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## 5 characteristics of real estate's top producers

Success is not about being smarter than your competition or having great connections

BY JOHN AAROE

JAN 5

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Over the course of my [decades-long real estate career](#), thousands of agents either worked for me or crossed my path, giving me priceless insights into how top producers operate, what they bring to the field and the characteristics that separate them from the rest.

All of these stand-out agents had a handful of key traits in common. Regardless of their markets, their strategies and their unique skills, these five factors inevitably played the biggest role in their success.

### They show up — whether they want to or not.

Even the best agents wake up uncertain of what the day will bring, or flat-out terrified because they can foresee the challenges ahead. Still, they get up every morning and head toward the unknown.

While talking with Lee Iacocca, the automobile exec and icon who saved Chrysler (and possibly the American car industry), I asked him what the economy might look like in a year. I'll never forget his reply: "Whatever I think the economy is going to be, I can guarantee one thing," he said. "It will either be better or it will be worse than I think it is today."



Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca attends the unveiling of the new Mercedes-Benz Maybach 57S at Mercedes Benz of Beverly Hills on October 18, 2005 in Beverly Hills, California. (Photo by Matthew Simmons/Getty Images)

The future of the market is immaterial and beyond our control. Just show up.



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**They understand who they are.**

I represented Cher and Diana Ross in the sale of their Beverly Hills homes. I spent a Saturday evening sitting on the floor with both of them eating popcorn and watching TV while both were headlining in Las Vegas.





2727 Benedict Canyon Drive / Cher's former Beverly Hills palace (Photo: Aaron Kirman / John Aaroe Group)

Each was a loyal, long-term client — in Cher's case, for well over 10 years. Yet I never forgot I was simply their ambassador to the real estate market.

Don't ever think you're as important as your client. And never assume your clients are your friends — that's unprofessional. The property and client are important. You are not. I have watched many blur the line of self-promotion and self-importance. The end results were never good.

### **They maintain a professional distance, avoiding emotion and editorializing.**

A real estate agent's true job is to position a client to successfully complete a transaction. Like your CPA, doctor or lawyer, it's essential for you to be able to deliver bad or disappointing news when necessary.

Your CPA doesn't care what you owe the IRS but prepares your return and informs you of your obligation. Your doctor doesn't care about maintaining your cholesterol levels but provides a recommendation and presumes you will listen. The agent's role isn't any different. Successful agents deliver accurate information without drama. They just present the facts.

### **They don't wallow in disappointment.**

One evening I received a call from Air Force One. Nancy Reagan had learned that I represented Broadway playwright Neil Simon in the sale of his Bel Air home, and she wanted to see it.

I had to remember I wasn't representing the President and First Lady. I was representing the potential buyers of a home. After viewing the property, the Reagans decided it would be perfect for their post-Washington life, and the Secret Service agreed.

I called Mr. Simon to inform him of a near full-price offer. Since the property had been on the market for 10 months with no offers, I assumed he'd be pleased.

"I'm glad you called," he replied. "I've decided not to sell." Mrs. Reagan, while very gracious, was decidedly not pleased.

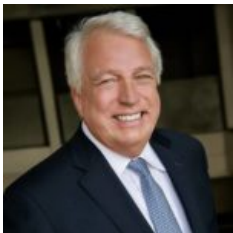
## They believe they are the best and are associated with the best.

Successful agents walk to the front door of each listing appointment with pride — they exude more than self-confidence without crossing the fine line into arrogance. They have a healthy understanding of what separates them from their competitors, speak proudly of their brand and can articulate its numerous points of difference. (If you can't do this truthfully and confidently, you won't be successful. And if you're not in alignment with the culture of your brand, change brokers).

The broker has an obligation to provide the tools and programs that the agent needs to be successful. The agent has an obligation to learn how to use them. Both have an obligation to learn from and listen to each other. Most agents don't fully grasp more than about 30 percent of the tools offered by their brokers. Top-producing agents maintain a whole arsenal of facts, programs and tools — and are well-versed in each one. They can tailor the appropriate options to their specific clients.

You have two choices in your career. You can be committed to it, or you can just be interested. Successful agents are totally committed. They begin each morning passionate about showing up for life and end each day with the same level of enthusiasm.

Success is not about being smarter than your competition or having great connections. Success is about being willing to work hard. Very hard. And showing up every day.



John Aaroe

*John Aaroe was one of the leading estate agents in Beverly Hills, representing Cher, Diana Ross, Neil Simon, Joan Rivers and countless others. He worked with Nancy Reagan, studio CEOs, business leaders and prominent politicians. Aaroe owned two of the most successful and productive real estate companies in the Beverly Hills/Los Angeles marketplace. He [announced his retirement in September](#).*

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**Nancy Fink** · Real estate broker at Compass

It's a sad fact that brokers have to be reminded of this, showing up..and all too often they don't and wonder why other agents have more production. Good article, especially liked the piece on giving yourself 24 hours to heal, good advice.

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**Sherri Noel** · Realtor at Keller Williams Realty

Great read and so true.

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**Nicole Gordon Needham** · Broker / Owner at Needham Realty Group

Great article! Agree with every point made!

Like · Reply · 4d



**Pamela Bellah** · Managing Broker/Realtor at Realogics Sotheby's International Realty

Well written and a refreshing reminder that the hard parts are essential in being (and bringing) our best.

Like · Reply · 4d



**Hank Miller Team/Harry Norman Realtors**

Wow - so 5 days into 2018 and I'm going to use one of my five "atta boy's" right now...

"A real estate agent's true job is to position a client to successfully complete a transaction." - GOLD.

That's all I care about. I'm not looking for lunch, "pop ins", calls, phoney "how are the kids...."; my role is to secure the best possible outcome for my client.

Like · Reply · 6 · 4d



**Brett Caviness** · Broker Associate at Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC

Great read!

Like · Reply · 4d



**Kelly Gordon** · Broker of Record at Leaf, Realtors

What a fresh and accurate perspective on this. Great read! Now the question for brokers is: how do you interview candidates to tease out who has and who does not have these qualities?



**Nolan Fink** · Realtor at The New Home Spot Inc.

Thank you for this insight. Like Nancy Fink, I too especially liked giving yourself only 24 hours to heal. I hope in your retirement you consider life coaching agents. Congrats on a great career and thank you!

Like · Reply · 4d



**Shane Fisher** · Works at ReMax First Calgary

Keep the focus on the Client and the Property, not yourself. - So true! great read . Thank you.

Like · Reply · 2 · 4d



**David Norman** · University High School, Los Angeles

Happy New Year !. I agree 100% with this article. The hardest part is to be given the opportunity. Many realtors squander their opportunities. P.S. Sherri Noel, Happy New Year :))) Best David Norman BoardwalkRE.com

Like · Reply · 4d



**Roberta Plutzik Baldwin** · Partner at Keller Williams NJ Metro Group

Superior piece. Endorses the most important personality traits of the best of the best. Posted it for all our agents to read and think about, especially at this time of year, when most of us have to reach way down inside to pull up the enthusiasm that's needed to prevail.

Like · Reply · 4d



**Susie Ostrow Pierce** · Branch manager at Lyon Real Estate - Fair Oaks

Thank you, very well said.

Like · Reply · 4d



**Edgar Escorcia** · Owner, President at Edgar Escorcia, PA.

What a great article! Very good pointers.

Like · Reply · 4d



**Margaret Murchie** · Vice President Sales at Coldwell Banker Pacific Properties

So true. Disappointing for some that one has to have thick skin for rejections especially the unexpected ones from friends and family. It's all about the client and taking the transaction to completion with as much of a win/win as possible.

Like · Reply · 4d



**Duncan Donahue** · Vice President at Keller Williams Realty, Inc.

Thx for sharing - Succinct, accurate & to the point.

Like · Reply · 2 · 4d



**Ellen Karp** · Realtor at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

Happy New Year, Duncan! Hope your year is off to a great start.

Ellen Karp

Like · Reply · 1 · 2d



**Scott Federighi** · Broker Associate at Keller Williams Success Realty

Great read! They show up - whether they want to or not...Great advice for life!

Like · Reply · 4d



**Lance Brown** · REALTOR®; Licensed at Stephen Cooley Real Estate Group at Keller Williams

I really appreciate this article. I just received some bad news and plan to follow that 24-hour rule (do weekends count?). 😊

I'll bet this man was fascinating to watch in action.

"The property and client are important. You are not."

Like · Reply · 2 · 4d



**Darryl Hayes** · Real Estate Agent at Baird & Warner - Libertyville

Great insight into professional demeanor. Nailed it!

Like · Reply · 4d



**Larry DeBerry** · Miami Dade College

Every day is a new day, a new opportunity, those who see it succeed those who don't won't. You article hits the mark!

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**Elizabeth Thao** · Hickory, North Carolina

Great read! It's a refresher/reminder!

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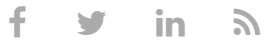
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