ATTRACT BUYERS | WORKING WITH REAL ESTATE AGENTS

How to Assemble a World-Class Real Estate Team

by Lin Nulman
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I love the way the original Mission: Impossible series starts. Jim Phelps finds the hidden tape, presses Play, and hears he has to, you know, go ahead and topple a regime or something.

Trying to sell a house can make you feel the tape should say, “Jim, your impossible mission is to get this place sold.” But Jim has the solution, and it works every time: use a real estate team. He picks the people he needs for their different talents, and they get it done.

You can pick a Dream Real Estate Team that will get a SOLD sign in front of your house.

real estate dream team

Source: (rawpixel / Unsplash)

It turns out you can pick a bigger, more expensive Real Estate Team than you really need. Yet other team members are more than worth it. So let’s review some, including:

- **Real Estate Agent**
- **Real Estate Attorney**
- **Appraiser**
- **Home Inspector**
- **Contractors**
- **Stager**
- **Photographer**

Your real estate agent can be one powerhouse individual or a listing agent from a group that works together. A good agent does a long list of things to improve your chances of selling faster, for the best possible price.

An agent should do Jim Phelps's job on Mission: Impossible: plan the mission and head up the team.

A Great Real Estate Agent:

- Stays on top of the recent sales and price trends in your area
- Creates local marketing materials and strategies
- Makes recommendations on and/or hires other real estate team members
- Runs your open house(s) and other showings
- Gets your listing on all the important online search sites, perhaps even creates a virtual tour of your home. (The National Association of Realtors reports more than 90% of buyers do online searching first.)

The real estate agent should be your first priority for the Real Estate Team. Since she plays such a big role in your house's sale, you need a super pick.

We recommend you interview at least three agents before you make your choice.

Here are a Few Things to Ask During an Interview:

- Is she full-time?
- What's her level of education in her field, and how many years of experience does she have?
- How familiar is he with your neighborhood? Has he sold homes on your street?
- What's his track record? (Make sure you check out their HomeLight profile for a full run-down.)
- How many sellers does he represent at one time? How much of his work gets delegated?
- Are her fees negotiable?
- What is her customized marketing plan for your particular house?
- Will she show you references from previous clients?
- How often will he be in touch with you?

HomeLight's database contains hundreds of thousands of real estate agents. Using data analysis from millions of actual housing transactions, and your input about your own needs, we can provide personalized recommendations to get you started!

Do You Need a Real Estate Attorney?

Sure, you can hire one. But before you switch channels from Mission: Impossible to a legal drama, consider whether you really need one.

Top 1% Florida real estate agent Dylan Snyder labels real estate attorneys as problem solvers; for example, when someone tries to back out of a contract, or the buyer and seller have a conflict about a repair request.

But outside of problems, a real estate attorney is only necessary for complicated situations, such as selling huge estate properties or dealing with a 50-page builder contract.

“I don’t push it one way or another,” he says. “If it’s a straightforward situation, it’s not something I recommend, but they can certainly do it.” Some people want to be “ultra-ultra cautious,” but Dylan adds that a good real estate agent should be all you need to handle contracts, etc., and “experienced agents cost less” than attorneys.

Chances are your real estate agent can recommend an attorney, since they use them themselves, or you can try online at legalmatch.com.

Do You Need an Appraiser on Your Real Estate Team?

Dylan Snyder says no, absolutely not, in a normal situation where “the owner is a realistic seller” and the “numbers speak for themselves.”

An appraisal to assess the value of your home will happen, but that takes place once the seller and buyer have signed a purchase agreement. Before that, your real estate agent has the knowledge to create a listing price that reflects value.

An appraisal, even from a licensed, experienced appraiser, is still just an educated guess from a third party. Dylan Snyder says an appraiser’s opinion helps when he and a seller disagree about the value/listing price, or when there aren’t comparable sales in the area. Then, he says, he suggests they “step back a little” and get that third party opinion.

The National Association of Real Estate Appraisers provides a Search Directory on their web site.

Your buyer will hire a Home Inspector, but this is also someone for your Real Estate Team. Sellers who don’t like surprises at the last minute will benefit from having their own inspections done.

The American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) explains that inspections “cover the condition of the home’s heating system; central air conditioning system (temperature permitting); interior plumbing and electrical systems; the roof, attic and visible insulation; walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors; the foundation, basement and structural components.”

That’s a lot of valuable information about your home to have sooner rather than later, because you want:

- To know about problems before the buyer’s inspector finds them and the buyer demands costly repairs.
- To make decisions by yourself about what to repair and what to just disclose “as is”, without the buyer pressuring you to spend money.
- To have your own report to compare the buyer’s inspection to.

ASHI has a “Find An Inspector” tool for buyers and sellers!

Your ‘Prepare Your House for Sale’ Real Estate Team

What dream team members do you need to have your house make its best first impression when it goes on the market?

Part of that answer depends on what repairs you have to do and what systems need maintenance or updating. If your faucets drip and your furnace hasn't been serviced lately, these people need to be on your team!

But what about things beyond fixing actual problems? What kind of makeover, if any, should you think about?

Remodeling magazine's annual Cost vs. Value Report shows the return-on-investment for renovation work, the national trends and the ROI in your part of the country. And trends can change quickly! Recent information suggests that you might want team members who can:

- Update front doors and/or garage doors
- Prune or add color to your landscape for curb appeal, which includes getting rid of plants that block natural light in the house
- Insulate the attic
- Make your home more energy efficient: the NAHB reports that more than 60% of home buyers would spend more to save money in the long run through energy efficiency and green updates.
- Take down walls to create open living space.
- Change out cabinet fronts, hardware, lighting fixtures, countertops, sinks, and old appliances in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Update flooring.

If a contractor suggests building a new deck or another bathroom from scratch, or gutting the whole kitchen, consult the report before handing out a Team uniform.

- Of course there are the must-dos, and you can do them yourself, or hire someone to take them off your hands. HomeLight also has listings for contractors and vendors who can do these jobs:
- Clean. Really, really clean. Everything has to shine and sparkle, and stay that way.
- De-clutter. You want potential buyers to get an exciting sense of your house's… well, potential for them. The grandkids' fridge art and all the magazines have got to go for now. The National Association of Professional Organizers has members with many specialties to fit your needs.
- Paint. Tired, marked-up walls are like a gloomy face on a first date. Bubble-gum pink bedroom walls may raise a red flag. A fresh, neutral look will show off the wonderful features of your house.
- Get that curb appeal: new plants, tree pruning, new sod, or bright colors in the garden.

staging a home real estate team

Source: (Pixabay / Unsplash)

Does Your Real Estate Team Need a Home Stager?

What's this Home Stager trend that everyone is talking about? Does your Real Estate Team need one?

Pioneer stager Lori Matzke says professional staging "is shedding new light on how to promote a home… Professional home stagers are practiced in the art of preparing a home for resale. They work with the 'flow' of a home, eliminate clutter, edit and arrange furniture, and even assist in enhancing curb-appeal."

Working with your needs and budget, a home stager can:

- Consult on the arrangement of what's already in your rooms
- Supply just the right props for rooms that are almost show-ready
- Bring identity to that tricky or undefined space through furniture and accessories
- Fully furnish an empty home to make it a stunner

As top 1% Sacramento real estate agent Elizabeth Weintraub poetically expresses it, "Home staging is…magical… the art of creating moods. Professional stagers are highly skilled artists…"

staging a home to sell

Source: (Sarah Jane / Unsplash)

Stager Susan Atwell's story brings the facts into the picture: in 2006 she saw a friend's "as is" home get no offers in nine months. Then the friend called in a stager:

"The total transformation cost less than 1% of the listing price, and once staged, the home proceeded to sell in just 2 months, with multiple offers and the beginnings of a bidding war. At the time the home was listed, there was a 7- month inventory of homes glutting the market."

When the Real Estate Staging Association (RESA) studied staging results, they found the same thing. Homes that had been on the market an average of 156 days "as is" sold within 42 days after staging, which is 73% less time on the market.

Homes staged before listing sold 79% faster!

RESA has a Find a Stager tool to connect you.

Do You Need a Real Estate Photographer for Listing Photos?

You have a smartphone, right?

Wrong. Your house faces competition on those search sites.
You want to show the best features, shot from the best angle (hint: you don't get that standing in a room with your phone). You want photos to be eye-catchers and breath-takers.
Photographer Jay Groccia calls great real estate photos "inspirational." And necessary: "That was it – right there – that was your opportunity to grab that buyer's attention, and if they clicked back, you've lost them forever."

John McBay of Perfect Exposure Imaging agrees, saying it "requires…a keen sense of composition, the skills and equipment to attractively light the interior spaces, cameras and lenses that may be different from one room to the next, and the ability to edit the images to further enhance their appearance…"

A university study into buyer behavior showed that most buyers look at the photos first. A 2010 Redfin study found that listings with professional photographs got 61% more views, and that these houses sold from about $900 up to $18,000 more than homes listed without them. They repeated the study in 2016 and reached the same

conclusion: yes on the professional photos.
The cost varies by area, but the average is 0.09% of the median American house price. Your agent is often the one who hires the photographer for the listing shots. Insist on it.

Find a photographer in the Real Estate Photographers of America & International online Directory.

sell house real estate team

Source: (Pixabay / Unsplash)

The Last Real Estate Team Pick?

Having just provided a friendly ear to someone going through both selling and buying, I want to end this “dream real estate team” list with the members of the squad closest to you. Even the Mission: Impossible team members needed someone to have their backs sometimes.

Enlist family and friends to listen, to take kids and dog away from the house while work is done, to take you to a movie during the open house, and to cheer for you and your real estate team when the sale is complete!

Real Estate Team

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Contributing Author

Lin is a writer and educator with over 20 years of experience in her field. She graduated from Williams College with a B.A. in English and earned an M.A. in Literature from Northeastern University. She currently resides in Boston, Massachusetts.

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