

Buying a dream house as a first time home buyer, at an affordable price, and in the Bay Area is probably something next to impossible. But with the help of an extraordinary real estate agent, Linda Yong, that mission impossible became a dream come true for my family.

My wife and I moved to the bay area 12 years ago, waited and waited again for the housing market to become favorable to first time buyers. In the middle of 2009 we finally decided that the wait had to end when our second baby was on the way. After seeing tens of open houses and meeting dozens of realtors in the past 10+ years, luckily we came across Linda at one of her open houses in Fremont's Mission San Jose area, where Linda is an expert in. We started out our house hunting within Mission for its school district, and ended up buying a little bit further north in a very nice neighborhood in Pleasanton where there are more spaces for the same price and equally excellent schools. Linda is instrumental in the entire purchasing process.

IMHO, the most important quality of a realtor is ethic. Yes, making money from real estate transactions is a realtor's goal. But he or she should not sacrifice ethic and honesty for money making - incorrect priority will easily lead to pushy and dishonest behaviors harmful to home buyers. On this regard, we have complete trust in Linda that she is working hard for the best of OUR interest. Well, ultimately this will make her money (for which we are also very pleased for her). Indeed Linda acted as a dual agent for the first offer she helped us make. Very honestly she told me that though she was representing both buyer and seller (therefore will double her commission if the deal goes through), she would not give us advantage to other potential buyers who made a better offer. Yes, we did not get that first house. But to me, knowing that I am working with someone trustworthy and honest IS an advantage.

On the same case Linda showed another good quality - patience. The first offer we made was somewhat lower than the *fair* market value in that very desirable market. Linda explained the opinion of her to us, but did not push us to raise the asking price. Instead she explained that she understood this typical mentality of first time home buyers of fearing to pay more, and expected us to learn the market and sink in by ourselves as we go. For that deal, which quite certainly she would not make any money, she still spent hours with us walking through tons of paperwork with great details. But this effort finally paid off for both us and Linda, when we smoothly closed the deal of our dream house in Pleasanton with a final price still significantly lower than the asking.

Last but not least, the agent needs to be experienced, knowledgeable, resourceful and hardworking. From searching properties, dealing with seller agent, home inspection and making offer, to loan process, closing the deal, and even recommending contractors, Linda knew the processes, people and knowhows inside-out. She scored high on every account of the above. When you can get quality response from your agent whenever you email or call, even after 9 pm or during weekends, what else can you ask for?

Overall, if I could work with Linda again I would not hesitate a bit to do so. However I don't think it will very likely to happen since we foresee ourselves living in our house for a long long time.



Zhang's family, happily thereafter