

AGENCY PROFILE

RealStar Realty, Naperville

Customer service, discounts help company succeed

By Randy Mielke
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

RealStar Realty, a locally-owned, independent brokerage has seen dramatic growth over the last six years. The main reasons for RealStar's success are excellent customer service and discounted commissions.

"We have had tremendous growth where other companies are struggling," said John Wilt, owner and broker of the real estate firm.

The growth is reflected in the firm's sales figures. RealStar Realty increased sales by 70 percent in 2002, 30 percent in 2003, 50 percent in 2004 and 34 percent in 2005. According to Wilt, the company is ahead of pace for 2006 with projected growth expected to be up 20 to 30 percent.

Because of the rapid growth of areas such as Oswego, RealStar will open an office in that town in mid-April, combining employees with those from a Geneva office. RealStar now has three offices in the western suburbs. In addition to the new Oswego location, the company has an office in Glen Ellyn and its main office in downtown Naperville. RealStar recently moved its company headquarters in Naperville for a third time in order to expand and accommodate additional real estate agents.

"We have made three moves in six years with the Naperville office because of growth," Wilt said.

Part of the reason for the growth is the discounted commission that RealStar offers customers. The majority of real estate firms charge a 6 percent

AGENCY FACTS

Name:
RealStar Realty, Inc.

Location:
639 S. Washington Street,
Naperville, IL

Years in real estate:
Six years

Sales Associates:
19

Specialty:
Residential

Fact:
Sales increased by 34 percent
in 2005

Phone number:
(630) 420-7400

commission fee on all transactions. RealStar offers a 3.9 percent commission.

"We are (a) full-service real estate company at discount pricing," Wilt said.

Because of the Internet and the Multiple Listing Service lists, which are available to everyone, RealStar can offer its clients the same level of national exposure that the major real estate firms offer.

"We can do 3.9 percent because we do not pay up the franchise chain," Wilt said. "Instead, we do a ton of advertising in local newspapers and on the Internet. Independent firms do not have to pay up the franchise chain. We can use that money to advertise locally."

Usually, every real estate agent in a company must buy their own advertising space from advertisers to market the homes that they list. But at RealStar, Wilt takes this responsi-

bility off of his agents and allows them to concentrate on selling.

"We do better marketing," he said. "We spend more money locally, like ads in newspapers. I pay for most of the core advertising for the real estate agents."

Another major component of the company's success is its attention to customer service. To help sales associates better serve their customers, all RealStar agents are cross-trained in every aspect of buying, selling and closing transactions.

"We focus a great deal on customer service," Wilt said. "In other companies, someone's wife or husband may be working part-time and handling part of the transactions. We never hand you off. From the time the house is on the market until the time you close, the client only deals with one person."

"We do all the marketing, handle any issues that arise, meet the termite guy, meet the appraisers and work with the attorneys," he continued.

The attention to customer service often results in satisfied clients telling others about the good service that they have received. An estimated 42 percent of RealStar's listings are by referral.

"The fact that we do not hand clients off is one of the main reasons that we get so much referral business for such a young company," Wilt said.

Wilt is proud of the team he has assembled and of the new way of doing business that he has developed.

"Our growth proves that it works," he said.



Jeff Kruga / Special to The Sun

John Wilt, owner and broker of RealStar Realty, and Dianne Wilt, shown here, continue to expand their company with great success.

"We are (a) full-service real estate company at discount pricing."

John Wilt ■ OWNER AND BROKER