

## 3 MISTAKES THAT WILL HURT YOUR CREDIBILITY

Are you just telling customers what they want to hear? That could come back to haunt you. Here's how to use everyday scenarios to build trust.

*By Mark Stevens December 2008, Realtor Magazine*

When you forgo an immediate commission by discouraging clients from making a poor housing choice—paying more than they can afford or making an offer on a home that won't fit their needs, for example—the trust level between you and your clients rises exponentially.

You're no longer seen simply as a salesperson but as a reliable adviser who cares more about the customer than the transaction. If you have the foresight to play that kind of role with clients, you'll make any lost commission back in spades because of the trust you engendered.

Sounds simple. Yet, it's amazing how frequently practitioners squander an opportunity to build this valuable trust. Here are a few easy-to-make mistakes that can seriously undermine your credibility.

**1. Flip-flopping.** Many consumers who visit a property with a salesperson express their excitement at the curb. And it's a pretty standard technique for a salesperson to reinforce this positive feeling by saying something like: "Yes, this is a great home." But what happens when the buyers tell the salesperson they're disappointed in the house after seeing it up close.

If the salesperson says, "Yes, I never liked that floor plan," the clients then think, "He knew it wasn't great all along but tried to sell it to us anyway. We can't trust him now."

You can avoid this apparent lack of candor at the outset by tempering the prospective buyer's exuberance at the curb. Reveal any factors you're aware of that may constitute a potential problem. You might say: "Yes, it truly is a stunner. It could be ideal for you, but once we get inside there are a few things I want to point out that should be factored into your decision."

**2. Ignoring your own better judgment.** When you know a house that buyers ask to see doesn't fit with one of their stated criteria, you should let them know about that fact before they see the home.

For instance, if a buyer tells you that schools are of primary importance, you should suggest right away that they review local school statistics themselves and decide which areas they want to tour. That will help you avoid unlawful steering when and if the buyers ask to see a house in a school district that you know has low test scores. You can then remind them to check the information they've already obtained if they're thinking of making an offer on such a property.

**3. Saying what your client wants to hear.** When I hired the father of one of my son's friends to sell my last home, I asked him if we could get a very ambitious price for it. He said what I wanted to hear: "No problem." Well, he got the listing but couldn't sell the house.

So I brought in the top salesperson in town, and she promptly told me what I didn't want to hear: "Replace these windows and lower the price by \$125,000." She sold the house in less than a week. I recommend her to everyone.