Why Was This List Prepared?

Surveys show that many homeowners and homebuyers are not aware of the true value a REALTOR® provides during the course of a real estate transaction.

At the same time, regrettably, REALTORS® have generally assumed that the expertise, professional knowledge and just plain hard work that go into bringing about a successful transaction were understood and appreciated.

Many of the most important services and steps are performed behind the scenes by either the REALTOR® or the brokerage staff and traditionally have been viewed simply as part of their professional responsibilities to the client. But, without them, the transaction could be placed in jeopardy.

This publication seeks to close that gap.

Listed on the following pages are nearly 200 typical actions, research steps, processes and review stages necessary for a successful residential real estate transaction and normally provided by a full service real estate brokerage and for which they are entitled to fair compensation.

Comprehensiveness

The list is by no means an attempt to set forth a complete list of services as these may vary within each brokerage and each market. Many REALTORS® routinely provide a wide variety of additional services that are as varied as the nature of each transaction.

By the same token, some transactions may not require some of these steps to be equally successful. However, most would agree that given the unexpected complications that can arise, it’s far better to know about a step and make an intelligent, informed decision to skip it, than to not know the possibility even existed.

The REALTOR® Commitment

Through it all, the personal and professional commitment of the REALTOR® is to ensure that a seller and buyer are brought together in an agreement that provides each with a “win” that is fair and equitable.

The motivation is easy to understand. For most full-service brokerages, they receive no compensation unless and until the sale closes.

By contrast, there are firms that offer “limited services” in exchange for an up-front flat fee, or perhaps offer a menu of pay-as-you-go or “a la carte” options. Some even offer a sliding scale ranging from limited to full service. In these cases, the compensation of the REALTOR® is based on these reduced service levels with the seller bearing full responsibility for all the other steps and procedures in the selling process. In short, the marketplace truism is that “you get what you pay for.”

A Variety of Choices

The variety of brokerage business models in today’s real estate industry affords the homeowner a greater range of options than ever before.
But no matter which option is chosen, before signing a Listing Agreement or otherwise engaging the services of a REALTOR® and agreeing to compensate them, homeowners should understand exactly what services will, or will not, be provided.

**Why Use A REALTOR®?**

Not every real estate agent or broker is a REALTOR®. That term and the familiar Block “R” logo are trademarked by the National Association of REALTORS® and can only be used by those are REALTOR® members through their local association of REALTORS®.

While all REALTORS® are state-issued licensees as agents or brokers, the major difference between a “real estate licensee” and a REALTOR® is that REALTORS® have taken an oath to subscribe to a stringent, enforceable Code of Ethics with Standards of Practice that promote the fair, ethical and honest treatment of all parties in a transaction. Non-member licensees have taken no such oath and are not morally bound to the ethical practices and principles set for in the REALTOR® Code.

For that extra measure of peace of mind, ensure the individual seeking to represent you is both a real estate licensee and a REALTOR®. Visit the Orlando Regional REALTOR® Association’s website, orlrealtor.com, for a searchable list of our REALTOR® members.

**The Critical Role of the REALTOR®**

Listed here are nearly 200 typical actions, research steps, procedures, processes and review stages in a successful residential real estate transaction that are normally provided by full service real estate brokerages in return for their sales commission. Depending on the transaction, some may take minutes, hours, or even days to complete, while some may not be needed.

More importantly, they reflect the level of skill, knowledge and attention to detail required in today’s real estate transaction, underscoring the importance of having help and guidance from someone who fully understands the process – a REALTOR®.

And never forget that REALTORS® are pledged to uphold the stringent, enforceable tenets of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics in their professional dealings with the public. Not every real estate licensee holds REALTOR® membership. Make sure yours does!

**Pre-Listing Activities**

1. Make appointment with seller for listing presentation
2. Send seller a written or e-mail confirmation of listing appointment and call to confirm
3. Review pre-appointment questions
4. Research all comparable currently listed properties
5. Research sales activity for past 18 months from MLS and public records databases
6. Research "Average Days on Market" for this property of this type, price range and location
7. Download and review property tax roll information
8. Prepare "Comparable Market Analysis" (CMA) to establish fair market value
9. Obtain copy of subdivision plat/complex lay-out
10. Research property's ownership & deed type
11. Research property's public record information for lot size & dimensions
12. Research and verify legal description
13. Research property's land use coding and deed restrictions
14. Research property's current use and zoning
15. Verify legal names of owner(s) in county’s public property records
16. Prepare listing presentation package with above materials
17. Perform exterior "Curb Appeal Assessment" of subject property
Compile and assemble formal file on property
Confirm current public schools and explain impact of schools on market value
Review listing appointment checklist to ensure all steps and actions have been completed

**Listing Appointment Presentation**

- Give seller an overview of current market conditions and projections
- Review agent's and company's credentials and accomplishments in the market
- Present company's profile and position or "niche" in the marketplace
- Present CMA Results To Seller, including Comparables, Solds, Current Listings & Expireds
- Offer pricing strategy based on professional judgment and interpretation of current market conditions
- Discuss Goals With Seller To Market Effectively
- Explain market power and benefits of Multiple Listing Service
- Explain market power of web marketing, IDX and REALTOR.com
- Explain the work the brokerage and agent do "behind the scenes" and agent's availability on weekends
- Explain agent's role in taking calls to screen for qualified buyers and protect seller from curiosity seekers
- Present and discuss strategic master marketing plan
- Explain different agency relationships and determine seller's preference
- Review and explain all clauses in Listing Contract & Addendum and obtain seller's signature

**Once Property is Under Listing Agreement**

- Review current title information
- Measure overall and heated square footage
- Measure interior room sizes
- Confirm lot size via owner's copy of certified survey, if available
- Note any and all unrecorded property lines, agreements, easements
- Obtain house plans, if applicable and available
- Review house plans and make copy
- Order plat map for retention in property's listing file
- Prepare showing instructions for buyers' agents and agree on showing time window with seller
- Obtain current mortgage loan(s) information: companies and & loan account numbers
- Verify current loan information with lender(s)
- Check assumability of loan(s) and any special requirements
- Discuss possible buyer financing alternatives and options with seller
- Review current appraisal if available
- Identify Home Owner Association manager if applicable
- Verify Home Owner Association Fees with manager - mandatory or optional and current annual fee
- Order copy of Homeowner Association bylaws, if applicable
- Research electricity availability and supplier's name and phone number
- Calculate average utility usage from last 12 months of bills
- Research and verify city sewer/septic tank system
- Water System: Calculate average water fees or rates from last 12 months of bills
- Well Water: Confirm well status, depth and output from Well Report
- Natural Gas: Research/verify availability and supplier's name and phone number
- Verify security system, current term of service and whether owned or leased
- Verify if seller has transferable Termite Bond
- Ascertain need for lead-based paint disclosure
- Prepare detailed list of property amenities and assess market impact
- Prepare detailed list of property's "Inclusions & Conveyances with Sale"
- Compile list of completed repairs and maintenance items
Send "Vacancy Checklist" to seller if property is vacant
Explain benefits of Home Owner Warranty to seller
Assist sellers with completion and submission of Home Owner Warranty Application
When received, place Home Owner Warranty in property file for conveyance at time of sale
Have extra key made for lockbox
Verify if property has rental units involved. And if so:
   - Make copies of all leases for retention in listing file
   - Verify all rents & deposits
   - Inform tenants of listing and discuss how showings will be handled
Arrange for installation of yard sign
Assist seller with completion of Seller's Disclosure form
"New Listing Checklist" Completed
Review results of Curb Appeal Assessment with seller and provide suggestions to improve salability
Review results of Interior Décor Assessment and suggest changes to shorten time on market
Load listing into transaction management software program

**Entering Property in Multiple Listing Service Database**
Prepare MLS Profile Sheet -- Agents is responsible for "quality control" and accuracy of listing data
Enter property data from Profile Sheet into MLS Listing Database
Proofread MLS database listing for accuracy - including proper placement in mapping function
Add property to company’s Active Listings list
Provide seller with signed copies of Listing Agreement and MLS Profile Sheet Data Form within 48 hours
Take additional photos for upload into MLS and use in flyers. Discuss efficacy of panoramic photography

**Marketing The Listing**
Create print and Internet ads with seller's input
Coordinate showings with owners, tenants, and other Realtors®. Return all calls - weekends included
Install electronic lock box if authorized by owner. Program with agreed-upon showing time windows
Prepare mailing and contact list
Generate mail-merge letters to contact list
Order “Just Listed” labels & reports
Prepare flyers & feedback faxes
Review comparable MLS listings regularly to ensure property remains competitive in price, terms, conditions and availability
Prepare property marketing brochure for seller's review
Arrange for printing or copying of supply of marketing brochures or fliers
Place marketing brochures in all company agent mail boxes
Upload listing to company and agent Internet site, if applicable
Mail Out "Just Listed" notice to all neighborhood residents
Advise Network Referral Program of listing
Provide marketing data to buyers coming through international relocation networks
Provide marketing data to buyers coming from referral network
Provide "Special Feature" cards for marketing, if applicable
Submit ads to company's participating Internet real estate sites
Price changes conveyed promptly to all Internet groups
Reprint/supply brochures promptly as needed
Loan information reviewed and updated in MLS as required
Feedback e-mails/faxes sent to buyers' agents after showings
Review weekly Market Study
Discuss feedback from showing agents with seller to determine if changes will accelerate the sale
Place regular weekly update calls to seller to discuss marketing & pricing
Promptly enter price changes in MLS listing database

The Offer and Contract
Receive and review all Offer to Purchase contracts submitted by buyers or buyers’ agents.
Evaluate offer(s) and prepare a "net sheet" on each for the owner for comparison purposes
Counsel seller on offers. Explain merits and weakness of each component of each offer
Contact buyers’ agents to review buyer’s qualifications and discuss offer
Fax/deliver Seller’s Disclosure to buyer's agent or buyer upon request and prior to offer if possible
Confirm buyer is pre-qualified by calling Loan Officer
Obtain pre-qualification letter on buyer from Loan Officer
Negotiate all offers on seller's behalf, setting time limit for loan approval and closing date
Prepare and convey any counteroffers, acceptance or amendments to buyer's agent
Fax copies of contract and all addendums to closing attorney or title company
When Offer to Purchase Contract is accepted and signed by seller, deliver to buyer's agent
Record and promptly deposit buyer's earnest money in escrow account.
Disseminate "Under-Contract Showing Restrictions" as seller requests
Deliver copies of fully signed Offer to Purchase contract to seller
Fax/deliver copies of Offer to Purchase contract to Selling Agent
Fax copies of Offer to Purchase contract to lender
Provide copies of signed Offer to Purchase contract for office file
Advise seller in handling additional offers to purchase submitted between contract and closing
Change status in MLS to "Sale Pending"
Update transaction management program to show "Sale Pending"
Review buyer's credit report results -- Advise seller of worst and best case scenarios
Provide credit report information to seller if property will be seller-financed
Assist buyer with obtaining financing, if applicable and follow-up as necessary
Coordinate with lender on Discount Points being locked in with dates
Deliver unrecorded property information to buyer
Order septic system inspection, if applicable
Receive and review septic system report and assess any possible impact on sale
Deliver copy of septic system inspection report lender & buyer
Deliver Well Flow Test Report copies to lender & buyer and property listing file
Verify termite inspection ordered
Verify mold inspection ordered, if required

Tracking the Loan Process
Confirm Verifications Of Deposit & Buyer's Employment Have Been Returned
Follow Loan Processing Through To The Underwriter
Add lender and other vendors to transaction management program so agents, buyer and seller can track progress of sale
Contact lender weekly to ensure processing is on track
Relay final approval of buyer's loan application to seller

Home Inspection
Coordinate buyer's professional home inspection with seller
Review home inspector's report
Enter completion into transaction management tracking software program
Explain seller's responsibilities with respect to loan limits and interpret any clauses in the contract
Ensure seller's compliance with Home Inspection Clause requirements
Recommend or assist seller with identifying and negotiating with trustworthy contractors to perform any required repairs
Negotiate payment and oversee completion of all required repairs on seller's behalf, if needed

The Appraisal
Schedule Appraisal
Provide comparable sales used in market pricing to Appraiser
Follow-Up On Appraisal
Enter completion into transaction management program
Assist seller in questioning appraisal report if it seems too low

Closing Preparations and Duties
Contract Is Signed By All Parties
Coordinate closing process with buyer's agent and lender
Update closing forms & files
Ensure all parties have all forms and information needed to close the sale
Select location where closing will be held
Confirm closing date and time and notify all parties
Assist in solving any title problems (boundary disputes, easements, etc) or in obtaining Death Certificates
Work with buyer's agent in scheduling and conducting buyer's Final Walk-Thru prior to closing
Research all tax, HOA, utility and other applicable prorations
Request final closing figures from closing agent (attorney or title company)
Receive & carefully review closing figures to ensure accuracy of preparation
Forward verified closing figures to buyer's agent
Request copy of closing documents from closing agent
Confirm buyer and buyer's agent have received title insurance commitment
Provide "Home Owners Warranty" for availability at closing
Review all closing documents carefully for errors
Forward closing documents to absentee seller as requested
Review documents with closing agent (attorney)
Provide earnest money deposit check from escrow account to closing agent
Coordinate this closing with seller's next purchase and resolve any timing problems
Have a "no surprises" closing so that seller receives a net proceeds check at closing
Refer sellers to one of the best agents at their destination, if applicable
Change MLS status to Sold. Enter sale date, price, selling broker and agent's ID numbers, etc.
Close out listing in transaction management program

Follow Up After Closing
Answer questions about filing claims with Home Owner Warranty company if requested
Attempt to clarify and resolve any conflicts about repairs if buyer is not satisfied
Respond to any follow-on calls and provide any additional information required from office files.