to field overseas inquiries during off hours?

For more tips on how to make the most of your real estate experience, visit michaelsaunders.com.