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How to get deal moving with an incompetent real estate agent

Raise the bar in your real estate business

BY BERNICE ROSS



[Lazy businessman image](#) via Shutterstock.com.

Editor's note: This is the third of a four-part series.

For more than a decade, our tag line at RealEstateCoach.com has been "*Seven percent of the agents do 93 percent of the business -- the rest don't have coaches!*" Hundreds of thousands of licensees do one or fewer transactions a year. How can you cope when the other agent is inexperienced or simply clueless?

A widespread complaint about the real estate industry is the lack of professionalism. Licensing requirements are seen as lax. Furthermore, the industry has been unsuccessful in raising standards. Realtors continue to rank below used-car salespeople and attorneys in terms of customer satisfaction.

While you may be working hard to raise the bar in your own business, what can you do to cope with those agents who are unwilling or unable to raise the bar in their businesses?

Anger about cooperating agents is a recurrent theme you will see in many agent blog posts. If an agent doesn't have the skills or just has a lousy attitude, this often means that you will have to do most of the work to close the deal. In fact, here's how one agent described it:

"I can't believe it. The other agent faxed me the offer, expected me to do all the work, never showed up for inspections or anything else. He wasn't even there for the closing; he had the title company messenger his check to him. What really irked me was that his clients gave him a glowing review online when I did all the work!"

Byron Van Arsdale, co-owner of RealEstateCoach.com and a "Master Certified Coach," describes this situation as being "slain by an expectation." The agent had an expectation that the other agent would do his fair share of the work. He did not. She also had an expectation that the agent would not be rewarded with a positive online review.

This issue isn't new. I discovered more than 30 years ago that if I wanted my deals to close, I often would have to do the work myself. Because the market was booming at the time, there were a lot of new agents who were untrained but had clients who would write offers.

Rather than becoming upset by this, I simply changed my mindset so my expectation was that I would have to do most of the work to close the deal. For the 20 percent of those transactions where the cooperating agent was highly competent, it came as welcomed surprise.

Tip No. 6: Take it up the food chain.

How many times have you had an offer or a transaction issue and you cannot get the listing agent to call you back? This can be a dicey situation. If you become angry at the other agent or report her to her manager, you now have someone who is hostile towards you on the other side of the deal. This also means she may be uncooperative if you ever have to do business with her again.

Nevertheless, you have an obligation to your clients to present their offer in a timely fashion and to close the transaction. If you have to take the situation to the agent's manager, you can do it in a way that will cause the least amount of damage to the situation with the other agent.

Rather than assuming that the agent is deliberately trying to avoid you, it could be the person is ill, there was an emergency, or she simply forgot to recharge her cell phone. Before you take this situation up the food chain, be sure you have made a concerted effort to reach the other agent.

When you do contact the agent's supervising broker or manager, frame the situation as if the agent is not trying to avoid you or is being a lazy bum. For example:

"Mr. Manager, I've been trying to reach Sally Agent to present an offer we have on her listing at 123 Main St. I was wondering how to proceed. I've tried reaching Sally on her cell as well as on the voice mail at your office. I'm wondering if she is OK. My buyers are eager to have their offer presented. What do you recommend?"

When Sally's manager contacts her, he will be inquiring as to whether she is all right, rather than accusing her of not doing her job. If she is being uncooperative, chances are she will attempt to be cooperative in front of her manager.

On the other hand, the manager probably knows the truth about Sally's level of competence. By asking the manager's advice on how to handle the situation, even if Sally is unhappy, the decision on how to proceed was made by Sally's supervisor.

Like it not, she has little recourse against you. When you do talk to Sally, be sure to tell her you called her manager because you were concerned about her well-being. If she becomes angry, listen and reiterate that you were only concerned about whether she was OK.

When it comes to dealing with incompetent agents, the best recourse is to expect to have to do the work, and when they refuse to cooperate, take it to their manager. In the rare case where that doesn't work, turn it over to your manager, and if need be, to your board of Realtors if there is an ethics issue.

Bernice Ross, CEO of RealEstateCoach.com, is a national speaker, trainer and author of the National Association of Realtors' No. 1 best-seller, "Real Estate Dough: Your Recipe for Real Estate Success." Hear Bernice's five-minute daily real estate show, just named "new and notable" by iTunes, at www.RealEstateCoachRadio.com. You can contact her at Bernice@RealEstateCoach.com or [@BRoss](https://twitter.com/BRoss) on Twitter.