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Real estate is one of the most competitive industries I know of. As a licensee for 20 years, and the daughter of 35-year industry veteran, I feel uniquely qualified to tell you there is NO lack of competition. We've worked the same area for years. Currently the 7,000 clients in our farm area report they receive more than 10 solicitations of real estate services per week through the mail, and nearly once a week an agent knocks on their door.

In fact, one of the biggest problems in the industry right now has to do with ethics and competitiveness-and cutting corners. In our area, discount agents even encourage potential clients to take advantage of experienced agents. They advise them to get a free market analysis from the neighborhood expert, then offer to do the same job for a lesser commission.

Is that fair? It sure is competitive.

Our team has seen entire offices sharing one computer programmer (which is supposed to be individually agent-owned) to cut costs. We've heard from assistants at discount brokerages that the agents are REQUIRED to double-end (also represent the Buyer) in order to make any profit. We've also seen a lot of emotional and financial damage caused by inexperienced agents and unlicensed assistants. When pressed, most of them claim they didn't intend to hurt anyone, they were just trying to survive in an extremely competitive industry.

The only benefits seasoned agents offer that new (or Internet only) ones don't are experience, local knowledge and area-specific expertise and trends-as well as negotiation skills. Allowing those who don't have the personal knowledge to use our knowledge does not benefit clients because there's no qualified to interpret the data.

Currently anyone from the public can access information about properties from the MLS over the Internet. Internet-only agents and brokers need to invest the time, energy and effort to learn about the market(s) they want to work in, just as other traditional agents do. Truly Internet-savvy agents already have an advantage *without* all listing data-it's as close as the telephone or e-mail.

The new IDX policy is fair for consumers as well as Realtors. Some sellers don't want a sign, a lockbox or strangers showing up unannounced at their doors. Part of what they pay agents for is their marketing expertise as well as a controlled balance for exposure and privacy.

Just as all other agents and potential clients do, an Internet-based agent should call or send an e-mail to obtain any data desired. One of the key factors in agents-agent and agent-client relations is finding out whether or not we can effectively communicate and work together. A reciprocal IDX arrangement as outlined in the new policy rewards like for like information sharing.

As the economy and job market continues drying up, more people from other industries come into real estate. In our area, I've heard that ~ 25% of the agents in it now have less than three

years' experience. Many of the new agents will work for almost no commission in the hope of getting referrals.

Residential real estate is the most important investment most individuals make during their lifetimes. These decisions are too important to subject to the next get-rich-quick-real-estate-wanna-bes. It takes time, education and experience to provide excellent service to clients--the market is extremely competitive with knowledgeable people already.

God Bless You,

Michelle & Judy Carr and the Get Re\$ult\$ Team

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