

## Why You Need a REALTOR®

The first factor to consider is the difference between a REALTOR and a Real Estate Agent. The word “REALTOR” can only be used by professionals who are members of The National Association of REALTORS (and locally, the Houston Association of REALTORS).

In order to be a member, an agent must agree to abide by a strict code of ethics based on values of competency, fairness, and high integrity.

An agent who has become a REALTOR has committed to a higher standard of service and professionalism.

### **What a REALTOR will do for you**

**Financing.** A Professional REALTOR knows a lot about the different kinds of financing options available to you. He or she also has experience working with many lenders in the Houston area and can direct you to someone who has a home loan that is right for you.

**Finding.** Once you know how much you can and want to invest, the fun begins. Your REALTOR has many resources to help you conduct a thorough search.

**Deciding.** Making a final selection is an exciting and emotional decision. Your REALTOR can help you by providing objective information about each property including zoning, the quality of local schools or whether or not your selection will be a good investment.

**Negotiation.** Many details will need to be negotiated in the contract including price, financing, terms, date of possession, the inclusion or exclusion of repairs and furnishings or equipment. The purchase agreement should also provide enough time for you to complete inspections and investigations of the property before you are bound to complete the purchase. Your agent can advise you as to which investigations and inspections are recommended or required.

**Due Diligence.** With a negotiated agreement in hand, it is time to complete the evaluation of the property. The area will determine the type of inspection(s) you will need. Your REALTOR can assist you in finding qualified responsible professionals to do most of these recommended investigations and provide you with a written report. You will also want to see a preliminary report on the title of the property. Title indicates ownership of property and can involve confusing status of past owners and rights of access. The title to most properties will have some limitations; for example easements (access rights) for utilities. Your REALTOR can help you resolve issues that might cause problems at a later date.

**Closing.** Finally there is the closing or settlement. Generally, you will meet with your REALTOR, your lender or attorney to finalize your contract. Your REALTOR will see you through this last stage, when the papers are signed and keys are in your hand.

*Buying a home is a major decision in your life. Before you begin, find a professional you can trust. Your REALTOR will be an important advisor during one of the most personal and exciting experiences of your life. It is OK to be very careful about choosing someone you feel comfortable with.*