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Purchasing a home can be a trying experience, both emotionally and financially. Agents need to understand that their responsibility is to guide, direct and support buyers throughout the process.

Agents who typically spend quality time with their buyers are now required to adapt to virtual hand-holding due to [COVID-19 and ongoing social distancing mandates](#).

Nurturing your buyer can be accomplished via email, text and telephone. My experience has been that if clients receive an encouraging email or text early in the day, and a summary communication at the end of the day, they feel your presence.

Immediate responses can also be helpful, but they aren't always possible, depending on the number of buyers with whom you are working. Learning to prioritize is vital to any successful business relationship. Barring two emails each day, sending emails with the word "update" in the subject line, followed by the address of the listing being considered, is advisable.

1. In any transaction, communication is key

At the start of a client relationship, it is essential to obtain the contact information of all parties involved in the transaction, like in-laws, children and financial advisors, to ensure [consistent, clear communication](#). A second requirement is to determine how clients like to communicate. Is it by email, text or telephone?

Ideally, everyone who is part of the transaction will be copied on every email and text. The obvious advantage of the written word is that there is a record of what has been stated. With phone calls, my method is to try to take notes and memos to file.

Even with this level of care, there are bound to be communication mishaps and details that are not addressed. It is best to keep in mind that patience is required. A cool approach can benefit everyone.

2. The role of a real estate agent is that of a teacher

If I'm working with [first-time buyers](#), sometimes I feel it's necessary to warn them that I'm conducting a class in Real Estate 101, and that certain facts require repetition to sink in. My experience with first-time buyers is that repetition will be a big part of the process.

When I repeat something that I feel is obvious, I begin by apologizing, and I emphasize how going through this information again is important for everyone involved. Without exception, buyers are grateful when I repeat what I think is obvious. Clarity in communication can never be taken for granted.

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3. First-time buyers may not understand the 'why' of certain aspects of the transaction

It's part of the agent's role to anticipate questions and carefully explain why a detail or directive may be crucial.

For example, the buyer's [credit score](#) will be a key factor in [obtaining a mortgage](#). The mortgage broker they engage with may encourage them to pay down credit card balances and avoid new debt, but it's helpful if their real estate agent reinforces this information and underscores its importance.

4. Managing setbacks in the buying experience

Disappointment is typically a part of any first-time buyer's search. It can be as simple as ugly-colored tile in a bathroom or inadequate closets, to something as major as losing a property that was their dream.

As their agent and guide, I prefer to substitute the term "compromise." It is also wise to be clear that some features such as tile, closets or wall color can be changed without too much effort. Other issues such as neighborhood, location and exposure are best thought of as compromises or even sacrifices — a means to an end.

The term "starter home" may be a turnoff to first-time buyers, but after seeing a property in their price range and in the location they can afford, they will typically adjust to the concept.

5. Always encourage a positive attitude

Finally, I strongly believe in [being positive](#) with first-time buyers, even when the process is tedious or going badly. I will often end emails with “I remain optimistic” when the buyer may not feel that way.

These tips, adapted to your personal selling style and fine-tuned to your client, can add to the buying experience, despite you not being physically present. In this current environment, businesses will learn to adapt to transact in a physically remote style, while maintaining contact in a personal way.

Real estate is, above all, an industry based on customer service. Just as each customer and transaction is different, how you, as the agent, approach your clientele and their deal must become part of your developing skill set if you are to remain successful.

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