

Find room for the right agent to buy or sell high-end home

KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL - MARCH 24, 2006

BY [M. Steele Brown](#) CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Buying and/or selling any home is a significant undertaking, but the stakes rise exponentially when that home crosses the \$500,000-plus line. Whether moving in or out, the right agent is key.

Chances are good this is a "last house" situation that finds buyers and sellers in possession of a fairly clear picture of what they expect or what they are offering, said Patrick Regan, broker/owner of [Coldwell Banker Regan Realtors](#) on Shawnee Mission Parkway.

"What you'll find on the higher end of the market in Kansas City are buyers who are more sophisticated," said Regan, who specializes in Kansas-side homes.

"More and more buyers have done their research ... before ever stepping inside, and most have agents they've worked with one to five times or more working with them. So a seller really needs someone with experience in the market to help represent you."

Finding a solid, experienced and sophisticated real estate agent who understands the high-end market -- and the neighborhoods in question -- is key to a successful transaction, said Sandy Palmer, an associate broker with Kansas City-based [Reece & Nichols](#).

"Whether you're selling your first home or your fourth, your agent has to know the market," Palmer said. "If we're talking about me, I know the close-in market ... around the Plaza on both sides of the state line.

"Mansions in Hyde Park are different from those in Hallbrook. They are simply different animals, and your agent better know that."

Listing agents should be able to recognize the value of the client's property and the home's context in terms of both the neighborhood and city at large.

"You are looking for someone who ... can explain the nature of your property to a buyer who simply doesn't know these things," Palmer said. "On the other hand, a buyer either needs education or a level of trust that their agent is on top of the market and is finding something that meets their needs.

"That is a time when networking among agents and the community at large is important. You cannot replace experience in this situation."

Both Palmer and Regan said that finding the right agent -- one who understands the client's needs and can communicate an action plan -- is easier for people already living in Kansas City who have an idea of what type of home they want and the general location they want to end up in.

Personal references from friends are always the best way to get started, but if that option isn't viable, drive the avenues and parkways in desirable neighborhoods to see who is listing houses. Then attend an open house or 12 and interview the agent to see whether there is a fit.

"Interview more than one. Competition ... forces us to come up with new and more creative ways to help clients," Regan said. "Communication is so important because it ... creates the kind of trust you'll need to have in someone handling something so important."

M. Steele Brown | Brown is a freelance writer in the Kansas City area.

REECE & NICHOLS



REECE & NICHOLS

Real Estate

Mortgage

Title

Insurance