**29 RULES OF ETIQUETTE FOR AGENTS**

Key Takeaways

* Being courteous isn't just polite; it's good for business too.
* Failing to promptly update listings, pre-judging colleagues, skimping on showing feedback, not locking doors, parking in driveways are a few among many no-nos cited by agents.

Leaving feedback on listings can seem like a chore. But Sidney-Nebraska-based agent Kathy King thinks agents owe it to colleagues to take the time to explain what they and their clients think are the strengths and shortcomings of a home.

Her habit of providing this input hasn’t only pleased other agents; it actually has resulted in a transaction.

“True story: We left feedback. Seller said, ‘What would you offer if we took care of that?’ Ka-ching!!!” she said in a [recent discussion on agent etiquette](https://www.facebook.com/groups/labcoatagents/permalink/1719827364903445/) in the Facebook group Lab Coat Agents.

King’s experience shows that behaving thoughtfully toward agents and consumers isn’t only courteous; it can also be good for business. Working off the Lab Coat Agents Facebook thread, Inman has rounded up some rules of etiquette for real estate agents.

Tell us what we missed, or got wrong, and we’ll adjust our list accordingly.

**1. Always be polite and respectful to colleagues**

This is particularly important in an industry where professionals must constantly cooperate with each other.

“Whether you’re talking with another new agent or the ‘biggest’ agent in town (or the craziest) remember that you are now an agent and you will never know when you may need to work with that agent again on either side,” said Framingham-based agent Jennifer Juliano.

Acting professionally towards other agents can “pay big dividends down the road,” added King. “I have received referrals from other agent’s clients because I was courteous and respectful during the process,” she said.

**2. Don’t pre-judge agents**

“Don’t let other agents’ opinions of other agents influence the way you treat them… Just because someone may have had a bad experience with somebody does not mean that you will” Juliano said.

**3. Try to work out differences before involving others**

If an agent does something you find objectionable, consider discussing your concerns with the agent before bringing others into the equation.

“This means that if you don’t like something they do, talk to them directly first before involving other agents, your broker or your board,” said Corvallis, Oregon-based agent Jill Schuster.

**4. Don’t trash-talk**

“Never, ever speak poorly of any agent, lender, escrow or anybody in the business, to ANYBODY,” said Kim Steel McCullough, a Fallbrook, California-based agent.

And that goes for clients, too. McCullough says she’s seen agents post comments like, “Can this freaking guy just pick a house already” and “Ugh, my client’s breath was so bad today it stunk up my whole car.”

“If people see you’re willing to snark behind your client’s back, why would they want to do business with you?” she said.

**5. Provide (constructive) feedback after showings**

“Not interested,” “not the right house,” or “too busy” will not do. Agents should share what they perceive to be the pros and cons of a home to help listing agents and sellers improve the marketability of the home.

“The sellers deserve it,” said Lakeland, Tennessee-based agent Greg Renfrow. “They allowed you into their home.”

That said, don’t be too harsh. It might come back to bite you.

“Some agents give your name to the seller and what you said,” said Toronto, Canada-based agent Diane Plant. “If that listing expires and you go after it, the seller might just remember what you said. True story; it happened to a couple of agents in our office.”

**6. Be punctual or call if you’re running late or canceling**

For their own scheduling purposes, listing agents and sellers may appreciate knowing if you’re running late or aren’t going to make it, even if a property is vacant.

**7. Update listing info promptly**

Agents who fail to update listing information in a timely manner can set buyers and agents up for major disappointments.

“Teach listing agents to update property info in a timely manner so buyers don’t fall in love with a home that’s under contract,” said Amanda DeBord, an agent in McKinney, Texas.

Because some agents drag their feet in updating listings, buyer’s agents are well advised to contact a listing agent to verify a listing’s status before trying to show it, said Las Vegas- based agent Aaron Mazza.

8. **Read broker remarks and instructions before scheduling a showing**

This way, you won’t have problems accessing a property and can spare listing agents or sellers the hassle of responding to dead-on-arrival showing requests.

9. **Leave clear broker remarks and instructions**

Listing agents also have to hold up their side of the bargain by providing easy-to-understand guidance for showings.

“When it says ‘call listing agent, use showing button, vacant electronic lockbox, easy to show, listing agent must accompany,’ I have no idea what’s going on there,’ said Saint Petersburg, Florida-based agent Lisa Avila. “Or when the instructions say ‘go and show, combo box’ with no combo.”

10. **Don’t double-book showings for vacant listings**

If showings for vacant properties require your approval, make sure you don’t reflexively sign off on all requests. Private showings are supposed to be just that: “private.” Make sure you aren’t sending two buyers to a home at the same time.

11. **Don’t park in a property’s driveway at an open house**

Whether this holds for private showings may be up for debate.

12. **Remove shoes during showings**

Duh.

13. **Leave a home the way you find it**

Carolyn T. Reynolds, a Tampa, Florida-based agent, says she recently “took it on the chin again” because someone left a listing’s door unlocked. Generally, you should probably make sure doors are locked, windows closed and lights off, as clients may have forgotten to cover their tracks, advises Phoenix, Arizona-based Shirley Coomer.

But, as Spokane, Washington-based agent Jennifer Gumm Shupe notes, leaving a home as you find it doesn’t always mean the house should be dark when you move on.

“As a new agent, I always turned off the lights,”Shupe said. “Little did I think that there would be a showing to follow.”

**14. Contact listing agents about problems with a property**

If you uncover an issue with a property, reach out directly to the listing agent about it.

“I always try to remember to look to see where the gauge is in case it runs out of oil and let the listing agent know,” Juliano said.

“I have turned off water at the street so a problem would not get worse,” said Birmingham, based agent Gusty Gulas.

15. **If you’re a listing agent at a showing, let the buyer’s agent do the talking**

“While it may be tempting to interject and share your knowledge, let the selling agents show the house and do the talking,” said Oxnard, California-based agent April Williams. “Be available for questions.”

16. **Promptly answer text, phone calls and email**

This may be common sense, but all too often, agents leave their colleagues hanging.

17. **Use a professional email address**

“None of this maddog54 or crazycatlady72 stuff, please!” pleads Teresa Baker Cooper, a Charleston, South Carolina-based agent.

18. **Include contact info in your email signature**

You should make it as easy as possible for agents and clients to get back to you.

19. **Answer the phone in a professional manner**

This is as simple as saying, “Hi, this is X,” said Roger Morris, a Seattle-based agent.

20. **Wait outside with your client if a showing is already in process**

“… if weather doesn’t permit it, don’t crowd them,” while you wait inside, said Exton, Pennsylvania-based agent Nancy Vitale Glenn.

21. **Keep your social media accounts professional**

“Clean up your social media profiles, or lock them down completely and start new ones for business,” said McCullough. “Your clients don’t want to see your political rants and drunken weekend adventures.”

22.**Don’t look like a slob**

Casual dress may appeal to a certain demographics, but be aware that some people may look down on professionals that shun business attire. At least be conscious that what you wear can send a message.

“Don’t watch the millionaire real estate agent and say, ‘Gee, I can wear cut off pants and look like a slob,'” says Bill Richard, a Carslbad, California-based agent.

23. **Send complete contracts**

Like all agents, Lewis Center, Ohio-based Jodi Beekman loves receiving offers. But “not so much when I have to open 12 PDFs to read them,” she said.

“Don’t piecemeal together by sending in 3 emails or multiple PDF’s,” Julie Baldino, an agent based in Vancouver, Washington.

24. **Give agents a heads-up when sending paperwork**

“Had an offer go to spam and had no idea the agent sent me an offer recently,” Gulas said. “24 hours later she was wanting an update and I didn’t know of an offer.”

25. **If you aren’t present for a closing, at least drop off the keys**

Come on, now…

26. **Help inexperienced agents**

Look at this as public service.

“Seasoned agents have a golden opportunity to be someone’s hero and have a long term positive impact on the industry they profess to love,” King said.

27. **Try to accompany buyers to open houses**

“Don’t just send buyers to open houses so you can watch football,” said Christopher Cassidy, a Woburn, Massachusetts-based agent. “If you can’t accompany them, call the listing agent the day before as a courtesy and let them know that your buyers will be stopping by.”

28. **Don’t just text and email agents, call them**

Some clients may prefer to hear from agents mostly by text or email.

But when it comes to communicating with each other, agents can reduce misunderstandings and increase the odds of doing deals by having actual conversations with each other.

“As in, pick up the phone and call to ask us questions about our listings or the offers we send you or whatever!” said Mineola, Texas-based agent Vince Leibowitz. “MLS can’t often tell the entire story, so if you wonder if a home might work for a buyer, call us and ask us about what you can’t see from MLS.”

“Get on the phone and talk to the other agent,” added Chula Vista, California-based agent John Stenberg. “Stop with all the text and email. If someone writes an offer on your listing, call them and speak to them.”

29. **Educate buyers**

“I’ve done too many deals with new agents who don’t educate and it causes transactions to implode,” Mazza said.