

TEXAS REALTOR®

Succeed in Texas Real Estate

May 2020 \$3.50

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

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100 Years of
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Advocacy p.24

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Shouldn't be
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SHAPING
TEXAS

1920-2020

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We are BOLD.

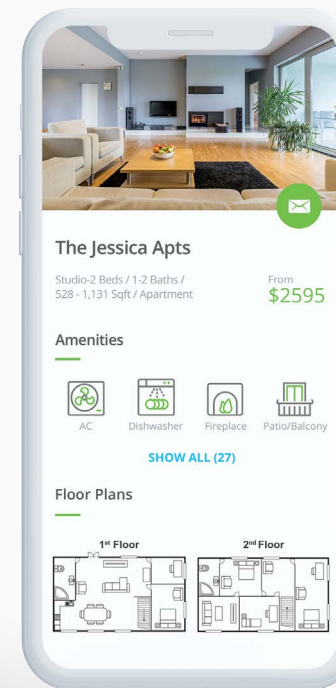
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per month
(minimums apply)

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Online maintenance	✓	✓
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Vendor payments	✓	✓
Owner payments & reports	✓	✓
Live chat support	✓	✓
Renters insurance	✓	✓
Resident screening*	✓	✓
Corporate websites*	✓	✓
Property websites		✓
Online state-based lease documents		✓
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Invoice approval & processing		✓
Corporate accounting		✓
Customizable financial statements		✓
Menu-level security		✓

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“Yardi Breeze is easy to use. Tenant tracking, maintenance requests and online support ... I love everything about it!”

Danielle Drozdek
RB Homes, Inc.

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AS TEXAS REALTORS®, WE WORK TOGETHER TO HELP MEET THE NEEDS OF OTHERS.

Let's continue to do whatever is needed to help make a difference, protect our profession, and help consumers across our great state during this challenging time.

While social distancing, check out ways you can help us continue to do what we are called to do: **protect the American dream for all Texans!**



PROMOTE

Share why TREPAC is important to you as we commemorate 2020 as the centennial year of Texas REALTORS®.

- **SHOW YOUR WHY** – Take a selfie with one word describing why TREPAC is important to you.
- **SHARE YOUR WHY** – Post your selfie to social media using the hashtags #100reasonswhy, #trepactogether and #shapingtexas. Be sure to tag #TREPAC or @TexasTREPAC on Twitter. (Take care to avoid words that have fundraising ties, like "invest" or "give", as certain TREPAC communications cannot be posted publicly.)



ADVOCATE

Our ongoing advocacy efforts ensure the interests of Texas REALTORS® and our clients are protected, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **BUSINESS OPERATIONS** – New federal laws include real estate professionals as eligible for relief including small business loans and unemployment insurance, thanks to the National Association of REALTORS®.
- **REAL ESTATE AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE** – Gov. Abbott issued an executive order on March 31 setting a statewide standard for essential services to include real estate during the COVID-19 crisis. Contact your local REALTOR® association, city, and/or county for the latest information for your area.
- **2020 CENSUS** – Ensure Texas is counted in the 2020 Census! Encourage Texans to complete their survey at my2020census.gov
- **FAIR HOUSING** – April is Fair Housing Month. Help honor the anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and recommit to expanding equal access to housing.



CONNECT

Check out these resources from Texas REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS® to ensure you stay connected.

- texasrealestate.com/coronavirus
 Check your inbox for the daily Texas REALTORS® COVID-19 Update
- nar.realtor/coronavirus

Learn more at www.trepac.com/together

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Chairman

Greetings, Texas REALTORS®...

On March 6, your Strategic Planning Committee, senior leadership team, and key staff wrapped up months of preliminary research and two days of intense on-site planning for the future of our profession, the association, its members, and the consumers they serve. As we headed home from Austin, we knew COVID-19 was coming, but none of us could have imagined what would ultimately unfold. Completion of the plan almost immediately gave way to urgent needs for relocating staff in compliance with shelter-in-place orders, communications with elected officials affirming the essential status of real estate services, creation of forms and business resources to aid in the safe delivery of those services, and formulating alternative ways to communicate and conduct the business of our association. Just this week, we were able to take a breath and revisit the preliminary strategic plan, assuming much of it might need to be scrapped.

That's when it hit me. The Oxford Dictionary defines *normal* as average or typical. Does anybody remember a time when our profession was normal, average, or typical? There is no "new normal," because there was never a normal. Normal doesn't describe our clients, transactions, markets, or members—and it never has.

A century ago this year, we were founded fresh out of a deadly flu pandemic, and since then we've been periodically disrupted by depressions, recessions, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods, fires, and the "dreaded" technology. Disruption is the only thing that is normal for us. We are experts at pivoting, planning, redirecting, negotiating, compromising, and creating opportunity in the face of challenges. Will that strategic plan draft we created just a few short weeks ago need to be revised? Perhaps, but only slightly. The strategic plans created by visionary past leaders prepared us well for today, and even tomorrow, because they presumed disruption itself as normal. Ours must position us politically, professionally, and fiscally for the inevitable disruptions beyond tomorrow, and we knew that when it was conceived. Well done, team!

Cindi Bulla **Cindi Bulla**

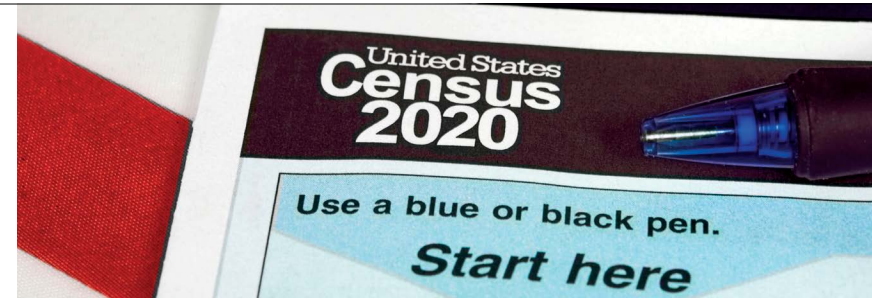
WE ARE EXPERTS AT PIVOTING, PLANNING, REDIRECTING, NEGOTIATING, COMPROMISING, AND CREATING OPPORTUNITY IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES.



TEXAS REALTORS® IS ADVOCATING FOR YOU

Since the onset of restrictions related to COVID-19, your state association has been in regular contact with government officials and state agencies. These communications, for example, resulted in detailed guidance for members directly from the Texas Workforce Commission about filing unemployment claims.

For the most up-to-date information about unemployment or other issues related to COVID-19 affecting your business, visit texasrealestate.com/coronavirus. REALTOR® members also can call the Texas REALTORS® Legal Hotline at 800-873-9155—it's available 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central, Monday through Friday.



2020 Census

YOU CAN HELP TEXAS WITH A COMPLETE COUNT

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 16 million people were not counted in the 2010 census. An undercount in the 2020 census could be costly for Texas. In fact, the Texas Demographic Center estimates that missing just 1% of the population could mean \$300 million of lost federal funds for communities in the Lone Star State.

The Texas residents most likely to be missed in the 2020 census are minorities, as minority communities have been undercounted in the past. According to The Leadership Conference Education Fund, about 7% of young African American children were not counted in the 2010 census, and one-third of the Hispanic population in the U.S. lives in difficult-to-count areas. A recent survey showed that only 55% of Asian Americans said they were extremely or very likely to fill out the census form, compared to 68% of all Americans.

As a REALTOR®, you can help ensure the 2020 census is inclusive of everyone. Visit texasrealestate.com/2020census for outreach materials you can use that are specific to hard-to-count communities and other materials to share with all Texans about the importance of the census.

The census counts every person living in the United States regardless of their country of origin or immigration status. All 2020 census responses are kept confidential and private, and responses cannot be shared or used against you by any government agency or court.

TELL LOCAL OFFICIALS PROPERTY OWNERS NEED TAX RELIEF

As part of the annual property tax process, local governments such as city councils and county commissions will start holding public hearings in August to get feedback on their proposed tax rates.

These rates will determine how much Texans pay in property taxes.

This year is especially critical for taxpayers to tell local elected officials if they need property tax relief—because these are the decision-makers who can make it happen.

The passage of REALTOR®-supported property tax reform legislation in 2019 gives taxpayers more transparency in the process used to set these rates and provides convenient ways to share feedback with local elected officials.

Look for more information from Texas REALTORS® in the coming months as the association works to educate members and consumers about the importance of engaging in this process.



NAR FUNDS 2 MONTHS OF TELEHEALTH BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS



The National Association of REALTORS® is funding two months of Members TeleHealth for members who don't currently have access to telemedicine.

The enrollment deadline is May 31 or when a pre-established limit of enrollees is reached. The two-month period begins at enrollment. Members will receive a significantly reduced rate of \$7 per month after the two-month period.

NAR says more than 25,000 members and their families are receiving TeleHealth coverage.

Members who sign up can access MDLIVE, a network of doctors professionally trained to practice via telemedicine. Non-emergency issues treated include allergies, asthma, rashes, nausea, and pink eye. TeleHealth should not be used for emergencies. Same-day access is available.

To enroll, visit realtorsinsurancemarketplace.com/telehealth-offer.

INSIGHTS

BRING YOUR VOICE TO A TEXAS REALTORS® COMMITTEE

Deadline to apply is June 19

Texas REALTORS® is a member-driven organization, and you can help set the association's direction by serving on a committee. Volunteer to be part of one of dozens of committees that:

- Set legislative priorities
- Work on the budget
- Review legal developments
- Identify emerging technology tools
- Create public policy positions
- And more.

Other committees focus on specialty areas, such as:

- Commercial
- Property management
- Global
- Housing Initiatives
- Professional Development
- Professional Standards
- Young Professional Network
- Diversity & Inclusion
- And others.



Visit texasrealestate.com/committees by June 19 to view the full list of committees and to submit the online volunteer form.

FREE CODE OF ETHICS TRAINING

Register today for the free May 19 remote training on the NAR Code of Ethics, provided by Texas REALTORS®. Participants can access this training from home.

The May 19 class is the last free Code of Ethics course being offered at this time. It meets NAR's 2021 ethics requirement and carries 3 hours of CE credit. To register, go to texasrealestate.com/findacourse, then in the Course field, select *The NAR Code of Ethics*. Choose the city nearest you for the May 19 course and call the listed contact, or register from the link.



DESIGN THE TEXAS REALTORS® CENTENNIAL T-SHIRT

If you've ever looked at a commemorative T-shirt design and thought, *I could do that*, now's your chance! Create a design to enter in the Texas REALTORS® Centennial T-shirt Design Competition. The winning design will be printed on T-shirts and available for purchase online and during the Texas REALTORS® Conference August 31-September 3 in San Antonio. The winning entry also will receive a \$500 cash prize and a free T-shirt. For contest rules and to submit your entry by the June 15 deadline, visit texasrealestate.com/100.



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RECOGNIZE REALTORS® WHO GIVE BACK

Are you a REALTOR® who makes positive contributions to your community, or do you know a REALTOR® or real estate firm or association that does? As part of the Texas REALTORS® centennial celebration, we're shining the spotlight on members who lead by example, going above and beyond to improve the lives of those around them. Nominate your local association, your company, your team, a fellow member, or yourself. The 100 Acts of Kindness Award will recognize 100 members across Texas for their community involvement. Visit texasrealestate.com/100 to nominate yourself or others by the June 15 deadline.



FINALLY

say yes to success.

If you want to be productive, the right tools make the difference.

Impress your clients with our professional suite of marketing materials. Promote your personal brand and market your listings using our digital marketing resources. Win more listings and justify your commission with our unique listing presentation. Plus, manage your clients, your marketing and your transactions through our unique technology platform. Success just got a whole lot easier.



It's time to maximize your commission. And maximize your career. Give your local Weichert office a call today or visit jobs.Weichert.com

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KNOW BEFORE YOU GROW



Interest in backyard farming has grown in recent years. Some homebuyers aren't just interested in a few planters—they are asking about chicken coops, rainwater collection, composting, and selling crops. Know where to direct curious clients.

Don't Have a Cow (or Maybe You Can)

Your city's land development code will tell you the rules that govern animals on residential properties. What's allowed can vary widely by city or other jurisdiction, so clients interested in urban farming activities should be sure to check first. It may be legal to keep a cow in one city and not in another, even though the properties are identical.

Many cities allow homeowners to keep smaller animals, such as chickens or rabbits, with only a few restrictions. Bee colonies are often permitted, too. Larger animals require more

elbow room; your clients' properties may not have enough space to legally house them.

Would-be urban farmers also should check homeowners association rules and other entities that govern uses on a property.

Save for a Rainy Day

Rainwater collection is a great way to conserve resources. Texas doesn't charge state sales tax on rainwater harvesting equipment and supplies. Check to see if your city, county, or local utility offers incentives for installing systems. Homeowners can treat and drink rainwater or use it to irrigate their backyard gardens. As with other activities, rules may apply to placement or size of rainwater-collection equipment.

Get the Dirt

Composting keeps biodegradable food waste out of the garbage. Your city may

pick up compostable materials as part of its waste management services.

Homeowners generally can compost their own yard trimmings and vegetable waste without a permit but would likely need permits to compost meat, fish, dairy, oils and greases, and disposable diapers, among other items.

Bring to Market

Homeowners who want to sell their homegrown goods from a farm stand on their property or directly out of their home should look at local rules regarding onsite businesses, such as parking, signage and sales to the public.

Keep in mind when receiving questions about urban farming that you can reduce your risk by pointing clients to the entities that regulate these activities rather than providing an opinion in an area in which you are not an expert.

Did you know that the Texas General Land Office (GLO) publicizes state lands for sale on its website? Visit glo.texas.gov, select *Land*, and look under *State Land Sales* to view available properties. These lands may include tax foreclosures and undeveloped spaces.

The GLO may sell properties that the governor deems underutilized. Sales typically take place through an auction, sealed bid sale, or real estate broker. The state can make direct sales once the property is available to the public.

For more information on individual properties, contact the listed sales agent.

STATE LAND FOR SALE

Q&A

WITH KEEYAN SABZ

NAR's *REALTOR® Magazine* named Houston's Keeyan Sabz to its 30 Under 30 Class of 2020. The associate broker with Intero Real Estate Services logged \$10.6 million in individual sales volume and 30 transaction sides last year. Sabz shared with *Texas REALTOR®* what he's learned so far.



How do you turn a happy client into an advocate for your business?

My main philosophy is to "treat others as you would like to be treated." When I'm showing homes to clients, I'm not just trying to close a deal but build a trusting relationship by advising clients on the pros and cons of the houses we view. I feel my clients appreciate that and look forward to what my feedback is because they know I am honest and won't hold back any negative comments for them to consider, even if they love the home. It helps build trust and confidence in me. If they trust me to assist them, they will trust me with their family and friends.

What advice would you have for REALTORS® who are just getting started?

Forget about just getting a sale, and show you care about your clients. Find your niche and build your business from there. There are many ways to build your business, so find what works for you and don't worry about what others say doesn't work for them. Leverage your sphere. My first listing came from a family friend and I leveraged that listing to grow my business. Real estate is constantly evolving, so stay ahead and up to date with market trends. Never be afraid to ask questions. Every transaction is different and you will constantly learn something new or face a new situation.

What motivates you?

My love of helping my clients achieve their real estate goals. The joy and appreciation a client has at closing is an indescribable feeling, knowing I was part of a process where they trusted me with one of their biggest financial decisions. Also, to distinguish myself and never stop learning by always striving to be the best version of myself.

How do you know when you have made a great sale?

When I receive reviews from clients where their experience mimics my philosophy to "treat others as you would like to be treated." Knowing they truly enjoyed working with me, and felt I wasn't just assisting a client, but a friend, by always being honest and giving critical feedback for things they may not have considered to help them make the most informed decision. Of course, a referral from a past client is the greatest compliment I can receive. No one ever refers someone they wouldn't trust to a friend or family member.

PUBLIC DATA TO SHARE WITH CLIENTS

Most buyers want to learn as much as possible about the properties they are considering. There is a wealth of publicly available information online that you can share with your clients.

Crime statistics: The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) compiles crime statistics searchable by county. Many cities and counties offer crime maps on their websites. txucr.nibrs.com

Sex offender registry: Texas DPS also maintains the state's sex offender registry, which is searchable by name and address, city, and ZIP code. records.txdps.state.tx.us/SexOffenderRegistry

U.S. Census data: The U.S. Census provides detailed population information. The most recent completed census took place in 2010, but the federal government publishes updated data and projections between censuses. data.census.gov/cedsci

School rankings: The Texas Education Agency's site offers data on academic performance by school district. analyze.txschools.gov

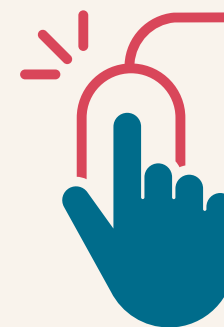
Flood maps: FEMA provides interactive flood maps that show potential risk areas. msc.fema.gov/portal/search

Water quality: The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) presents data on drinking water quality and standards compliance. <https://dww2.tceq.texas.gov/DWWW/>

Air quality: TCEQ also forecasts air quality for major cities. Visit tceq.texas.gov > Air > Air Quality and Monitoring.

Traffic and road conditions: The Texas Department of Transportation has traffic maps, road closures, and incidents on its website. transguide.dot.state.tx.us

REMEMBER to comply with fair housing laws and the Code of Ethics, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity under the Code of Ethics), familial status, or disability. Access to public data should be provided equally and on a consistent basis.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS REMOTELY



Texas REALTORS® offers many benefits you may find useful during these challenging times. The services listed below can be accessed remotely and can help keep your business up and running. You can find a full list of services by visiting texasrealestate.com, selecting *For REALTOR® Members > Member Benefits > Alphabetical List of Benefits*.

Coronavirus Updates: Texas REALTORS® has compiled information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit texasrealestate.com/coronavirus for more resources.

DocuSign: Members can receive a 20% discount on the company's electronic signatures and related transaction management. Visit docusign.com/tar to purchase.

FloorPlanOnline: Members receive free unlimited virtual tours, up to 25 photos in a gallery and video, as well as email support during business hours. Visit floorplanonline.com/tar for more information.

Legal Hotline: The Texas REALTORS® Legal Hotline is available to members weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central Time, excluding holidays. Call 800-873-9155 for answers to real estate law questions, including information related to the new COVID-19 forms.

Office Depot/OfficeMax: Members can receive discounts up to 60% off office supplies and printing by visiting texasrealestate.com/card and clicking on *To Shop Online, Click Here*. Cleaning and breakroom supplies, fresh and frozen food, and basic supplies are also discounted. Office Depot/OfficeMax offers free next business day delivery on orders over \$50, as well as other shipping and delivery options. Curbside pickup is available in most locations.

Online Learning: Texas REALTORS® offers hundreds of scheduled virtual learning classes through texasrealestate.com. Use the *Find a Course* search function to select opportunities, such as the NAR Code of Ethics training. The association's education partners also offer online real estate courses.

SmartMove Tenant Screening: Members can use the code TXREALTORS2020 at texasrealtors.mysmartmove.com to receive \$10 off one screening each month. Criminal reports and credit-based leasing recommendations cost \$25.

TaxBot: This app offers a free 14-day trial. Members who sign up receive three extra months of service for the first year. TaxBot offers IRS-compliant expense tracking, GPS mileage tracking, cloud storage, and bank integration.

TechTeamOne: TechTeamOne gives members computer and technical assistance. The company will run a free diagnostic scan for customers. Members can purchase discounted services, or upgrade to an unlimited service plan. Call 855-888-7441 for more information.

zipForm: Your Texas REALTORS® membership gives you zipForm Plus, online access to forms and transactions; zipVault, a place to store transactions for as long as you have an active account; and free unlimited Digital Ink electronic signatures. Members also receive discounts on zipForm Mobile and zipForm Standard editions. Members also can receive 24-hour customer support on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Central Time support on weekends. Training webinars are also available.

Be sure to check out NAR's member benefits such as digital marketing tools and webinars. Visit nar.realtor, select *Membership* and then *REALTOR® Benefits Program*. NAR's Right Tools, Right Now initiative makes the association's products and services free or discounted to members. The tools can be accessed at nar.realtor/right-tools-right-now.

Your local association may also offer additional member benefits.

3 TIPS FOR BETTER ONLINE MEETINGS

With more meetings taking place remotely, you want people listening, questioning, and offering ideas. Here are three tips for more engaging online meetings from Howard Tiersky, coauthor with Heidi Wisbach of *Impactful Online Meetings: How to Run Polished Virtual Working Sessions That Are Engaging and Effective*.

Turn on video - Encourage or require participants to turn on their video cameras. This makes participants part of "the show" versus remaining in private. They're less likely to multi-task—an engagement killer—since they can be seen.

Give people roles - Involve as many people as possible with presentation roles, so they do not attend the meeting in a passive mode of watching a webinar.

Use the chat feature - Increase participation and get feedback by asking others to answer a question with short answers in the chat feature. Not only will you know they are still there, but you are in dialogue with your audience.

Don't be surprised if you find people enjoying working together virtually and getting more done than ever before.



Clients getting tired of cramped apartment living?

Help them purchase a home with down payment assistance from TSAHC.

Several assistance options available.



tsahc
T E X A S
State Affordable Housing Corporation

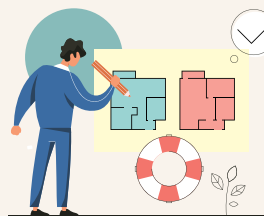
www.ReadyToBuyATexasHome.com

Photos: © Ribby, © fizles - stock.adobe.com

WHAT HOMEBUYERS VALUE



Texans weigh convenience versus cost when considering which homes to buy. Among new-home buyers, 44% were looking to avoid renovations or problems with plumbing or electricity. The next most-cited reason was the ability to choose and customize design features (36%).



Among buyers who purchased previously owned homes, 32% were looking for a better value, followed by a better price (30%) and more charm and character (24%).



To make their down payments, 54% of Texan homebuyers used savings, while 37% used proceeds from the sale of a primary residence.



Find other stats about buyer and seller preferences and demographics in the 2019 Profile of Texas Homebuyers and Sellers. You can download the 197-page report from texasrealestate.com by going to the *For REALTOR® Members* tab and looking in the *Research* menu.



WHAT TO DO WHEN THE PRICE IS TOO HIGH



It's your job to help your clients sell their home. But what happens when your sellers have an inflated view of their property's value? Here are ways to work with them to set a realistic price.

Show the comps

Pull nearby home sales that compare with your sellers' property and share them with your clients. Remind them that the only criteria that matters in selling homes is what the market will bear. Even if the house was objectively well built or beautiful, it is only worth what buyers will pay for it. That distinction is a way of acknowledging a home's intrinsic value and market realities.

Ask questions

The homeowners may have a good reason for setting their price above market value. Recent major renovations, like a new kitchen, could raise the asking price.

However, remind your clients that just because they spent \$40,000 on a new kitchen doesn't mean that makes the home worth \$40,000 more. You can point them to sources, such as *Remodeling* magazine's Cost vs. Value guide, which shows how renovations can affect resale value.

Focus on the end goal

You and clients want the same thing: to get the highest realistic price for the home. Reaffirm that goal and reframe the conversation with that end in mind. What is the lowest price that they would be willing to consider that would meet that goal?

Perhaps your clients owe more than the house is worth, and it's hard for them to accept that they must sell it at a loss. At that point, the goal would be to minimize the loss.

Be patient

You have a lot more experience selling homes than your clients do. What seems obvious to you may be news to them. A REALTOR® manages not only the transaction but also the people involved. Take the time to get it right.

TEXAS CITIES TOP LISTS OF BEST AND MOST AFFORDABLE FOR VETERANS

San Antonio led all U.S. cities in the Veterans United Home Loans annual ranking of best places for veterans to live. Six other Texas locations ranked in the top 20: Arlington (3), Fort Worth (9), Corpus Christi (12), El Paso (14), Irving (17), and Lubbock (19).

The study assessed 20 variables related to affordability, employment, availability of VA benefits, and quality of life in the 100 most populous cities. Areas ranked include only cities, not metro areas.

Texas also dominated a second Veterans United Home Loans list of the most affordable U.S. cities for veterans in 2020, with the top five cities located in the Lone Star State. Laredo was ranked first, followed by Corpus Christi, Lubbock, El Paso, and San Antonio.



The sooner you report wire fraud or other internet crimes, the better the chances of recovering the funds.

The FBI's Recovery Asset Team recovered more than \$300 million for internet crime victims last year. Where to report internet crimes:

- The financial institution involved
- Your local FBI field office - fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices
- The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center - ic3.gov



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HUD RELEASES ASSISTANCE-ANIMAL BEST PRACTICES

New guidance clarifies existing rules—it does not change housing providers' obligations.



HUD OFFERS THE GUIDANCE AS A PDF AT hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUDAsstAnimalNC1-28-2020.pdf.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released a set of best practices to help housing providers comply with the Fair Housing Act when assessing requests for reasonable accommodations to keep animals in housing.

Unlike past statements regarding assistance animals, this new guidance offers a step-by-step process that property managers and landlords can follow. Additionally, it provides information on the types of animals that may be appropriate and best practices for when the requested animal is one that is not traditionally kept in the home. It also provides information for housing providers and people with disabilities regarding the reliability of documentation obtained from third parties of a disability or disability-related need for an animal, including internet-based services offering animal certifications or registrations for purchase.

Here's an example of the step-by-step guidance available at hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUDAsstAnimalNC1-28-2020.pdf:



IS THE ANIMAL COMMONLY KEPT IN HOUSEHOLDS?

- If "yes," the reasonable accommodation should be provided under the Fair Housing Act unless the general exceptions described below exist.
- If "no," a reasonable accommodation need not be provided, but note the very rare circumstances described below.

Animals commonly kept in households

If the animal is a dog, cat, small bird, rabbit, hamster, gerbil, other rodent, fish, turtle, or other small, domesticated animal that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes, then the reasonable accommodation should be granted because the requestor has provided information confirming that there is a disability-related need for the animal. For purposes of this assessment, reptiles (other than turtles), barnyard animals, monkeys, kangaroos, and other non-domesticated animals are not considered common household animals.

Unique animals

If the individual is requesting to keep a unique type of animal that is not commonly kept in households as described above, then the requestor has the substantial burden of demonstrating a disability-related therapeutic need for the specific animal or the specific type of animal. The individual is encouraged to submit documentation from a healthcare professional confirming the need for this animal.

Example: A unique type of support animal

An individually trained capuchin monkey performs tasks for a person with paralysis caused by a spinal cord injury. The monkey has been trained to retrieve a bottle of water from the refrigerator, unscrew the cap, insert a straw, and place the bottle in a holder so the individual can get a drink of water. The monkey is also trained to switch lights on and off and retrieve requested items from inside cabinets. The individual has a disability-related need for this specific type of animal because the monkey can use its hands to perform manual tasks that a service dog cannot perform.

Legal Hotline

800-873-9155

I'm getting callers who think that the parties do not have an executed contract until they actually deposit the earnest money. That isn't true.

Earnest money is not necessary to make an otherwise accepted offer into a valid contract. Earnest money is a buyer's performance obligation and is required to be deposited after a contract is fully executed. If a buyer does not pay the earnest money in the time required by the contract, a seller could potentially exercise his options under a default provision. A contract could become effective even if no earnest money is required in the agreement.

—Laura Miller, staff attorney



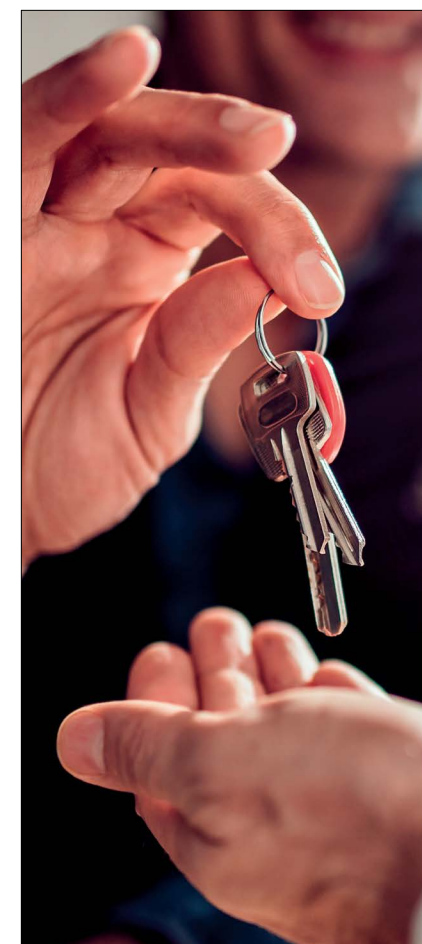
The *Pet Agreement* (TXR 2004) spells out the rules for all pets on a leased property. Use this addendum to the *Residential Lease* (TXR 2001) to identify what animals are allowed, set a pet deposit and/or other fees associated with keeping pets on the property, collect information about authorized pets, and for the tenant to disclose whether the pets have ever bitten or injured a person. The form also spells out that the tenant is liable for any damages or personal injuries caused by the pet, and also sets forth that the tenant indemnifies the landlord and property manager from any costs as a result of an act by the pet. Note: Under fair housing guidelines, assistance animals are not considered pets; do not use this form in reference to an assistance animal. This is one of more than 130 forms available exclusively to members of Texas REALTORS®.



Fact or Fiction?

As a licensed real estate salesperson or broker, you can call an auction to sell a client's house.

FICTION. You must be licensed as an auctioneer by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to call an auction. Your real estate license alone doesn't authorize you to act as an auctioneer.



CAN A TENANT SUBLET?

Only if the lease allows it. The *Residential Lease* form (TXR 2001) and *Residential Lease for a Multi-Family Property Unit* form (TXR 2011) state that a tenant cannot sublet without the landlord's prior *written* consent. A landlord can evict an unauthorized subtenant and sue the tenant and unauthorized subtenant for any property damages.

Both leases state that any subtenant must be acceptable as a tenant and sign a new lease with terms acceptable to the landlord, a sublease with terms approved by the landlord, or an assignment of the current lease in a form approved by the landlord.

The original tenant is still responsible for the lease unless otherwise stated in the sublease or assignment by the landlord. The *Lease Amendment Concerning Tenant Change* form (TXR 2211) includes sections to evidence a subtenant or assignee, whether the prior tenant will be released from liability, and whether and how the rent can be divided among tenants and subtenants.

Photos: © Africa Studio, © iStockphoto.com, © iStockphoto.com

E&O AND OTHER INSURANCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Texas REALTORS® has five E&O risk management partners that share information with the association and provide useful risk-management tools to members. These partners have been monitoring concerns brought about by COVID-19. Here are some issues REALTORS® should consider:

Transmission of disease

Clients or others may accuse real estate agents of infecting them with COVID-19 or creating conditions that caused them to be infected. Though these assertions may be difficult to prove, an agent may find himself having to defend such an allegation. Typically, a bodily injury claim would be covered by a company's general liability insurance—not errors and omissions. However, some E&O carriers offer bodily injury endorsements that could cover the claim. An endorsement such as this could require the policy holder to first submit the claim to the general liability carrier and get denied.

Business interruption

Business interruption does not fall within the parameters of E&O policies. Brokers and agents would need to look at their general liability policies or other insurance coverage.

Fair housing claims

There may be increased exposure to claims of fair housing violations due to agents choosing not to work with certain clients. Though agents can ask prospects and clients if they have recently traveled to certain areas known as COVID-19 hot spots or whether they have symptoms or a diagnosis of COVID-19, agents should take care to ask screening questions of all individuals to avoid fair housing issues.

Finally, real estate brokers and agents should review their E&O and other types of business insurance policies *before* facing a lawsuit or adverse event that could be mitigated with the proper coverage.

The Texas REALTORS® risk management E&O partners are Mondics Insurance Group, Preferred Guardian Insurance, Pearl Insurance, CRES Insurance Services, and Great American Insurance Group. Learn more in the Legal & Ethics section of texasrealestate.com.

2 FORMS REVISED FOR MLS CLEAR COOPERATION POLICY

Texas REALTORS® has made changes to Residential Real Estate Listing Agreement Exclusive Right To Sell (TXR 1101) and Exclusive Agency Addendum To Listing (TXR 1403) that help members comply with NAR's new "Clear Cooperation Policy."

The policy, which is also known as MLS Statement 8.0 and became mandatory for MLSs to adopt by May 1, requires listing brokers to submit listings to the MLS within one business day of marketing the listing to the public. Public marketing includes items such as yard signs, marketing on public-facing websites, email marketing, and other communications available to the public.

Both forms contain new sections that detail the new obligation set forth in the Clear Cooperation Policy. The revised forms are available in zipForm and other Texas REALTORS®-authorized forms applications. You can also download blank PDFs of these and all other Texas REALTORS® forms from texasrealestate.com > For REALTOR® Members > Legal & Ethics > Forms.



A seller under a listing agreement wants me to take her property off the market. Do I have to terminate the listing to do this?

NO. In this situation, you can use *Amendment to Listing* (TXR 1404). This amendment allows the seller to instruct the broker to cease marketing the property until further notice or until a specific date. The amendment additionally clarifies that the listing is not terminated and remains in full effect.

REDUCE YOUR RISK

As a member of Texas REALTORS®, you can take advantage of these exclusive risk-reduction resources and tools.

Model Policies for Do-Not-Call/Fax/Email Rules



<p>Legal Hotline 800-873-9155 Live access to Texas REALTORS® attorneys to answer your questions about forms, laws, COVID-19-related situations, closings, and more</p>	<p>500+ Legal FAQs Advertising, contracts, fair housing, landlord-tenant issues, commissions, COVID-19, taxes, and more</p>	<p>Model Privacy Policy Establish guidelines to follow privacy rules</p>	<p>Property Management Tools Residential Property Management Resource, and Model Tenant-Selection Criteria Form</p>	<p>Legal Fund Legal assistance for members involved in precedent-setting lawsuits</p>
<p>130+ FORMS Listing agreements, disclosures, notices, contracts, and addenda for residential, commercial, and farm and ranch properties, as well as property management. Plus, forms related to COVID-19</p>	<p>Broker Guides Policies and Procedures Manual, and Responsibility Guide for TREC compliance</p>	<p>Copyright Guides Model policy and agreements for photos and listing info</p>	<p>Deceptive Trade Practices Act Protection An online tool to create a response to frivolous DTPA demands</p>	<p>Webinars Online presentations on MLS rules, privacy, commissions, contracts, and more</p>

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9 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

Help Others, Go Virtual, and Other Advice for Challenging Times.

Interviews by Joe Olivieri

Marion Napoleon, broker/instructor with Unlimited Realty Solutions, is the Texas REALTORS® 2019 Educator of the Year. She has more than 18 years of experience in the real estate industry.

Bernice Ross, CEO and president of realestatecoach.com and BrokerageUp!, is a nationally syndicated columnist, author, trainer, speaker, and Master Certified Coach with more than 35 years of real estate experience.



The coronavirus pandemic has upended businesses and life in general. REALTORS® in Texas are figuring out how to do business during a time of tremendous uncertainty. While circumstances such as shelter-in-place orders may change, disruptions may continue for some time. Texas REALTORS® officers have emphasized during this time that members should take care of themselves and their families, and do what is needed to ensure the health and safety of clients, customers, and all fellow Texans.

Texas REALTORS® also asked two prominent real estate educators what members can do right now to move forward. Here's what they suggest:

Make the human connection

Ross: The number one thing is to pick up the telephone. Call your clients and have a conversation with them as a person. Ask: "How are you? How is your family? How's the homeschooling going with your kids? Is there anything I can help you with?" It's the little things like that. It's just making that human connection.

Serve your community

Napoleon: I know this may sound strange, but success right now is not about how much money you're making. Success right now is being a service to your clients, your community, and the industry. If you are a REALTOR® who also sews, why not create masks? I think right now it's about finding a way that you can give back. In the end when it's all said and done, people will remember those who did not make it about themselves but who made it about moving the entire economy forward.

Ross: Is there someone who doesn't drive, or who is sheltered at home? Someone who is older and is afraid to go out? Can you pick up some food for them? Support that restaurant in your local area. Do what you can to help with what other challenges they may have. You've got to keep your social distance, but you can pick something up and leave it on their doorstep. There are so many different things we can do to help each other.

Share useful information online

Napoleon: Utilize this time to create posts that are very client friendly. I've been posting a lot of different things such as, "Here's how buyers and sellers can work right now in this virtual environment" and, "Here's a list of all the things sellers can do." And at the end of all of them say, "If you are sick, stay home." That is a way of advertising your business, but not in a vain way. You aren't saying, "Hey, pick me! Pick me! I'll buy or sell a house." Our market right now really can't handle that. You're giving clients something that answers the question of "What's in it for me?" Not only that, but "Here's how I can help you in this time."

Offer clients options

Napoleon: You should be explaining to clients how they can continue to do real estate, if they choose to continue. You can give clients some options of things that they *can* do. For example, for a client who has not embraced digital signatures in the past, now is the time to teach them how to use the computer to do those things.

Let clients know that you can both "go out" and virtually look at some properties. Tell them that if they find one they're really interested in, you can reach out to that listing agent to ask if they will allow the seller to do a virtual walkthrough with the buyer. Most importantly, you should make sure your clients realize that you're going to find a way to keep them moving forward.

Open a virtual office and use virtual tools

Napoleon: I have been preaching forever about agents and brokers creating a virtual office. So now is the time. I have created a complete virtual office using

not only Google products but every single free application of software provided through my association.

Ross: Anybody who has been doing video and working virtually will have a huge advantage right now. This is a time to double down on learning how to use Zoom and other remote platforms. Start learning how to

“You should be explaining to clients how they can continue to do real estate ... if they choose to continue.**”**



VIRTUAL TOOLS FOR A VIRTUAL OFFICE

Marion Napoleon recommended the following tools for a virtual office. Many are available for free. Check with your local, state, and national associations to see what tools they offer.

Administrative software to manage your business

Cloud storage for documents, backup capacity

Digital signature software to manage e-signatures remotely

Forms software, such as zipForm

An online address book to log client information

An online calendar to schedule appointments and send out reminders

Online document editing and collaborating such as Google Docs

RPR Commercial, a real estate platform exclusively for REALTORS® that produces comprehensive data and reports

A text chat and video conferencing platform, such as Zoom

VOIP, or voice over internet protocol, for phone calls through the internet and advanced calling features, such as forwarding only calls from pre-selected numbers.



WAYS TO HELP DURING THE PANDEMIC

You can help your community while still observing shelter-in-place orders and social distancing. Consider the following options.

- + Donate homemade masks.** Many cities and organizations are collecting homemade masks during the pandemic. Visit cdc.gov and select *Cloth Face Coverings* for instructions on how to make masks.
- + Volunteer at a food bank.** Food banks are experiencing high demand and need volunteers. Visit your local food bank's website to register to volunteer.
- + Deliver food to those in need.** Many people cannot leave their homes due to illness, self-quarantine, or coronavirus risk factors. Meals on Wheels and other local organizations are delivering food to homes in your area.
- + Donate.** Monetary donations go a long way to meet emerging needs.
- + Support local businesses.** Orders and purchases help local businesses stay open and pay employees. Many restaurants offer takeout, pickup, and delivery options. Businesses may be willing to ship products to customers.
- + Check in on neighbors.** Reach out to those around you. Make sure people have what they need and know where to get resources.

—Joe Olivieri

do your business virtually, because if you don't in this moment in time, you are going to be left behind by the agents who do. You're not going to be able to compete anymore.

Expect many unknowns

Ross: Our comps are not going to be accurate. What about lenders? Are lenders going to qualify buyers from their salary in January or from what they have earned lately? How's the buyer's credit going to be impacted if that person hasn't been able to pay bills? How will it be impacted by any moratoriums on payments and rents? We don't know. There are so many unknowns right now. Many of these situations are still being resolved. Be upfront with your clients about the unknowns and keep them updated when new information becomes available. In the meantime, each deal may have to be done on a case-by-case basis until we get some clarity.

Napoleon: Normal is no longer normal. A lot of agents are thinking they can do business as usual, but they have to do business "unusual." I remember back during the 2008 financial crisis, and many agents did not move quickly. Everyone should read *Who Moved My Cheese* by Spencer Johnson. It helps you figure out who you are, and helps you be able to move quickly in the changing times.

Get creative

Ross: Agents are figuring out how to conduct their businesses in new and creative ways while still observing social distancing.

For example, if a client is interested in a tenant-occupied income property, you can review all of the pictures and video online. You can also obtain a copy of the floor plan to include on the MLS and on digital brochures. Clients

can also drive by the property and look at the exterior from their car. If the client submits an offer and the offer is accepted, then the client can go inside and do the interior inspection during the option period. Interior inspections should be conducted following presidential and CDC guidelines as well as any local and state governmental orders. This way the property gets sold and you've maintained social distancing.

Consider the demand

Ross: Interest rates are so low, and the demand is still there. We have way more people than we do housing. That isn't going away.

Savvy buyers see that and are looking to acquire properties, either for themselves or as investments. Those who buy during these lower rates will end up saving money and paying less in the long run as opposed to buyers who wait until rates rise. These savvy buyers see this turmoil as an opportunity, while other people kind of pull back.

For agents working with sellers, I would dust off those price reduction scripts. There will be properties that will not go for the price sellers have in mind. We're in a time of uncertainty. I think there will be some reluctance to act. Others may get one or two offers on a property that would normally get 10 offers, and decide to go forward with the transaction.

Get educated

Napoleon: Many REALTOR® associations are providing free education and training. **Ross:** This is a wonderful time to sign up for classes. Many education providers are delivering classes via Zoom or other broadcast platforms. This is a great time to fulfill your CE requirements or even go for your GRI.



From discounts on roadside assistance with AAA to unlimited e-signatures with zipLogix Digital Ink, Texas REALTORS® has you covered. Find a categorized list of discounts and services available to you in the Member Benefits section of texasrealestate.com.

How do you get your savings? Go to texasrealestate.com/benefits for complete instructions on how to take advantage of your discounts that require specific promotional codes.

Only two programs require the use of a discount card: Office Depot/Office Max and the prescription discount. If you don't have a copy of these cards, you can always access one from your mobile device at texasrealestate.com/card.

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TransUnion Smart Move

Screen tenants with this safe online system that provides a credit report, background check, and eviction records. No subscription required. Use code TXREALTORS2020 to save \$10.



Office Depot/Office Max

Use your discount card to save up to 60% on office supplies, furniture, and print services. To shop online, set up an account at texasrealestate.com/officedepot.



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Rx Discounts

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Lowen Signs

Save up to 12% on real estate signs with a production turnaround on most options of just three business days.

Negotiating With Tactical Empathy

You can learn a lot about successful negotiations from hostage negotiators, police officers, and emergency services dispatchers.

by Debbie Remington

In early 2019, I noticed a recurring theme in communications with other real estate agents: It became increasingly difficult to get them on the phone to negotiate. Initially, I believed that agents were simply busy and preferred the convenience of texting or emailing. I thought it might be a generational issue with younger agents who preferred texting to verbal communications. But the problem became more pronounced, and not just with young or newer agents.

It became increasingly clear that the agents who had entered real estate during the long stretch of record sales in Texas rarely had to negotiate to close a deal. Basically, many didn't know what to say or how to say it.

How not to approach negotiations

As luck would have it, I attended a real estate negotiations class where the problem became apparent. The instructor began the class with the statement, "I don't believe in empathy, and it has no place in business negotiations or communications."

I couldn't disagree more. I very much believe that empathy is the key negotiation skill—in real estate and life.

Prior to my career in real estate, I spent many years as an emergency services dispatcher. In that position, I grew to appreciate the need for empathy-driven communications. I also witnessed firsthand how empathy could be the best tool for defusing situations and managing emotions.

A few weeks after that real estate negotiations class, I was speaking with one of our top-selling agents—a former police officer—who remarked that he believed that his ability to convey empathy and his ability to negotiate effectively were his biggest advantages in real estate, as they were in policing.

Getting both sides what they want

Many agents approach a real estate negotiation as an adversarial process. It is not. In fact, it is a partnership built on the desire of both agents to get their clients what they want most. There's nothing to be gained by approaching real estate negotiations as though the other side is the enemy. In fact, we better serve the interests of our clients by using any and all effective skills to further the interest of our clients.

Real estate negotiations may not be as critical as those involved in hostage negotiations, where lives quite literally are on the line. But those same strategies may easily be tailored to

the world of real estate negotiations.

In contrast with the instructor from the class I attended, I do believe that the most important negotiation tool is empathy—more specifically, tactical empathy, as described in *Never Split The Difference* by Chris Voss. Voss, a retired chief international hostage negotiator for the FBI, states: "Tactical empathy is understanding the feelings and mindset of another in the moment and also hearing what is behind those feelings so you increase your influence in the moments that follow."

Don't invalidate emotions

Many classes on business negotiations teach that emotion must be neutralized and removed from negotiations. The problem with that approach is that real estate is often an emotional transaction. People are emotional beings, driven by emotional desires and basic wants. Selling a home with a lifetime of experiences can be difficult. Buying a home in which you intend to raise your family can be overwhelming.

Instead of trying to invalidate and ignore the emotional factors of the parties involved, acknowledging those emotions can better serve the negotiations process. Using what's known as the LEAPS tools from conflict resolution training can be helpful when managing the emotions of a transaction. LEAPS stands for:

Listen - Listen with all your senses and with focus.

Empathize - Truly understand the other person's position.

Ask to clarify - Ensure a clear understanding.

Paraphrase - Reaffirm your understanding and clarity.

Summarize - Focus and prioritize.

These actions will establish a rapport along with trust and understanding. The higher the level of trust, the better negotiations tend to proceed. Trust helps remove the adversarial part of the process by allowing the other party to identify and relate to you with the same values, motives, and intentions.

By listening, we gain a much better understanding of what's most important to the other parties involved. Remember, in every real estate transaction there are at least four people involved. The buyer and seller each have real estate agents, and both sides may have a spouse or significant other that has input or influence. Sometimes the emotions of the other agent can become an issue. Understanding what motivates the other parties involved can make all the difference in managing effective negotiations.

When you think about it, you will realize that a real estate

transaction is rarely an adversarial relationship. We all are working on behalf of our buyers or sellers and trying to get them what they want in the best possible way. In dealing with people, there are certain things we all have in common. Negotiations will be much more productive if you honor a few universal truths as discussed in *Never Split The Difference* and another book with excellent lessons that can be applied to negotiations, *Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion* by George J. Thompson and Jerry B. Jenkins. Those truths revolve around treating people with respect, providing others with explanations and options rather than demands or threats, and giving people second chances.

How to use tactical empathy in successful negotiations

All of the steps listed below include one key ingredient: tactical empathy. By directly addressing the other side's position, recognizing hidden biases, and understanding others' perspectives, you will truly gain a competitive edge as a negotiator.

- **Listening is your most important skill** - Strangely enough, this is the hardest skill to master and the most often overlooked. The ability to simply stop talking and allow silence to occur without interjecting is huge.
- **Mirroring** - Mirroring can be an effective tool in building a good rapport and gaining trust with the other party. It's basically a form of imitation. By simply matching the speech tempo, tone, and word choices of the other party, that person begins to trust you and believe that you understand them.

Here are five easy steps to mirroring:

1. Use a calm voice.
2. Begin with saying *sorry*.
3. Repeat the last three to four words said by the other party.
4. Stay silent, listen, and wait for a response.
5. Repeat the four steps above.

- **Rephrasing and labeling** - Paraphrasing restates the other party's position. Labeling identifies that person's emotions.

Using labeling phrases such as "it seems like" and "it sounds like" not only demonstrate that you are listening but also puts the focus on the other side and encourages them to reveal more.

- **Use open-ended questions (getting to How)** - By using open-ended questions, you create a partnership to solve a problem. That puts you in the *How* phase, employing the assistance of the other agent to find a solution.

Two responses that can be better than yes

Many business negotiation books focus on getting to *yes*. In reality, hearing *that's right* can be much better than hearing a *yes*. *That's right* is confirmation that the other party has actively listened and conveyed empathy.

Getting a response of *no* is often a much more effective tool than getting to *yes*. Often the word *no* is a temporary tool that allows one party to feel as though they are gaining control. The word *no* can be a great starting place to begin a conversation. Don't be afraid to hear the word *no*.

Good communication and negotiation skills should not be limited to your interactions with clients and customers. Maintaining good relationships with other agents, title companies, and lenders will also benefit your clients. Be pleasant, professional, and kind. It's much easier to get things done on behalf of your client by

asking in a manner that makes people want to help. Kindness is not overrated, and can go a long way towards building lasting professional relationships.

DEBBIE REMINGTON is the owner/broker of Remington Team Realty (remingtonteam.com) in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. She is a retired 911 dispatcher and is married to a retired police officer. The top selling agent referred to in the article is her son, Colt Remington, who is a former police officer and United States Marine.

The ability to simply stop talking and allow silence to occur without interjecting is huge.



A CENTURY OF ADVOCACY

100 YEARS OF REALTORS SHAPING TEXAS

by Jaime Lee

1ST ANNUAL CONVENTION, TEXAS ASSN,
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DEC. 13TH 1920.



TEXANS IN D.C.

Texas REALTORS® work with the state's Congressional delegation to advocate for federal real estate issues, such as fair housing, flood insurance, and financing.

In 2019, 430 Texas REALTORS® went to Washington, D.C., to advocate for real estate issues with their Congressional delegation.



In 2020, Texas REALTORS® celebrates the association's centennial as the strongest grassroots advocacy organization for Texas real estate.

But this stature didn't arise quickly—it took years of proving the REALTOR® value to earn the reputation as protectors of the real estate industry.

A mission of grassroots advocacy

In 1920, committed leaders in real estate from across Texas came together under a shared vision for the industry's future that remains in place today. Over the years, the association's most important advocates are REALTORS® themselves. Members' on-the-ground intel about how proposed policies will support—or harm—real estate consumers has made Texas REALTORS® the premier grassroots advocacy organization. As the state grew, so did the REALTOR® presence in Texas.

The REALTOR® voice at the local, state, and national levels has positioned the association as the go-to information source that elected officials rely on when implementing real estate-related public policy.



STOPPING BAD BILLS EARLY

Many of the association's victories don't make headlines. Over the years, Texas REALTORS® has fought to defeat bad bills from even progressing to votes or committee hearings by educating lawmakers on the potential damage of proposed legislation for their communities and the real estate industry statewide.

Under the dome

The Texas Legislature meets every two years, and you will find Texas REALTORS® at the state Capitol every session—even between sessions—working to educate lawmakers on the potential effects of proposed legislation and helping them draft pro-real estate public policy to protect consumers.



Reaching goals through determination

The first goal members outlined in 1920 was to pass a licensing law that would provide statewide regulations on the real estate industry. It took dedication and perseverance, as success finally came in 1939 with the passage of a license law.

The next significant milestone came almost 30 years after the association originated, when the Legislature created the Texas Real Estate Commission as the state regulatory agency. Gov. Beauford Jester (pictured below) signed the bill in 1949. Members had pushed for this to raise standards and boost the profession's esteem.

In 1961, the association focused efforts on opposing a proposed transaction tax and an occupation tax imposed on real estate brokers. Thanks to REALTOR® advocacy, the transaction tax was abandoned, and a bill removing brokers from the occupation tax was signed into law.



REALTORS® supported a wide range of private property rights. For example, in 1963, the law regarding condos required individual or joint ownership of a single structure. The association supported the creation of the Texas Condominium Act—the first statute to address multiple ownership of residential property.

In the 1970s, REALTORS® were the driving force for establishing the Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University to provide public study of the state's real estate industry.

Protection and collaboration

Members actively worked to maintain their legislative influence and continue to closely monitor any proposed taxation on real estate. In 1974, REALTORS® played a role in the state's first Constitutional Revision Convention to serve as watchdogs protecting the rights of private-property owners.

Also in 1974, REALTORS® collaborated with the State Bar of Texas to create the first standardized real estate forms. The newly created Broker-Lawyer Committee drafted a Statement of Principles that defined the roles of lawyers and real estate brokers that recognized real estate brokers as fiduciaries and conveyors of real property.

When the Legislature reconvened the following year, the association spearheaded the movement to amend the License Act to require continuing education and other enhanced licensing requirements, which Gov. Dolph Briscoe (pictured below) signed in 1975.



Unity in support

In the 1980s, Texas REALTORS® focused on political advocacy with the goal of ensuring REALTORS® spoke with one voice in support of the industry and its consumers.

When the Texas protective homestead law was threatened in 1985, REALTORS® fought against forces that sought to allow homeowners to take out a second mortgage. Members were concerned these changes could lead to increased debt and more foreclosures. Thanks to REALTORS® working to educate lawmakers on these concerns, the bill eventually failed in the Texas House.



Close to the action

The association's headquarters had always been in Austin to be near the Texas Capitol. But it was at the end of the 1980s when the organization made its home on a piece of property just across the street from the statehouse, opening in 1989.

This gave REALTORS® convenient access to the Capitol and ensured that lawmakers recognize REALTORS® as dedicated advocates for their industry.

The association's walls and archives are filled with photos, proclamations, and bills signed into law.

The 1990s provided REALTORS® with ongoing opportunities to stand up for consumers' rights, as members fought to enshrine strong home equity protections in the Texas Constitution. Voters approved the REALTOR®-supported constitutional amendment in 1997 that prohibited homeowners from borrowing more than 80% of the value of their home minus what was still owed—a safeguard that has protected Texas from housing market crashes in several other states over the years.

Other landmark victories in the 1990s included the passage of consumer protection legislation regarding seller's disclosure, the



ADVOCACY DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

In 2020, the COVID-19 crisis has touched every facet of life—personal and professional. Texas REALTORS® has been advising elected officials at every level about the impact on the real estate industry, its practitioners, and consumers.

Texas REALTORS® helped ensure that real estate was considered an essential service statewide so REALTORS® could continue helping real estate consumers.

As the state took steps to plan for reopening, Texas REALTORS® engaged in discussions with Gov. Abbott's Strike Force to Open Texas to coordinate the phase-in of real estate activities to bring association members back to business.

Broker's and Appraiser's Lien on Commercial Real Estate Act, and amendments to the Deceptive Trade Practices Act.

Huge wins in the new millennium

In 2001, the association helped defeat legislation that would have levied an 8% sales tax on the sale of all real estate. Two years later, REALTORS® defeated a proposal to create a 1% real estate transfer tax.

During a special session in 2005, REALTORS® advocated to address eminent domain reform, with the resulting legislation curbing some uses of eminent domain and offering protections for Texas property owners.

Property tax reform was a key issue for the state in 2006, with REALTORS® appointed to a governor's task force and commission that generated recommendations for improving the property tax and appraisal systems.



Thousands of Texas REALTORS® attended a property tax reduction rally on the Capitol grounds, urging passage of the legislation that ultimately provided homeowners with substantial property tax cuts. The association's 2006 chairman, Dennis Patillo, pictured above, addressed members at the rally.

The first legislative session of the 2010s resulted in several victories for Texas REALTORS®, including defeating more attempts to tax real estate. The association also supported bills to protect owners in eminent domain proceedings and bills to reform homeowners associations.

In addition, the association won a long-fought battle to revise the Deceptive Trade Practices Act to effectively exempt real estate brokerages from liability under the act, as long as the broker or agent hasn't committed an illegal act.

Member-driven process

After the 2007 session, the association formed six new public policy task forces to set the agenda for the next session. These member-driven bodies research and vet issues to set REALTOR® priorities for the following session.

Pictured (below) are Texas REALTOR® leaders meeting with Speaker of the House Joe Straus during the annual legislative visits in 2011.



A list of successes

With the line "Under all is the land" in mind, REALTORS® in 2015 further expanded the association's public policy priorities with support to measures that helped improved Texas roads.

It was this year that REALTORS® engaged in the association's largest campaign ever, spending \$6 million on a statewide campaign to encourage voters to approve a constitutional amendment to ban transfer taxes and increase the homestead exemption. Voters agreed, with 86% of those who went to the polls voting in favor of the amendment.

From 2017 to 2019, the association earned several more legislative victories on behalf of real estate consumers, stopping forced municipal annexation and prohibiting cities from imposing certain fees on new residential and commercial construction.

The 2019 legislative session brought REALTORS® monumental wins on years-long fights to reform the state's property tax system and school finance system—all benefiting Texas taxpayers with more information and reduced tax burden.



A historic century with more successes on the horizon

As the association celebrates the first 100 years of Texas REALTORS® at the forefront of legislative advocacy for real estate in the Lone Star State, it is clear that REALTORS® will continue to be the driving force in shaping Texas for many years to come.

JAIME LEE is director of advocacy communications for Texas REALTORS®.



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DID YOU KNOW?

REALTORS® LOOK OUT FOR YOUR INTERESTS

You know REALTORS® are trusted advisors to help you buy, sell, lease, and manage real estate. REALTORS® also advocate for laws and policies that protect your property rights, reduce hassles, and save you money.

REALTORS® WORK TOGETHER FOR YOU

REALTORS®—that is, licensed real estate agents and brokers who join the REALTORS® association—may be competitors, but we come together to fight for lower and fairer property taxes, limit burdensome regulations on real estate transactions, and ensure that laws and rules protect you.

How? REALTORS® travel to the U.S. and Texas Capitols to meet with elected officials, attend city and county meetings, and work with regulators at every level—all with the goal of making property transactions and ownership better for you.

A CENTURY OF ADVOCACY ON YOUR BEHALF

In 1920, real estate professionals from across Texas formed an association based on higher professional standards for the industry. That aim has remained at the forefront of everything REALTORS® do. For 100 years, REALTORS® have been the driving force in Texas for creating real estate license laws, blocking countless real estate taxes and lowering others, ending forced annexation, advocating for home equity laws that kept many Texans out of foreclosure, creating minimum services agents must provide clients, ensuring property owners' rights, and many others.



**WHEN YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC REAL ESTATE GOAL,
YOUR INDIVIDUAL REALTOR® CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE IT.**

Even when your immediate plans don't include a real estate transaction, rest assured that *all* REALTORS® are working hard for you and keeping your best interests at heart.

TAKE 5

Photo © New Africa - stock.adobe.com

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR TIME

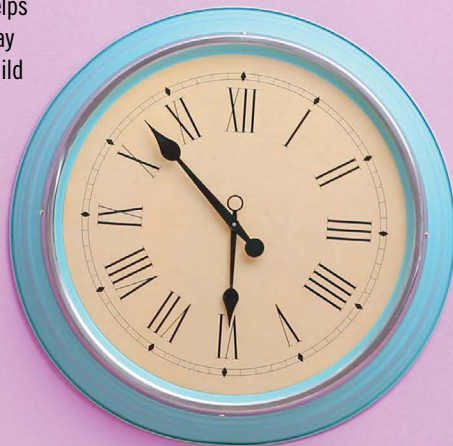
Being proactive about time management can help reduce stress and give you a sense of control. Try these five tips for taking charge of your time.

WORK IN PRIVATE AND FOCUSED MODES

Using a private browsing mode—also known as Incognito in Google's Chrome browser—helps you focus on the task at hand by limiting your access to saved passwords and login information that may tempt you to hop between social feeds, email, and other distractions. Other apps, like word processors and email programs, offer focused modes to limit diversions.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

Whether it's a written document or saved in an app, a set schedule helps you organize tasks, plan ahead, stay focused, and gives you a way to build breaks from work into your day.



BREAK YOUR DAY INTO CHUNKS

Do you need to be responsive to clients and colleagues during certain parts of the day but prefer handling your own work at other times? Break your workday into chunks and space them out or put them together to suit your needs.



COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS

If you've taken steps to create a schedule that fits you, communicating that to your colleagues and clients will help you maintain it: they know what to expect from you, and you can follow through without feeling the need to upset your schedule for each new request.



USE A TIME-TRACKING TOOL

A time-tracking tool can record how long you spend on each task or record what websites or programs you use the most. Either option will help you assess how you're currently spending time so you can better plan your schedule and prioritize tasks.



Find your escape.

Every day, we work with our fellow Texans to help them buy the land they've always envisioned. And as a cooperative, we share our profits with those same customers. Last year alone, we paid our customers more than \$57 million in dividends. So when you're ready to secure a property loan for the perfect place to retreat, try a **partnership that really pays.**

Together we're better.



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SAVE THE DATE

 **TEXAS REALTORS®**
2020 CONFERENCE

100


SHAPING TEXAS 1920-2020

Attend the 2020
Texas REALTORS®
Conference
in San Antonio!
Aug. 31 - Sept. 03

Join us for our Centennial
Celebration, including
speakers, education, and
a one-day trade expo.
More details coming soon.

