

Hata preaches REALTOR® value

NAR's Director of Member Engagement believes REALTORS® needed now more than ever

BY DAN ECKLES

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Based in Chicago, Nobu Hata is NAR's Director of Member Engagement. In a week's span at the end of April, he was busy doing just that – engaging members - and across the Western U.S. no less. Hata was in Colorado Springs for the Region XI conference, days later in San Jose for an NAR Tech Edge event and lastly at the GLVAR general membership meeting in Las Vegas. The former REALTOR® is an expert in communication trends, social media and real estate technology. Hata believes there's never been a better time to be a REALTOR® and that clients need REALTORS® now more than ever.

“A REALTOR'S® value now is helping clients through this (digital age),” he said. “With greater transparency and connectedness come new duties for REALTORS®. We are held to a higher standard and we need to stop keeping this a secret.”

Hata was alluding to a digital environment that allows clients access to more real estate information, but can be more confusing than ever for them. In short, yes there's more information readily available on homes and taxes and specific communities, but this can overwhelm clients and it does little to help sort out contract language or the significance of inspections, among a myriad of other issues.

Additionally, Hata said it's important for REALTORS® to understand many potential clients have done some research before even reaching out to a REALTOR®.

“There's never been a better time to be a REALTOR,” Hata said. “What does your brand promise mean to people? ... Your client orientation is now online, before people even meet you. Educate them better than a Google search can. Is what a client sees about you on the web indicative of the service you give them? Understand your market and own you. Reaffirm and re-envision your brand promise.”

Hata said eight of 10 clients do not use



Nobu Hata serves as NAR's Director of Member Engagement. He was in San Jose late last month talking with Bay Area REALTORS® about incorporating technology into their business practices while still building personal relationships with clients.

the same REALTOR® on a corresponding transaction. He stressed that since a negative experience is far more memorable than a positive one, REALTORS® must do everything they can to have a positive experience with clients. The importance of treating all clients like a first time seller or buyer cannot be understated.

“Clients don't need your help to find a home anymore, but they do need your help to find the right home,” Hata said. “Real estate is hard. Consumers need to feel how hard it is. Stop insulating them and show your value.”

One key way REALTORS® can show their value is educating their clients on security measures during the search and transaction process. Building a relationship strong enough that clients trust their REALTOR® more than what they see on their phones is a good place to start.

“Have clients think twice when they get something in their email inbox they don't expect,” Hata said. “Teach them to

call their agent first. Anticipation is key. If REALTORS® can help their clients anticipate hurdles in the process, the better it will work out in the end. As REALTORS®, we need to up our game on educating our clients.

“Get your contracts out of email and use alternative programs. Then once you get your business practices into safer standards, market that. Tell clients how safe you are.”

Hata stressed that one of the biggest mistakes he sees REALTORS® make is touching base with their clients after a transaction is complete to ask for a review and/or referral. He alluded to the old adage of actions speak louder words.

“Do things that are awesome during the transaction,” he said. “When you're asking for a review after the transaction, at that point, most clients just want to be done with the process and move on. What are you doing to make your clients' lives better? Compel a better review.”