



# How the Real Estate Business Will Change After COVID-19

BY TED HIGHLAND  
KAPLAN REAL ESTATE EDUCATION

Academic futurists are projecting that the COVID-19 pandemic is going to shape the future of everyday life, including the way real estate business is conducted, the behavior of real estate consumers, and how real estate education takes place.

The National Bureau of Economic Research issued a paper in April 2020 which researched how pandemics affect economic activity in the medium- to long-term. Studying 15 major pandemics dating back to the 14th century, they concluded that an after-effect of pandemics is a reduction in the size of the labor force. The surviving labor market sees a rise in real wages. This labor scarcity may result in less investment and demand for capital. They



concluded that these factors result in a reduction in the natural rate of interest, which they estimate will reach its lowest point about 20 years later. We can conclude from this that the coronavirus may, generally, result in stimulating home sales.

This article seeks to identify what specific changes are going to take place in the real estate business and what their impact will

be on real estate agents, consumers, and educators.

## Responses to Pandemics

Historically, people have responded to pandemics by following certain patterns of behavior. The first step in this pattern involves going through an adjustment stage. Most people in the United States are going



through that adjustment stage now. The adjustment stage is where people discover their old habits changing and therefore develop new habits to replace the old ones. Disruption and isolation are very effective in resulting in life evaluation and changing one's behavior.

These changes are not always negative. When times are normal, we get lulled into routines, develop habits, and invest in relationships that we believe are important. When we live through a crisis, we realize some of these things are not as important to us

*continued on page 3*

# Getting Ready to Sell

BY MARY CAMPBELL

Your house doesn't need to be in perfect condition to sell it for a good price. There are steps you can take, however, that will net a good return on investment. There are still other changes that, even if they're not immediately noticeable, could result in a lower offer price because the buyers will have to pay for those repairs themselves.

## Repair what needs fixing

Hire a home inspector to find major issues like the roof, foundation, plumbing and wiring. How old is your water heater? Buyers will ask. Has mold ever been a problem? Make sure it's taken care of. Many of these issues will have to be disclosed in the offer.

Look for smaller repairs as well. Realtor.com suggests looking for wood rot around door frames, window ledges and garage doors; water stains on the ceiling or near doors or windows; leaks under the sink; bulges under carpet or discolored hardwood; visible cracks in the walls; doors that don't shut right; broken handles; loose doorknobs or trim; non-functioning gas fireplaces; and anything else that is broken.



## Paint the walls to neutral tones

One of the best parts of owning your own home is getting to paint a bedroom maroon or bright yellow or allow your children to paint handprints on their walls. However, when you decide to sell, it's time to paint over those colors. Go for neutral colors like tan or other light colors — hues that won't be the first thing potential buyers notice or what they remember and that allow buyers to think about what colors they would like the walls to be.

## Ready for a renovation or an upgrade?

Even if your house is in good condition, you may want to get work done to make the house more appealing and increase its value. This could be new kitchen or bathroom cabinets, new carpets or hardwood

floors, replacing windows, adding ceiling fans or upgrading the light fixtures or myriad other updates. Figure out how much you want to spend and what updates will give you the best return. A study by the National Association of Realtors found new hardwood floors give you a 100 percent return on investment, new insulation can get you a 95 percent ROI and a new roof will more than pay for itself.

## Get Help

Need assistance? We will be happy to meet with you and share our guidance. Schedule an appointment today. Call us at 888-670-6791. ■

# Deed Transfers

Do you need to do a deed transfer? Our Firm would be happy to help.

We would be glad to assist you with any of the following:

- Add a spouse, family member or partner to a deed
- Remove an individual from a deed.
- Transfer a deed from an individual to a Corporation, LLC or Trust.
- Advise you on whether a deed transfer would violate the terms of your mortgage.
- Advise you on the best way to take title (eg: tenants in common or joint tenants with right of survivorship).
- Advise you on the best type of deed to use (there are many types of deeds).

*Our attorneys have handled numerous deed transfers. Our prices are reasonable and we are happy to offer you a consultation prior to taking your money.*

26 Court Street, Suite 701  
Brooklyn, NY 11242  
Call 1-855-768-8845

# Choosing the Right Real Estate Brokerage



BY KAPLAN REAL ESTATE EDUCATION

The first step to success in pursuing a real estate career is making a good business decision. Part of becoming a licensed real estate salesperson is selecting a broker to sponsor you. Although it is true that you're technically working for yourself, a real estate agent cannot act as a real estate agent independently; they must work on behalf of a real estate broker. This decision has the potential to affect the direction of your career in real estate, either positively or negatively.

Most real estate companies are constantly recruiting salespeople. However, there are big differences among companies in structure, operation, and philosophy. Your goal is to find the real estate office that you like

and will ultimately be the right fit for you. If you haven't selected your career specialty or real estate brokerage, there are a number of factors to consider. Researching, weighing pros and cons, and planning ahead are essential in getting your new real estate career off to a fast and productive start. Take the following advice to find the brokerage that's right for you and get ready to send them a killer resume.

#### Scout the Area Where You Want to Work as a Real Estate Salesperson

- Check the local area as if you were an out-of-town buyer
- Stop by local real estate brokerages and review printed materials
- Talk to active agents from different brokerages to gauge their opinions of the local offices

**EQUITY SMART REALTY**  
EMPOWERING EQUITY SMART INVESTMENTS

26 Court Street, Suite 701  
Brooklyn, NY 11242

Phone: (888) 670-6791  
Fax: (718) 222-3153  
E: info@equitysmartrealty.com  
W: www.equitysmartrealty.com

**BUY | SELL | RENT | DEVELOP**  
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

**BRIAN FIGEROUX, ESQ.**

• Drive by the offices. Is it a convenient location, ample parking, attractive exterior?

#### Narrow Down the Search of Real Estate Brokerages

- What is the company's reputation locally and/or nationally as a real estate brokerage?
- Is the company well established in the local area?
- Does the brokerage specialize in a certain area of real estate?
- How is the quality and quantity of ads in the local papers and on Internet sites?
- Do they effectively promote properties, the office, and their agents?
- How many real estate agents work out of the office?
- Do they serve a large market? Is it in the areas you would like to work?

#### Interview with the Real Estate Broker or Owner

- What type of agent are they looking for? What are their goals?
- As a real estate salesperson, would you be working as an independent contractor or as an employee?
- Is there a training plan in place for new agents?
- Are they members of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS)?
- Is there clerical or administrative support for the agents? Or will you need to find your own assistant if you do well?
- What is the commission split and the benefit package?
- What would your obligations be to the brokerage if you were employed?
- Is there technology support and marketing resources?
- What is the office's market share? ■

## REPRESENTATION FOR RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE



#### FOR BUYERS

1. Understanding your unique property
2. Review of your real estate agreements
3. Negotiation of the best terms for you in the agreements
4. Explanation of the purchase contract and mortgage documents
5. Correspondence with the seller's attorney
6. Communication with the title company
7. Correspondence with the mortgage company
8. Obtaining the necessary title work
9. Review of mortgage commitment
10. Review of title commitment
11. Preparation for closing
12. Resolving all disputes before closing
13. Representing you at your successful closing

#### FOR SELLERS

1. Understanding your unique property
2. Preparation of your real estate agreements
3. Negotiation of the best terms for you in the real estate agreements
4. Explanation of the real estate contracts & covenants
5. Correspondence with the buyer's attorney
6. Correspondence with other parties
7. Preparation for closing
8. Resolving all disputes before closing
9. Representation of you at your successful closing



Figeroux & Associates  
Law Firm

**Call 888-670-6791**

26 Court Street, Suite 701, Downtown Brooklyn

## ARE YOU READY TO SELL YOUR HOME?

### SELL YOUR HOUSE FAST!



#### WHY SELL WITH US!

1. Do you know the true value of your property, even if in foreclosure?
2. Forget short sales; you are ill advised; listen to us.
3. Buyers' agents may not want to show your property to their clients.
4. It's harder to keep your emotions out of the sale.
5. It's not your full-time job.
6. Agents have a larger network than you do.
7. You subject yourself to needless showings.
8. Negotiating the sale is tricky and awkward.
9. You can't see what's wrong with your home.
10. You put yourself at risk of being sued.



**CALL US NOW!**  
**(888) 670-6791**

#### Predators' Alert!

Minorities continue to be the target of the predatory practices by real estate and mortgage brokers and the man who comes knocking on your door with a bag of cash. To save your home, we offer a FREE consultation.

26 Court Street, Suite 701  
Brooklyn, NY 11242

Phone: (888) 670-6791  
Fax: (718) 222-3153  
Email: info@equitysmartrealty.com  
Web: www.equitysmartrealty.com

## Real Estate After COVID-19/ continued from page 1

as they once were. A re-evaluation stage takes place. According to researchers, 61 percent of surveyed respondents indicated they have reduced their spending on luxury goods during this pandemic, and 21 percent indicated that they anticipated continuing to reduce their luxury spending when the pandemic ends. This pattern of thinking might manifest in reduced sales of luxury residences, as well. Maybe owning a big, expensive home will just not seem as important.

### Real Estate as an “Essential Service”

Most state governors have classified the transfer and sale of real estate as an essential service. As such, real estate agents are continuing to help consumers with their real estate transactions during this time. Real estate agents and brokers must comply with local guidelines in terms of how to accomplish this objective. Licensees, including individuals and business entities, may use their discretion as to whether or not they wish to continue to operate their businesses with the parameters required, some of which are described below.

### Open Houses and Showings

In most states, physical or in-person open houses are either discouraged or not permitted. In a few states, in-person showings of single and multi-family homes that are oc-



cupied by renters are prohibited. In other areas, showings are limited to one person or family group, scheduled in advance with the consent of the property owner. Virtual or remote open houses are being required by local regulations. Specialized virtual tour software is available to agents and has become affordable, such as iStaging and Tourwizard.

While readily available and affordable, virtual tours are not without their downsides. As more purchasers buy a property sight unseen, some of them may come back to the agent saying they did not get what they bargained for. As these types of practices become common, contractual language to protect the buyer, seller, and agent will become necessary to protect all parties.

### Disease Confidentiality

The current pandemic does not invalidate agency law requirements for real estate licensees, especially the duty of confidentiality. If a real estate agent has come into contact with a client and later finds out that the client has contracted COVID-19, the

agent cannot notify any other parties that came into contact with the client without the client’s consent. If they cannot obtain consent, they may want to notify the party without identifying the specific client or the property.

### Remote Work

According to the U.S. Census, approximately 5 percent of all workers, prior to the pandemic, worked completely from home. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has published data indicating that around 25 percent of workers worked from home at least some of the time. After the outbreak of the COVID-19, Google sent out a memo on March 11, 2020, to all of its tens of thousands of North American employees recommending that they work remotely from home if their positions allowed for it. Joining Google was Microsoft, Apple, Twitter, and other employers.

The issue is not that employees mind working from home for a short time, particularly if they do not see a reduction in pay along with the request. It is that there

is something unique that people get from interacting with others that does not fare as well when individuals are subjected to prolonged social isolation. Numerous studies have found that social interaction is critical to mental health and business productivity.

On the one hand, it is easier to talk on the phone while Googling a topic, making a list of tasks, and not having to be establishing eye contact with a person you are talking to. However, texting “LOL” is not the same experience as being with someone and laughing out loud with them. It will be interesting to see how many people, given a chance to work at home, end up preferring it to the traditional social workplace. What we can anticipate is that at least a portion of those confined to working at home right now will desire to continue working remotely after COVID-19. The demand for homes with separate working spaces is bound to increase. The real estate agents who know how to identify combination home/workspaces will find a profitable niche in the future.

### Entertainment and Education in the Time of COVID-19

Who would have thought that the day would come when our favorite late-night hosts would be performing for us from their homes with no bands, no witty banter, or glamorous sets? Yet, that is the state of television entertainment in the age of the pandemic. Will we continue to see this version of the late-night variety show once the pandemic is over? Probably not. We will probably return to what we were familiar with in terms of entertainment.

Something that no one would ever believe would happen, however, pre-virus, was that all the schools in the United States, from elementary schools to universities to private real estate schools would stop having live classes with students. Overnight, the only education taking place in the country was distance education. Continuing to educate students of all kinds is especially important, and live streaming video is the key to accomplishing it. While some of these changes are temporary, others will become permanent.

Providing interactive experiences will be essential to the long-term success of live streaming video educational experiences. Passive viewing experience is not enough. Even in the classroom, the historic model of teaching (i.e. “the sage on the stage”) is fading away. No student wants to be lectured. In today’s world, they want to be engaged.

Flexible software solutions can provide true interactivity so that users can communicate as naturally as if they were in the same room. Platform features can help keep participants focused by switching audio and video on and off until the instructor and the students are ready to engage. There are even capabilities where small groups of students can break out to separate electronic rooms to discuss specific topics. Embedded video clips can deliver the participants to the larger world outside of the immediate classroom to make the learning experience limited only by the imagination of the content creators. Once students experience true interactivity and real-time live streaming video with these virtual educational events, there may be no going back to passive educational experiences. ■

## Your Success in Real Estate Starts Today

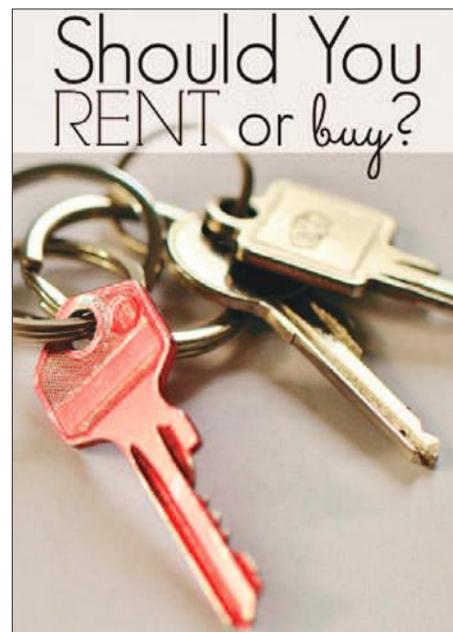


When you succeed, the Chamber Coalition succeeds. That’s why we’ve partnered with Kaplan Real Estate Education. From prelicensing and exam prep to continuing education, you’ll be guided through every stage of your real estate career.



Education that fits your schedule  
Visit [www.nacc.nyc/kaplan](http://www.nacc.nyc/kaplan)

At check out enter the code **Chamber5**.  
Questions? Call **800-636-9517**.



Call Equity Smart Realty at 888-670-6791 for a FREE consultation.



# Five Skills Expected from All Home Inspectors

BY DOUG HASTINGS, ACI  
KAPLAN REAL ESTATE EDUCATION

When thinking about becoming a home inspector, you should consider the industry expectations. The days of the contractor walk-thru inspection are over. In all communities, large and small, the expectation of the home inspector's ability is higher than ever. When you hang a sign calling yourself a home inspector, you better be ready to meet a high standard of performance.

Initially, real estate salespeople were reluctant to embrace the home inspector. As the industry grew, agents began to accept the home inspector, but demanded professionals. In today's real estate industry, agents are okay with the home inspector finding issues during the transaction, as long as they are actual problems. Home inspectors essentially need to perform at the same level as a licensed contractor. They need to be experts in all facets of the home, from foundations to roof shingles, from furnaces to electrical panels, from wet basements to mold. In other words, today's home inspector must be highly trained in order to succeed. If you want to become a home inspector, ask yourself the following questions:



## 1. Do you know all the systems and components of a home?

As an instructor of 26 years, I have never met a student who, at the end of their inspection training, wasn't completely overwhelmed and exhausted. Most students, regardless of their background, are shocked by the amount of technical knowledge they still needed to learn.

## 2. Do you know how to identify all the potential problems of each system and component?

A home inspector not only needs to know each and every part of the building, but they need a unique skill set that allows them to

identify each problem within these systems and components. It's one thing to know what a furnace is, but another thing to be able to tell someone why it's unsafe and needs to be replaced.

## 3. Do you know old homes as well as new homes?

Old homes perform differently than new homes. A competent inspector must be able to recognize that. For example, moisture intrusion in an old home is bad and needs to be stopped, but moisture intrusion in a new home, with much lower drying potential, could be devastating and should be a high concern for decay and mold.

## 4. Are you capable of explaining what you know to a customer?

Successful home inspectors need to be able to communicate their findings, both verbally and in a high-quality physical document. Often, it's not what you say, but how you say it. Great communication is one of the major keys to controlling liability and providing customer satisfaction.

## 5. Do you have any designations that support your ability to inspect a home?

Unless your customer is a repeat customer, your client will likely not know you. As customers shop for a qualified inspector, they will be looking for industry designations that make you stand out from your competition.

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you may not be prepared to become a home inspector yet. ■

*Doug Hastings, ACI is a Lead Instructor at Kaplan Real Estate Education*

### Free Consultation

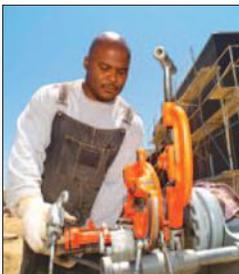
Need assistance? We will be happy to meet with you and share our guidance. Schedule an appointment today. call us at 855-768-8845.

## NY WORKERS' COMPENSATION

*Are you working? Have you been injured on the job?  
Was it a serious injury as defined under NY Workers'  
Compensation Law?*

**If yes, then call Figeroux & Associates  
for a FREE Consultation at 718-222-3155.**

### *Why Should I Hire A Lawyer?*



In addition to being eligible for workers' compensation, you may also have a claim against a party other than your employer. That is why it is so important to seek assistance from our experienced team.



Workers who know their rights and speak to a lawyer put themselves in a better position to obtain a recovery.

*Find Out What Our Firm Can Do For You*

## LANDLORD & TENANT CASES

PROMPT SERVICE • REASONABLE FEES

**WE KNOW  
YOUR RIGHTS &  
WILL PROTECT  
THEM!**



**FREE CONSULTATIONS**  
Every Saturday 10am-3pm  
Call 718-222-3155

- Evictions
- Orders To Show Cause
- Non-Payments
- Holdovers
- Appeals
- Tenants' Rights
- Co-ops
- Leases
- Obtain Services
- Rent Abatements
- All D.H.C.R. Proceedings
- Overcharges
- Primary Residence
- Owner Occupancy
- Buyouts
- Relocations
- Article 78
- Jury Trials

**LAW OFFICES OF FIGEROUX & ASSOCIATES**  
26 Court Street, Suite 701, Brooklyn, NY 11242

**1-855-768-8845**

[www.falaw.us](http://www.falaw.us)