

Real Estate Agents Are Better at Selling Than We Are

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I had coffee with a real estate agent last month and spent the whole time jealous of how much better his industry has its shit together compared to domains.

Not the big stuff, we both deal with property and scarcity and timing and negotiation. But the small stuff, the presentation stuff, the way he talks about listings and buyers and comps. It all felt more... professional isn't the right word. More intentional, maybe.

Domain investors pride ourselves on being contrarian data nerds who don't need fancy presentation because "the domain speaks for itself." Except it doesn't. A string of letters doesn't speak. We have to speak for it. And most of us are terrible at it.

Real estate agents figured this out decades ago. We're still winging it.

First impressions are doing more work than you think

Real estate agents obsess over curb appeal because they know the first three seconds determine everything. Before a buyer walks through the door, they've already decided how they feel about the price.

Domain landing pages work the same way, but most of ours look like we don't care. Default parking page. Maybe a "Make Offer" button. No context, no framing, nothing that helps someone see what this domain could become.

I started adding one sentence to my better domains a few years ago. Not marketing copy, just context. "Perfect for a fintech startup" or "Ideal for a wellness brand." Takes thirty seconds. I've had multiple buyers tell me that line was what convinced them the domain fit their vision.

That's not fluff. That's framing. Real estate agents stage homes so buyers see possibility instead of empty rooms. We should be doing the same thing with landing pages, but most of us can't be bothered.

I get it, it's tedious to customize pages for hundreds of domains. But your best twenty domains? The ones priced over \$5K? Those deserve more than a parking page and a prayer.

Nobody just accepts your price because you said so

Real estate agents don't drop a number and walk away. They justify it. "Comparable homes in this area sold for \$650K, and this one has a renovated kitchen."

In domains we just... list a price and hope someone agrees. That works fine for inbound leads who already want the domain. For everyone else, you're asking them to trust that you didn't just make the number up.

I've started including a short explanation when I counter an offer. One or two sentences, nothing fancy. "This price reflects comparable one-word .coms in the \$12K-\$18K range and the brandability in your niche."

Does it always work? No. But it turns the price from "random number this guy wants" into "there's logic here even if I don't love it." That's what real estate comps do, they make the number feel less arbitrary.

Also, pricing psychology matters more than I used to think. \$4,995 feels achievable. \$5,200 feels expensive. Real estate agents price homes at \$499K instead of \$505K for exactly this reason. Buyers anchor emotionally before they think logically.

I still mess this up constantly. I'll price something at \$3,200 when \$2,995 would probably close faster. Old habits.

One sale should lead to more sales, but it usually doesn't

Top real estate agents get most of their business from referrals and repeat clients. In domains, we treat every sale like a one-time transaction. Someone buys the domain, we push it to their registrar, done.

But that founder is probably going to need another domain eventually. Maybe several. And if the transaction went smoothly, why wouldn't they come back to you?

I started following up with buyers a few months after the sale. Nothing pushy, just a quick email. "Saw your site went live on the domain, looks great. If you ever need help with other names or matching extensions, let me know."

Most don't reply. Some reply a year later when they need another domain. And when they do, I'm the first person they think of instead of the first result on Google.

Real estate agents don't chase cold leads forever. They nurture warm ones. I wish I'd figured this out earlier—I've probably left ten sales on the table over the years just by not staying in touch with past buyers.

You're not selling letters, you're selling what those letters could become

Real estate agents are storytellers before they're salespeople. Nobody buys a house for square footage alone. They buy because they imagine Sunday mornings on the porch or their kids in the backyard.

Domains work the same way. The story turns a string of letters into a future brand.

If I'm selling ThriveLabs.com, I could describe it as "short brandable two-word .com." Technically accurate. Completely uninspiring.

Or I could say: "ThriveLabs.com evokes growth, experimentation, innovation—ideal for wellness, biotech, or performance brands that want to project energy and progress."

Same domain. Different frame. One version describes what it is. The other version helps someone see what it could be.

I used to think this was BS marketing speak. Now I think it's just interpretation. You're not making stuff up—you're pointing out what's already there. Real estate agents don't lie about homes having natural light. They just make sure you notice it.

Pushing too hard kills more deals than pricing too high

Good real estate agents know when to push and when to shut up. They read the buyer, they use silence strategically, they keep deals alive even when numbers stall.

I've killed sales by negotiating too aggressively. Buyer hesitates at \$2,800, I counter at \$2,750, they disappear. If I'd just waited three days they probably would've come back on their own.

Silence works. So does empathy. When a buyer says "that's a bit high," real estate agents ask "is price your main concern or are you weighing a few

options?" That one question shifts the whole dynamic from adversarial to collaborative.

I'm still bad at this. My instinct is to counteroffer immediately because I'm worried the buyer will move on. Sometimes they do. More often I just pushed when I should've paused.

Presentation signals whether you're serious or just some guy with domains

Real estate agents dress the part, send professional follow-ups, show up on time. Presentation builds trust.

In domains, presentation means a real email address, a coherent signature, messages that don't read like text messages. When I'm asking five figures for a domain, my reply shouldn't say "yea i can do \$4500 lmk."

I've gotten better at this but I still slip. I'll fire off a quick response from my phone and realize later it looked sloppy. Buyers equate professionalism with reliability. Sloppy emails signal risk.

The same domain listed by a respected seller often gets a premium price—not because the domain is different, but because buyers trust the transaction will go smoothly. That trust is built on presentation.

You can't price well if you don't know what's selling

Real estate agents watch the MLS daily. New listings, hot neighborhoods, interest rate shifts. They operate on information, not just instinct.

Most domainers check NameBio occasionally, scan a few auctions, call it research. I'm guilty of this. I'll go weeks without looking at recent sales in my niches, then wonder why my pricing feels off.

The best investors I know have alerts set up for every keyword and extension they care about. They're watching sales velocity, not just individual prices. They see trends before they're obvious.

I'm trying to get better at this. I set up some alerts. I check them maybe twice a week. It's boring but it helps. When you combine data with gut instinct, you start recognizing patterns, like when a niche is heating up or when pricing is softening.

Real estate agents don't rely on instinct alone. Neither should we.

Not every domain deserves to be listed

Rookie agents flood the market with every listing they can get. Pros are selective, every property reflects on their brand.

Same with domains. Don't list everything everywhere. Curate.

If you wouldn't personally vouch for a domain, why is it in your portfolio taking up mental space and renewal fees?

I'm still working on this. I've got domains listed that I wouldn't buy today if they were available. But I keep renewing them because dropping them feels like admitting I was wrong. That's collector thinking, not investor thinking.

Real estate agents walk through properties and decide what's ready for market and what needs work. We should do the same with portfolios. Most of us don't because it means confronting how much dead weight we're carrying.

What I'm still figuring out

Real estate agents have had a century to refine their approach. Domain investing is what, thirty years old? We're still figuring out basic stuff like whether landing pages matter.

I think they do. I think presentation matters more than most domainers admit. I think treating buyers like future relationships instead of one-time transactions would change a lot.

But I also know I'm inconsistent at all of this. I'll spend time on a landing page for one domain and ignore twenty others. I'll send professional emails for a month and then slip back into casual mode. I'll price something strategically and then price the next one based on whatever number feels right that morning.

The real estate comparison isn't perfect. They're selling physical assets with standardized comps and regulated transactions. We're selling digital assets in a market that's still half wild west.

But the parts that translate, presentation, storytelling, relationship building, justified pricing—those parts we could steal wholesale and probably double our sales.

I'm trying. Some days it works. Some days I forget and just list another domain at \$3,888 with zero context and wonder why nobody's buying.

At least real estate agents are consistent. That's probably the biggest thing we could learn from them.