



Shopping for the best deal in Town

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

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If you have ever tuned into one of the many Do-It-Yourself home improvement programs that permeate the television airwaves, you've probably noticed how easy fix-ups seem when undertaken by the professionals. Part of this can be attributed to their solid foundation of knowledge and the rest can be ascribed to the top-notch tools that they use.

Greater Toronto REALTORS® draw from the same combination of knowledge and tools to guide you through every transaction.

An important tool used by REALTORS® is the Multiple Listing Service®. The MLS® is distinct from the Canadian Real Estate Association's consumer website REALTOR.ca in that it contains a wealth of information that is accessible only to REALTORS® on sales, average prices and more, by housing type and neighbourhood.

Using the MLS® your REALTOR® may develop a Comparative Market Analysis, contrasting your existing or prospective home to those recently sold in the area. This information is vital to helping you determine a suitable offer or listing price.

Since it is also used to match buyers' preferences with properties available for sale, your REALTOR® will compile accurate information and photos of your home's most notable features to be displayed on the MLS®.

REALTORS® who represent Buyers can input their preferences into the system, which in turn emails listings that correspond to those tastes.

Using Virtual Earth mapping technology, your REALTOR® may even display the specific location of a listing in relation to neighbourhood amenities and other available properties.

Similarly, your REALTOR® may identify your wish to buy a particular type of property by entering you in the Buyer Registry Service, a password-protected

database that contains information on the current housing preferences of Greater Toronto REALTORS® clients.

To provide for your privacy, your personal information is only accessible to your REALTOR®, whose name is displayed for making contact.

The BRS provides for a more efficient search, as it allows your REALTOR® to receive immediate notice when properties that match your preferences are listed for sale, communication can occur even faster between REALTORS® using the BRS.

Your REALTOR® may also get a sense as to the demand for your preferred housing type by comparing your criteria to similar preferences registered in the BRS. Gauging this type of information may help you make a successful offer.

Your registration in the BRS also helps verify the clearly defined business relationship between you and your REALTOR®, so that you can avoid the mistake of signing more than one Buyer Representation Agreement.

All that's needed to take advantage of this very useful tool is a signed Buyer Representation Agreement, which confirms your REALTOR'S® commitment to represent your best interests by working exclusively on your behalf, and completed BRS Data Form.

To learn more about how sophisticated tools like the MLS® and the BRS, can benefit you, talk to a Greater Toronto REALTOR® and visit the Toronto Real Estate Board's consumer website www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.

Tom Lebour is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 28,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.