

SOUND OFF *Cathy Brandt*

What should I know if I want to become a Realtor?

I am asked several times a year, "How difficult is it to become a Realtor?" Most people think it is as simple as passing the real estate exam, which is no easy task. I was fortunate to pass the exam the first time I took it, but most agents do not. There is a lot of real estate law to know, so studying diligently for the exam is essential.

Once you have passed the exam, it is important to sign with a broker that will offer you free marketing materials and as much training as possible. Spending your own money on these things

would be counterproductive. Then, you should find a seasoned agent willing to have you shadow them. This is the best way to get to know how this business works. No book or classroom will truly prepare you with everything that you need to know. As with any business, selling is hard work, and learning the day-to-day details quickly is critical to your success.

Relationships are your bread and butter in this business, and building a large sphere of potential clients is important. Create a database of friends, family, co-

workers and acquaintances. Send mailings and e-mails to let them know that you have started your new business. And make a point of telling everyone that you meet what you do for a living. You would be surprised at how many conversations are sparked by simply saying that you are a Realtor.

Most importantly, if you wish to work in this business, you need to project confidence and be thick-skinned. You must be prepared to be doubted, questioned and rejected by people who think they know the business as well

(or better) than you. Even after years of experience, there will be clients who will second-guess your every move.

And you will be on call 24/7 because you must act quickly in this business, because time is of the essence. You will need to work hard, and sometimes for long hours, but helping someone find their dream home and seeing the smiles on their faces makes it all worthwhile.

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