Surveys show that many homeowners and homebuyers are not aware of the true value a REALTOR® provides during the course of a real estate transaction.

The list here is just a baseline since the services may vary within each brokerage and each market. Many REALTORS® routinely provide a wide variety of additional services that are as varied as the nature of each transaction.

By the same token, some transactions may not require some of these steps to be equally successful. However, most would agree that given the unexpected complications that can arise, it’s far better to know about a step and make an intelligent, informed decision to skip it, than to not know the possibility even existed.

The Critical Role of the REALTOR® – 181 Steps

Listed here are 181 typical actions, research steps, procedures, processes and review stages in a successful residential real estate transaction that are normally provided by full service real estate brokerages in return for their sales commission. Depending on the transaction, some may take minutes, hours, or even days to complete, while some may not be needed. They are divided into the following categories:

Pre-Listing Activities
   Listing Appointment Presentation
   Once Property is Under Listing Agreement
   Entering Property in Multiple Listing Service Database
   Marketing The Listing
   The Offer and Contract
   Home Inspection
   The Appraisal
   Closing Preparations and Duties

More importantly, they reflect the level of skill, knowledge and attention to detail required in today’s real estate transaction, underscoring the importance of having help and guidance from someone who fully understands the process – a REALTOR®.

Pre-Listing Activities
1. Make appointment with seller for listing presentation
2. Send seller a written or e-mail confirmation of listing appointment and call to confirm
3. Review pre-appointment questions
4. Research all comparable currently listed properties
5. Research sales activity for past 18 months from MLS and public records databases
6. Research "Average Days on Market" for this property of this type, price range and location
7. Download and review property tax roll information
8. Prepare "Comparative Market Analysis" (CMA) to establish fair market value
9. Obtain copy of subdivision plat/complex lay-out
10. Research property's ownership & deed type
11. Research property's public record information for lot size & dimensions
12. Research and verify legal description
13 Research property's land use coding and deed restrictions
14 Research property's current use and zoning
15 Verify legal names of owner(s) in county's public property records
16 Perform exterior "Curb Appeal Assessment" of subject property
17 Compile and assemble formal file on property
18 Confirm current public schools and explain impact of schools on market value
19 Review listing appointment checklist to ensure all steps and actions have been completed

**Listing Appointment Presentation**

20 Give seller an overview of current market conditions and projections
21 Review agent's and company's credentials and accomplishments in the market
22 Present company's profile and position or "niche" in the marketplace
23 Present CMA Results To Seller, including Comparables, Solds, Current Listings & Expireds
24 Offer pricing strategy based on professional judgment and interpretation of current market conditions
25 Discuss Goals With Seller To Market Effectively
26 Explain market power and benefits of Multiple Listing Service
27 Explain market power of web marketing, IDX and REALTOR.com
28 Explain the work the brokerage and agent do "behind the scenes" and agent's availability on weekends
29 Explain agent's role in taking calls to screen for qualified buyers and protect seller from curiosity seekers
30 Present and discuss strategic master marketing plan
31 Explain different agency relationships and determine seller's preference
32 Review and explain all clauses in Listing Contract & Addendum and obtain seller's signature

**Once Property is Under Listing Agreement**

33 Review current title information
34 Measure overall and heated square footage
35 Measure interior room sizes
36 Confirm lot size via owner's copy of certified survey, if available
37 Note any and all unrecorded property lines, agreements, easements
38 Obtain house plans, if applicable and available
39 Review house plans and make copy
40 Order plat map for retention in property's listing file
41 Prepare showing instructions for buyers' agents and agree on showing time window with seller
42 Obtain current mortgage loan(s) information: companies and & loan account numbers
43 Verify current loan information with lender(s)
44 Check assumability of loan(s) and any special requirements
45 Discuss possible buyer financing alternatives and options with seller
46 Review current appraisal if available
47 Identify Home Owner Association manager if applicable
48 Verify Home Owner Association Fees with manager - mandatory or optional and current annual fee
49 Order copy of Homeowner Association bylaws, if applicable
50 Research electricity availability and supplier's name and phone number
51 Calculate average utility usage from last 12 months of bills
52 Research and verify city sewer/septic tank system
53 Water System: Calculate average water fees or rates from last 12 months of bills
Well Water: Confirm well status, depth and output from Well Report
Natural Gas: Research/verify availability and supplier's name and phone number
Verify security system, current term of service and whether owned or leased
Verify if seller has transferable Termite Bond
Ascertaining need for lead-based paint disclosure
Prepare detailed list of property amenities and assess market impact
Prepare detailed list of property's "Inclusions & Conveyances with Sale"
Compile list of completed repairs and maintenance items
Send "Vacancy Checklist" to seller if property is vacant
Explain benefits of Home Owner Warranty to seller
Assist sellers with completion and submission of Home Owner Warranty Application
When received, place Home Owner Warranty in property file for conveyance at time of sale
Have extra key made for lockbox
Verify if property has rental units involved. And if so:
  * Make copies of all leases for retention in listing file
  * Verify all rents & deposits
  * Inform tenants of listing and discuss how showings will be handled
Arrange for installation of yard sign
Assist seller with completion of Seller's Disclosure form
"New Listing Checklist" Completed
Review results of Curb Appeal Assessment with seller and provide suggestions to improve salability
Review results of Interior Décor Assessment and suggest changes to shorten time on market
Load listing into transaction management software program

**Entering Property in Multiple Listing Service Database**
Prepare MLS Profile Sheet -- Agents is responsible for "quality control" and accuracy of listing data
Enter property data from Profile Sheet into MLS Listing Database
Proofread MLS database listing for accuracy - including proper placement in mapping function
Add property to company's Active Listings list
Provide seller with signed copies of Listing Agreement and MLS Profile Sheet Data Form within 48 hours
Take additional photos for upload into MLS and use in flyers. Discuss efficacy of panoramic photography

**Marketing The Listing**
Create print and Internet ads with seller's input
Coordinate showings with owners, tenants, and other Realtors®. Return all calls - weekends included
Install electronic lock box if authorized by owner. Program with agreed-upon showing time windows
Prepare mailing and contact list
Generate mail-merge letters to contact list
Order “Just Listed” labels & reports
Prepare flyers & feedback faxes
Review comparable MLS listings regularly to ensure property remains competitive in price, terms, conditions and availability
Prepare property marketing brochure for seller's review
92 Arrange for printing or copying of supply of marketing brochures or fliers
93 Place marketing brochures in all company agent mail boxes
94 Upload listing to company and agent Internet site, if applicable
95 Mail Out "Just Listed" notice to all neighborhood residents
96 Advise Network Referral Program of listing
97 Provide marketing data to buyers coming through international relocation networks
98 Provide marketing data to buyers coming from referral network
99 Provide "Special Feature" cards for marketing, if applicable
100 Submit ads to company's participating Internet real estate sites
101 Price changes conveyed promptly to all Internet groups
102 Reprint/supply brochures promptly as needed
103 Loan information reviewed and updated in MLS as required
104 Feedback e-mails/faxes sent to buyers' agents after showings
105 Review weekly Market Study
106 Discuss feedback from showing agents with seller to determine if changes will accelerate the sale
107 Place regular weekly update calls to seller to discuss marketing & pricing
108 Promptly enter price changes in MLS listing database

The Offer and Contract
109 Receive and review all Offer to Purchase contracts submitted by buyers or buyers' agents.
110 Evaluate offer(s) and prepare a "net sheet" on each for the owner for comparison purposes
111 Counsel seller on offers. Explain merits and weakness of each component of each offer
112 Contact buyers' agents to review buyer's qualifications and discuss offer
113 Fax/deliver Seller's Disclosure to buyer's agent or buyer upon request and prior to offer if possible
114 Confirm buyer is pre-qualified by calling Loan Officer
115 Obtain pre-qualification letter on buyer from Loan Officer
116 Negotiate all offers on seller's behalf, setting time limit for loan approval and closing date
117 Prepare and convey any counteroffers, acceptance or amendments to buyer's agent
118 Fax copies of contract and all addendums to closing attorney or title company
119 When Offer to Purchase Contract is accepted and signed by seller, deliver to buyer's agent
120 Record and promptly deposit buyer's earnest money in escrow account.
121 Disseminate "Under-Contract Showing Restrictions" as seller requests
122 Deliver copies of fully signed Offer to Purchase contract to seller
123 Fax/deliver copies of Offer to Purchase contract to Selling Agent
124 Fax copies of Offer to Purchase contract to lender
125 Provide copies of signed Offer to Purchase contract for office file
126 Advise seller in handling additional offers to purchase submitted between contract and closing
127 Change status in MLS to "Sale Pending"
128 Update transaction management program show "Sale Pending"
129 Review buyer's credit report results -- Advise seller of worst and best case scenarios
130 Provide credit report information to seller if property will be seller-financed
131 Assist buyer with obtaining financing, if applicable and follow-up as necessary
132 Coordinate with lender on Discount Points being locked in with dates
133 Deliver unrecorded property information to buyer
134 Order septic system inspection, if applicable
135 Receive and review septic system report and assess any possible impact on sale
136 Deliver copy of septic system inspection report lender & buyer
137 Deliver Well Flow Test Report copies to lender & buyer and property listing file
138 Verify termite inspection ordered
Verify mold inspection ordered, if required

**Tracking the Loan Process**
140 Confirm Verifications Of Deposit & Buyer's Employment Have Been Returned
141 Follow Loan Processing Through To The Underwriter
142 Contact lender weekly to ensure processing is on track
143 Relay final approval of buyer's loan application to seller

**Home Inspection**
144 Coordinate buyer's professional home inspection with seller
145 Review home inspector's report
146 Enter completion into transaction management tracking software program
147 Explain seller's responsibilities with respect to loan limits and interpret any clauses in the contract
148 Ensure seller's compliance with Home Inspection Clause requirements
149 Recommend or assist seller with identifying and negotiating with trustworthy contractors to perform any required repairs
150 Negotiate payment and oversee completion of all required repairs on seller's behalf, if needed

**The Appraisal**
151 Schedule Appraisal
152 Provide comparable sales used in market pricing to Appraiser
153 Follow-Up On Appraisal
154 Enter completion into transaction management program
155 Assist seller in questioning appraisal report if it seems too low

**Closing Preparations and Duties**
156 Contract Is Signed By All Parties
157 Coordinate closing process with buyer's agent and lender
158 Update closing forms & files
159 Ensure all parties have all forms and information needed to close the sale
160 Select location where closing will be held
161 Confirm closing date and time and notify all parties
162 Assist in solving any title problems (boundary disputes, easements, etc) or in obtaining Death Certificates
163 Work with buyer's agent in scheduling and conducting buyer's Final Walk-Thru prior to closing
164 Research all tax, HOA, utility and other applicable prorations
165 Request final closing figures from closing agent (attorney or title company)
166 Receive & carefully review closing figures to ensure accuracy of preparation
167 Forward verified closing figures to buyer's agent
168 Request copy of closing documents from closing agent
169 Confirm buyer and buyer's agent have received title insurance commitment
170 Provide "Home Owners Warranty" for availability at closing
171 Reviews all closing documents carefully for errors
172 Forward closing documents to absentee seller as requested
173 Review documents with closing agent (attorney)
174 Provide earnest money deposit check from escrow account to closing agent
175 Coordinate this closing with seller's next purchase and resolve any timing problems
176 Have a "no surprises" closing so that seller receives a net proceeds check at closing
177 Refer sellers to one of the best agents at their destination, if applicable
Change MLS status to Sold. Enter sale date, price, selling broker and agent's ID numbers, etc.

Follow Up After Closing
179 Answer questions about filing claims with Home Owner Warranty company if requested
180 Attempt to clarify and resolve any conflicts about repairs if buyer is not satisfied
181 Respond to any follow-on calls and provide any additional information required from office files.