

Martha May



Communication is key

**MARTHA
MAY**
An Artistic Approach

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Martha May, a broker associate with the downtown Glenview office of Koenig & Strey GMAC Real Estate, has worked in the real estate business since 1986 with unparalleled results. She has consistently been the office top producer and credits her follow-up with customers, and the care she gives them, as the foundation for her success.

Metro Chicago Real Estate® Magazine: Why did you decide to begin a career in residential real estate?

Martha May: My parents had a Realtor® who was a very dear friend, someone I had known for many years. I have an art degree, and, at the time, I was doing photography and catalog layout work for a company downtown. I was frustrated with the commute and the 9-5 lifestyle. This friend told me she thought I'd be great at selling real estate. She got me in touch with someone she knew who was managing a local real estate office. I haven't looked back since.

MCREM: What do you enjoy so much about selling real estate?

May: It's never boring, and you meet amazing people! It's one of the few businesses I know that you get out of it what you put into it. It's a very rewarding career. One of the reasons for the success of my business is that I take it to heart. I take it seriously. One of the biggest things anyone is going to do is buy or sell a house. To these people, real estate is much more than just another deal...it's a life altering decision.

MCREM: Has any of this changed with the down real estate market?

May: I see so many people now who are selling under duress. There are people selling now who have no choice. I am sensitive and empathetic especially when I am working with these people. I do everything I can to make deals go smoothly. I don't want to add any additional stress to their lives. My reputation precedes me. People refer me to other people because I am genuine and caring, and I'm excellent at what I do!

MCREM: What character traits do you have that make real estate such a good career for you?

May: My mom was an artist, so I have that artistic background. That helps me. I don't need a stager. I do all that myself. I'm great at visualizing. I look at a room and can immediately see what needs to be done to it. My dad worked in the advertising business. He was also a published author. I get my marketing skills from him. It all comes into play in the real estate business. I'm also extremely detail oriented and organized!

MCREM: How much marketing do you do of yourself and your properties?

May: I put myself out there and spend a lot on advertising, as well as personal marketing. My website is www.marthamay.com. I have "Visit me at marthamayrealtor.com" as my license plate holder. People laugh that I still do mailings. I have four-color postcards that I send out to my sphere of influence and my farming area. People say that farms are passé. But they aren't. I get so much business from them. I send out about 2,000-plus color postcards a month. By the time they're ready to do something, they have all these cards from me. Who else are they going to call! They remember my name! Every time I list or sell a home, I send out hundreds of postcards to the surrounding area announcing the event. I also have a personal brochure which highlights my artistic approach to real estate that I have at each of my listings. I do virtual tours, as well as a gorgeous color brochure. Whether it's a \$125,000 condo or a million-dollar home, I give every client 200 percent. The theme that embodies my marketing is "Defining the Art of Living on the North Shore".

MCREM: You also stress that you're a big proponent of constantly communicating with clients.

May: That is so important. I call even if there is nothing new to report. I tell my clients, "If you have to call me, I'm not doing my job." They are spending a lot of money to have me do what I do. It's tough in a market like this when you don't have a lot of showings to make that call, but homeowners always appreciate it when I stay in touch. It's about being personable & professional. I keep my clients informed so we can make intelligent decisions together.

MCREM: How are you doing in this tough market?

May: What I'm doing is paying off. I've had a great year so far! It's about being honest and up front with clients. You have to let them know that you're there to get the job done. It's all about creative marketing, setting the right prices on properties and doing the extra things to help a home move. I am a very optimistic, positive person!

MCREM: What advice would you give to agents just entering the business?

May: It's a lot of hard work. The thing you want to do is try to set yourself apart. That's the biggest thing. Be ethical and straight with your clients. You have to get out there and let everyone know what you do and how you do it. You have to tell them why you are the best at what you do.