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# Honest marketing proposals get listings

*5 basic expectations sellers and agents should agree on*

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[Agreement](#) image via Shutterstock.

Journey back with me to those first few months after becoming a bona fide real estate agent: You had a desk full of brand-new file folders, a shiny name badge, and a go-get'em attitude that just wouldn't quit!

If you were anything like me, you'd also invested in a full-grain leather briefcase and some hoity-toity shoes, too. Fake it till you make it, right? Right!

Until the new excitement wears off and you find yourself shrinking in the back row of the office meeting and thinking *please don't call on me!*

Oh, those office meetings. What I once lived for, I began to dread as week after week agents announced new listings, buyer needs and recent closings. And week after week, I had to say, "Skip," when it was my turn to talk.

In my mind, "skip" sounded a lot like "I'm a big loser!"

After four weeks of "losing," I wasn't having any more of it. I got on my telephone and cold-called every builder in the Yellow Pages. Did they have any unsold property? Any at all? I could sell it, guaranteed.

And that's when I tripped up a bit.

I was so desperate for a listing -- any listing -- that I made irresponsible promises with a caveat that no builder could resist. I guaranteed a sale in 90 days, or a canceled listing. You know what? I got three listings right off the bat!

Of course, none of the houses were actually completed. And they were all going to be overpriced. Jewels among thorns. Mansions in a mobile home park. Oh, but I just didn't care. I agreed with *everything* the builder said, including open house Saturdays in a half-framed home. Hey, all I wanted was something to announce on Tuesday morning.

I think you already know the end of the story. It involved a lot of egg, my face, and a sorry start to a career. The experience did, however, lead me to the five basic listing expectations to be discussed and agreed upon between seller and agent.

### **1. Communication.**

You really have to be honest, here. It's not just *how* your client wants to communicate, but *how often*. Do you promise to return their text or phone call immediately? Within an hour? The next day? Whenever it's convenient for you? Promising them that you are available 24/7 only sets you up for massive failure when in reality, you stop answering your phone at 8 o'clock in the evening.

### **2. Reporting.**

I've had clients expect full-page, typed reports after every showing. I've also had clients tell me *not* to call unless it was with an offer. Others simply look forward to my monthly community market reports and call it good. But you won't know what your client's expectations are unless you ask! Come to a consensus on this point from the get-go.

### **3. Exposure.**

This is one area in which *you* must clearly know your limits before you negotiate with a prospect. What kind of advertising is effective in your market? Newspaper? Magazine? Billboard? What kind of online tools do you have ready to rock 'n' roll the moment the listing goes live? Clearly outline your plan of action -- and be ready to fulfill each promised media. This is one area that the client will undoubtedly investigate.

### **4. Extras.**

This is what differentiates you from the 5,000 other Realtors in your MLS. Do you donate a part of your commission back to the community? Volunteer with a certain service organization? Or, is your "extra" specific to each listing? Maybe you provide a decorator-stager, prepay for inspections, or offer handyman services. Whatever it is, be consistent and certain.

### **5. Performance warranty.\***

Given what I knew about the listings I was taking on and the uphill battle I faced, I never ever should have promised a 90-day sale. First-timer's folly! Instead, be realistic with sales timelines.

Be honest with market values. Your integrity and reputation will certainly reflect a satisfied performance warranty.

Once I learned how to create an honest marketing proposal, the listings rolled in more frequently. Armed with strong coffee and a plan, my new file folders started to fill up. My briefcase got heavy!

But best of all, I no longer feared Tuesday mornings.

\* Your Marketing Plan - What's in it for them!