

REAL ESTATE

What to look for in choosing the right realty agent

A year ago in this column I related Realtor Diane Williams' criteria for a successful realty agent.

Now I've asked her what should prospective buyers or sellers of a home look for in choosing a real estate representative, and how should they go about getting the right one.

Williams is an associate broker with Weichert Realtors in Montgomery County's Spring House. She's noted for her enthusiasm and effectiveness in her dealings.

Her productivity has earned citations from the industry. Letters from her clients attest to the thoughtfulness, professionalism and success she brings to her work.

Drawing on her 18 years' experience in the business of residential real estate, she didn't hesitate in answering my question for the benefit of buyers and sellers.

"Among the first things to look for are a Realtor's credentials," Williams said. "Designations of accreditation are important because they indicate the Realtor is serious about his or her profession and wants to be on the cutting edge of the real estate industry."

Some designations she cited by way of example are Associate Broker, CRS (Certified Residential Specialist), and ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative).

A creditable resume and let-

ters of recommendation from clients are other positives that should be taken into account, she said.

Williams emphasized the importance of a Realtor making effective use of the latest technology in getting and conveying information.

"Although real estate is referred to as a 'people business,'" she said, "today's top Realtors must be comfortable with technology and have basic computer skills. Buyers and sellers are consulting the Internet.

"Multiple Listing information can be promptly e-

mailed to a prospective buyer. A home for sale can be quickly posted on the Internet at realtor.com. And many buyers and sellers find it convenient to communicate with their Realtors through e-mail."

Professionalism, a strong work ethic and enthusiasm are essentials for a good Realtor, according to Williams. She said they could be detected in the Realtor's personal appearance, presentation and manner.

"Talking with the Realtor, for example, reveal that the agent

enjoys his work, is excited about selling your property or finding you a home.

A realty agent should be proactive and have a high energy level."

Something else to consider, she said, is an agent's "reputation in the real estate community" as a "team player that's willing to cooperate and work with other agents" so as to help you in seeing properties and in securing a sales agreement.

Williams said the seller of a home should expect from the Realtor "a written marketing plan that specifies the type of advertising, Internet exposure, communications and feedback."

She said the homebuyer should ask the Realtor for "a

written plan outlining the procedure that will be followed in finding that 'perfect' property."

As for locating the right Realtor, Williams likened it to "finding a doctor, lawyer or dentist: Ask friends, relatives and coworkers."

She added: "Check the Internet for Realtor Web sites. For instance, realtor.com is the site for the National Association of Realtors.

"Attend open houses in your area, especially if you're interested in selling your property.

"And, of course, interview Realtors — three is the number usually recommended."

For more information, call Diane Williams at 215-855-5656.



Realty Notes

by Robert E. Trea