

DEALING WITH A BUDINSKI-BROKER

(Friend or foe?)

By

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Every now and then, I encounter a broker who I respect. In my opinion, the good ones also arrive early and are well prepared. They have the keys and know how to open the doors, they turn all the lights on, they provide a copy of a "seller's disclosure form for my review; and most importantly - **THEY STAY OUT OF THE WAY DURING THE INSPECTION!** In my opinion, the good brokers oversee the home and stay busy telephoning leads, doing paper work or reading a book. They don't interfere with the home inspection and they remain available for questions.

Don't get me wrong, I don't hate all brokers. After all, we are all part of the same "purchase process team." However, the broker represents the seller while we represent the buyer - therein lies the problem. Certainly the broker wants the home inspector to represent the home fairly and with a demeanor that does not unnecessarily frighten a buyer away, but just make one statement that jeopardizes the broker's commission and you may have to deal with an adversary while on the job.

Have you ever had the opportunity to meet a "**BUDINSKI broker**"? You know the one I mean. You explain to your client that the home needs a total new roof and the broker butts in and says: "*not to worry, you can easily wait a few years and I know a roofer who will do the work for a case of beer!*" A "BUDINSKI broker" is the one who always has something to say after the home inspector. In my opinion, this type of broker is not a true professional and it is up to you to do something about it.

If a broker is expressing opinions after you describe your unbiased observations, then you are not in charge and you are not representing your client very well. No one should influence the picture conveyed to your client. Have you ever had the nerve to speak up, to set the tone and to ***assert your authority*** before or during an inspection or are you worried that you may lose a future broker referral?.

Yes, that's right, I said "**assert your authority.**" You may be a guest in the home, but you are also the person in charge of the inspection process. Through the use of diplomacy when needed, you must "**set the tone**" and establish yourself as the expert and the person in charge or the broker may usurp your authority by interjecting comments that diminish the weight of your statements to the buyer. You are the building expert. You are the one who will be held accountable if the client is misled. You are the one who may be facing a claim if the client is wrongly influenced by a 3rd party and fails to comprehend the significance of your statements. Yes, the final report is the legal record of what was said and done, but no one should be allowed to influence your client while in your presence.

Taking charge and setting the tone of authority does not mean that you have to make an enemy of the broker, but you may need to politely remind a broker about your respective roles. How you handle this problem is a business decision that needs practice and flexibility during different scenarios.

The standard business practice of some home inspectors is to meet the parties at the site and to request that no one accompany the home inspector and client during the entire inspection. Remarks such as: "I would ask that you (broker, owner, etc.) Not follow us during the inspection as I need the complete attention of my client and would like to be able to speak freely about my client's interests". This practice will certainly ruffle a few feathers, but at least you are in charge and are assured that you will not be interrupted.

Other inspectors meet the respective parties at the site and utilize the "wait & see" policy. In other word, the inspector performs the inspection knowing that a small parade of people will follow and that any one of them may interject comments. In this situation, a broker may feel free to express and opinion to your client that may be misleading or just plain wrong.

Still other home inspectors welcome an audience and don't care who is within earshot. This type of inspector may have a commanding presence that demands respect and prevents 3rd party interference simply by nature of authority. Some inspectors enjoy having a captive audience and welcome the broker's questions just as well as the client's questions.

Regardless of how you perform your field procedures and inform your client, I guarantee that you will eventually encounter a "**BUDINSKI BROKER!**" When you hear comments that make your antennae go up; a "take charge" response may be needed. Each home inspector should evolve a firm and practiced diplomacy that prevents interruption along with an occasional reminder of your distinctive roles.

Here are some phrases that you may like or dislike, but at least they will get you thinking about past encounters with a "**BUDINSKI BROKER:**"

"Are you working as a buyer's broker? No? Then I would ask you to please refrain from expressing any further opinions during the home inspection! Thank you."

"My client is paying me by the hour. Perhaps it might be best to discuss and sign those papers after the inspection."

"I promise to inspect this home fairly and to present my findings in an unbiased manner. In return for that promise, I ask that you

refrain from following us or expressing any opinions during the home inspection."

"You are more than welcome to accompany us, but please do not express any opinions during the inspection, as I need the full attention of my client."

"I'm sure that you have good intentions, but from this point on I respectfully request that you not express any further comments as you represent the seller. In return, I promise not to intentionally place your sale at risk."

Sooner or later, you will meet a "**BUDINSKI BROKER!**" How you choose to react is a business decision. I hope that the above discussion will get you thinking about a planned response that best represents your client. Do you wear a captain's hat or a 3rd mate's hat during a home inspection? Do you ever compliment a "good broker"? Perhaps "*how to deal with broker interference*" may make a good topic for future round table discussion.

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