



Talking Real Estate with Steve Slicker

Hi folks,

I thought today that I might cheer a few people up and mention an aspect of the property market slowdown that some of you will enjoy. No not the affordability factor coming back, something that for some people is even better. What's that Steve? I hear you ask. The ever shrinking number of real estate agents!!

I know as an industry we sometimes don't help ourselves, the complaints I tend to hear from the general public relate to shoddy service, vendors not knowing what's going with their homes etc, not to mention the horror stories that get into papers and on Fair Go and the like. The public perception is that we operate dodgy practices, do nothing to earn our fees, play too much golf (I wish) and essentially earn money for jam.

This is not an easy industry to work in. In Upper Hutt over the last 4 years 3 companies closed down, LJ Hooker, First National and The Real Estate Warehouse. And those were in a great market! This year one of the largest, cheaper companies Go Gecko has closed down 9 offices, The Jones's closed down in February. Check out this paper today, see if you can spot which (ex) agents photos have disappeared.

So is it a bad thing to have less agents? Personally I don't think so. As the market gets harder the experienced and hopefully empathic agents will do better. The cream rises to the top and in today's market this is especially true. The focus in real estate, in my opinion, should have always been service first, sales second. If the service is delivered the sale will follow. Those people whose homes I have appraised over the years will have heard me say this before, they will also have seen my service guarantee where among other things I clearly state to a vendor that if I don't return your call within 3 business hours I will take \$500 off the fee. Just so you know, I've never had to pay it! Why do I put that in writing? To justify the service will be given and if it's not then sack me immediately.

Changing subject, many congratulations to Tommy's in Wellington which in June sold more property than any single real estate office in New Zealand. Well done chaps, you can only do that by being brilliant and delivering GREAT service.

If you need property advice or there are any property topics that you would like covered, please drop me a line at steveslicker@xtra.co.nz alternatively write to me at Tommys Real Estate, 897 Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt. I will do my best to answer any questions and if there isn't space in this column, then I will get a personal reply to you asap.

Kind regards,

Steve Slicker

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