



NANCY WALKER & THE NANCY WALKER TEAM – REALTORS WHO CARE

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Photo by Kathrine Black

A familiar face from the pages of *Lavender* is Nancy Walker. The leader of The Nancy Walker Team at Coldwell Banker Realty first picked up a *Lavender* magazine in the late '90s, and has been a supporter ever since. As one of Coldwell's top 50 agents, Nancy and her team have a tried-and-true approach to their business. They have the desire to help people, build relationships, and find clients their dream home.

Nancy's team "has the wherewithal to be creative and we have a lot of experience to be able to problem solve." They take a holistic, personal approach with clients—going to a lot of weddings, visiting new babies, attending funerals. "It's very intentional that we stay in touch," Nancy says. It's more than just real estate: "it's about life." With more than 30 years of experience, Nancy has some professional advice for those looking to make a real estate move in 2022.

What are your recommendations for selecting a Realtor?

Interview more than one Realtor and ask for testimonials. Talk to people who worked with them in the last year and vet their experience. The relationship with a Realtor is a partnership. It's a big decision that you're making. Find someone who is invested in your success as much as you'll be investing in them. They're going to become your confidant and your housing compass.

How can clients tell if it's time to sell?

When you're physically, emotionally, mentally, and financially prepared to sell. If you combine all of those aspects of your life, and you can determine that you're ready, then you'll know. If you are very attached to your home, you may not be emotionally ready to sell. If you don't have your finances in order, wait until all these pieces come together.



Photo by Tammy Brice and Miranda Welte

What are some of your top tips for sellers?

1. **Do a walkthrough and market evaluation early.** Invite a Realtor over to get a professional's advice on what needs to be done months before you hit the market.
2. **Put your money where the water is.** Updating kitchens and bathrooms has the greatest return on your investment. Before investing in any major projects, ask your Realtor where the money should go. Coldwell Banker Realty has a program called **RealVitalize**—you get a construction concierge to assist with projects, then, as the seller, you don't pay for it until closing.
3. **Curb appeal is paramount.** On an average, people buy homes in the first 15 seconds—you've got to grab them from the street. Decorate for the season, landscape, or add lighting to make your home look inviting. When they drive up you want to attract them from the outside so they are drawn to go inside. Then think about what they'll see, smell, and feel as they enter your home.
4. **Avoid incorrect pricing.** Do research online, go to open houses, and listen to your Realtor. In a "seller's market" where supply is low and demand is high, some sellers increase their price point—just make sure it'll appraise at a point that's comparable to others on the market.
5. **Declutter and deep clean.** You live in your house differently than you sell your house. Even if you think you're great at cleaning, you're probably not as spot on as a professional.
6. **Hit the market early.** The spring market has lagged into the summer the last few years. In 2021, however, it quieted down in July and August. In 2022 buyer inventory is going to come out of the woodwork, so the sooner your home hits the market the better.
7. **Critically assess risk.** You may have a handful of offers, but partner with your Realtor on the decision. It might not always be the highest price—you might have an offer that's slightly lower, but much less risk.

One of the hardest moves a seller has to make in this market is when they have to sell their current home in order to buy a new one. Nancy told a recent client to "take a leap of faith" with her and sold the home subject to the seller finding a new home of their choice. Although it may have been difficult, the seller was "in the driver's seat" and would always have a roof over their head. Eventually they found a buyer that was willing to wait until a new home was found. The client recently closed on an awesome new home and is very happy.

How do you decide where to buy?

Start with the big picture and then nail down your criteria. Think about what you like to do. Do you like to bike, or go for walks? Go to the theater or clubs? Think about where your community is located. Where are your family, friends, work and school? Figure out everything that is important to you and that will start to narrow down the cities or neighborhoods. Then you need to educate yourself on those areas and get a feel for them. Drive up and down the streets, sit and watch an area for local activity and noise.

Then you can share this criteria with your Realtor. They can assist you by setting up a narrowed search and can provide you with inventory the minute it hits the market. The more homes you see, the more you're able to make an informed decision on value.

What are your top tips for buyers?

1. **Plan ahead.** If you're thinking about making a move in spring, start organizing now. Partner with a Realtor, talk about timing, the process, and get financing in place.
2. **Educate yourself.** The Minnesota Attorney General's office offers a free "Home Buyer's Handbook." Read it. There are many nuances to all the stages of buying a home. Learn about the offer, inspection, appraisal and closing processes.

3. **Secure a trustworthy Realtor.** Much of the education about these processes will come from your Realtor. Make sure you partner with the right team or person who you connect with and trust.
4. **Move fast.** Homes move quickly, get in to view the physical property as quickly as you can. If you can't get there in the first few days, be prepared that the property may sell before you get the chance to make a move.
5. **Toughen up and don't give up.** It can be very discouraging when you enter this market. You may make offer after offer and not get the home. You may, or may not, be privy as to why you weren't the chosen offer.

Another recent client of Nancy's went through 12 offers that they did not win. When trying to buy an older home in Minneapolis, it was critical that they had a home inspection contingency in their purchase agreement. Finally on their 13th offer, they won. Nancy's team took them out to celebrate at Lucky's 13 Pub, where the client looked back at the other 12 homes and was so glad they got the one they did.

Nancy puts it simply: you have to hold both hands out—family and friends held in one and your Realtor in the other. It's a mission for all of us to have a happy ending, so don't forget to invite your Realtor over to celebrate once you've settled in!

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5100 EDEN AVE, SUITE 107
EDINA, MN 55436
612.436.4660

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