Old-school Realtors lose touch without today's technology

By Carl Medford, CRS

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I received a call the other day from a prospective buyer complaining about another Realtor. While I normally don't entertain such calls, I thought I might be able to help in this case.

Their complaint? "They don't communicate." I called their Realtor and discovered a similar grievance: "I can never get ahold of them!"

I quickly discovered the problem: the buyer was a 20-something who communicated via text, Facebook and Twitter. They didn't have a home phone and their cellphone voicemail box wasn't set up.

On the other hand, their agent (much older) didn't have a Facebook account, preferred calls to their office phone number and had an older cell phone with no texting capability. They weren't in the practice of giving out their cell number and wouldn't have known what a tweet was if it bit them. Preferred communications were voice messages on their work phone or, occasionally, by email.

Both were communicating… in ways that didn't work for the other person. In reality, they weren't communicating at all.

Today, we have four generations of Realtors representing clients. Many were selling homes before the advent of the internet, cell phones, etc. They remember the introduction of faxing, still have answering machines and use desktop computers for business… in their office. Access to property profiles on their phone? To them, that's the stuff of Star Trek.

Conversely, younger buyers were born with an iPhone in their hand. They can text blindfolded while simultaneously posting on Facebook. They're the Apple generation and they interact all day long. They frequently have small notebook-style devices they slip in a backpack or purse, won't visit a restaurant or buy anything without consulting Yelp, Tweet constantly and, when house shopping, are constantly monitoring the flow of homes on their smart phones with apps from Trulia, Realtor.com, Zillow and so on.

While many “old-school” Realtors are grappling with the nuances of the Communications Age, younger generations can’t comprehend there might be any other way of communicating than the ones they’re using. As you can imagine, it can cause real problems when trying to buy or sell a home.

Real estate on your agenda for 2013? Choose a Realtor that understands how to communicate the way you do. Real estate transactions are time sensitive and information critical; make sure there’s a steady flow back and forth and that everyone is effectively bridging the gap together.

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