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*Service  
Does  
Matter*



# Service Does Matter

By: Anne Marie Aikins

Few people are lucky enough to have a job that is one of their passions in life. Calgary real estate agent Christine Richard is one of those truly fortunate because she absolutely loves her career. “Real estate is my passion,” she says earnestly.

A consummate people person, Christine Richard naturally gravitated towards the service industry. Her family was originally from the Maritimes but they made the move to Ontario for more diverse job opportunities. After attending university full time for 2

years in southern Ontario, she moved out West finishing the remaining courses as a visiting student at the University of Calgary. When Richard completed her studies, the energetic and dedicated student graduated from the University of Waterloo with a degree in Social Development Studies and a minor in Psychology.

As a portrait photographer, she traveled across Canada and when she immediately fell in love with Calgary, she laid down her roots for good. After working part time in the field

for a couple of years the marketplace collapsed so Richard dabbled in the courier industry working in customer service and sales.

Both her educational and earlier career choices helped her develop excellent people skills, making the transition to a real estate career both logical and lucrative.

“We were house hunting and received very poor service from two different agents,” Richards says explaining her decision to make the move to real estate. “I was looking for a career change and decided to pursue real estate, a decision I have never regretted.”

Christine obtained her real estate license in the fall of 1992 and has achieved a number of professional designations including the Diamond International and National Societies, Ultimate Service Awards and Certified Relocation Specialist.

Beginning her career in real estate at Re/Max, she moved to Coldwell Banker more than 10 years ago where she joined a team of 3600 agents in Canada and more than 100,000 worldwide. Coldwell Banker, which is owned by Cendant Corporation began in 1906 and is part of the largest real estate company in the world with





locations in 46 countries.

The company website ([www.coldwellbanker.ca](http://www.coldwellbanker.ca)) describes the reasons they have attained a 98% customer satisfaction rating nationwide: “The simple explanation is that we built a team of professionals to help us be in 10 places at once, and therefore greatly enhance the quality of service we can deliver to our clients. This is basically how other professionals like your banker or lawyer operate. And on top of this, we’ve used cutting edge technology to dramatically improve the speed, efficiency and innovative capabilities of every part of the service we deliver.”

Apart from the obvious reasons for joining this particular company, Richards was drawn to the technological marketing platform and strategies at Coldwell Banker, an company that generates over 100,000 referrals internationally each year. Coldwell Banker provides unique services to the clients to ensure an easier sale and save them money. They provide so many alliances exclusive to our organization.”

Website marketing, the Ultimate Service Program (provides customers

with a written guarantee), Concierge and Alliance services (a list of exclusive services from companies clients may benefit from), Sears Club Points and professional marketing layouts all sets Coldwell Banker apart from their competitors.

“I use the Internet and have several sites available to me to provide excellent coverage for the sellers,” Richard says proudly adding that their website is updated daily. “The award winning website draws the public in to view our properties and the accompanying marketing feature sheets.”

In house tours of the property and professional color feature sheets are automatically included as part of her service. In addition, special mailings are generated to the client base and specific district mailings to target markets are sent out. Alternating newspapers and other media are utilized to strategically market each listing.

To assist sellers with preparation of their listing, A Home Enhancement Guide and” Staging Tips” are provided so their houses sell as fast as possible and for the best price.

With her work now almost evenly split between buying and

selling markets, Christine appreciates Coldwell Banker’s support team, which is great for developing feature sheets, color layouts and Internet marketing support. Her branch also offers ongoing training and seminars for their agents, which she regularly attends, because Richard says as she is always striving to expand her knowledge base and improve her skills. “Even my husband likes to attend the informative and interesting conferences. I have learned so much about all the cutting edge technology, which helps me keep organized to provide only the best of service to my customers.”

Her peers and clients say that her versatility and creativity as well as her constant ability to listen empathically are Richard’s strongest traits and she is convinced these qualities help her tremendously in the real estate industry.

“Christine was an exceptional real estate agent and we have recommended her to a few friends,” wrote one client after the successful completion of their sale. “She kept us very well informed and was always thinking of our best interests, not her own. We would definitely recommend her again.”

Richard has quite a range of listings because of the diversity of the sellers in Calgary including character, retro, renovated, revenue, upscale residences and condos pricing predominantly in the 250 to 600k markets. “I work all over the city and in some smaller towns. I generally work with a diverse base of clients.... Upscale, first time, revenue, investors, renovation homes and of course condominiums,” she says adding she loves the challenge.

A dedicated and hard-working agent, Richard is an active member in a number of professional associations including CREA, AREA and the Calgary Real Estate Boards. She is also a committed community volunteer with a special interest in Habitat for

Humanity.

Dedication, integrity, tenacity, ongoing education and delivering on your promises are all necessary to make an agent successful in a highly competitive industry. And it helps to have a solid support system, Richard says. "My husband deserves special mention. He has always been very supportive of my career and does not mind the hours and is very proud of my accomplishments. I also want to say a thank you to all the clients that refer me to their friends and family. Their support and trust is greatly appreciated."

Richard sees herself continuing to work in the field perhaps in a partnership within the next 10 years because she says, she loves to keep up with the new technological tools like her trusty PDA that keep her so well organized. "I am very pleased with the changes the industry is going through and the new innovations,

which have helped to improve the services I am able to offer to my clients." Each time she synchronizes her top-of-the-line PDA (palm pilot/cell phone) to her laptop computer, Richard's portable wireless office makes her completely accessible and fully prepared to provide only the best of service to her clients.

The busy agent balances her hectic life so she can keep everything in perspective by pursuing other interests such as antique hunting, reading, attending the ballet and opera and taking periodic travel breaks. "It is important to keep yourself grounded"

Christine Richard gets her inspiration from seeing someone's eyes light up when they find their special place. It always reminds her of what is important, she says. "You can do what you love and you can learn so much from others. I am proud to be a realtor. But above all, treat people as you wish to be treated. Because service

does matter."

And a recent satisfied customer seems to agree: "I trust her and felt she would provide me with the best possible service and that is exactly what she did."

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