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## Helping the New Homebuyer

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*Special to the Palisadian-Post*

Since starting my career in real estate 24 years ago I have seen many changes in the industry, including buyers markets, sellers markets and new boutique real estate companies coming into the market (with many of them later being purchased by large corporations).

I have seen literally hundreds of people get real estate licenses in order to “make an easy living” only to watch them fold shop and leave the business months later.

The newest change I am witnessing is how the Internet is influencing a vast majority of homebuyers during their search for a new home.

Unquestionably, the Internet has changed how quickly buyers are introduced to homes. In my professional opinion, this is fantastic for all involved – homebuyers, sellers and agents.

Agents were once the sole source of this information, but now both agents and buyers are able to be more thorough, to ensure nobody is overlooking a client’s dream home.

However, due to the speed with which this information is reaching people’s computers, laptops and handheld phones, some homebuyers may mistakenly consider: “I don’t need a real estate agent to help me find a home. I hear about all of these homes as fast as my agent.”

This is true. People do not need a real estate to “obtain” information. However, what remains the vital role of a real estate agent is “assessing” the information to make smart buying (or selling) decisions. This is why having a good, local real estate agent guide and represent homebuyers is prudent.

I have purchased and sold real estate outside of my area of expertise, some in California where I could have repre-

sented myself and earned all the commission and also in other states as well as overseas.

On each one of these transactions, I never represented myself. What was my reasoning? I am knowledgeable enough to know my knowledge is limited.

Even though I had access to the same information as these other agents, I knew it was best to allow them to lead me in making smart real estate investments and to understand the intangibles of each area.

They had expert knowledge of comparable homes, nuisances of each neighborhood and their home values, which I assure you most – if not all – real estate search sites simply do not provide. These sites only provide information, which can be seriously inaccurate, or at least misleading.

Although an agent is no longer the gatekeeper of information, finding a good and

local real estate agent helps ensure you are buying the best home for your needs at a fair price and while protecting yourself contractually.

When I was buying and selling real estate out of the area, I found an agent’s guidance to be priceless, giving me peace of mind that I was making sound business decisions.

One final point, since the seller pays the fee to the agents handling the transaction, why not have a good agent represent you? It just makes good business sense and in the long run, can save a homebuyer a lot of time.

*Robert Radcliffe of The Radcliffe Group has been representing home buyer and sellers since 1991 with over 600 local home sales. Robert offers a home buying and selling video blog that can be viewed at [www.robertradcliffe.com](http://www.robertradcliffe.com) and Robert can be reached at Sotheby’s International Realty in Pacific Palisades 310-255-5454.*