

AGENT

How great agents win in the face of NAR settlement misinformation

Consumer misconceptions post-NAR settlement are wild. Jimmy Burgess talks to Keeping Current Matters CEO David Childers on how to communicate with today's buyers and sellers

BY [JIMMY BURGESS](#)

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The proposed National Association of Realtors' (NAR) [settlement](#) will separate professional agents from amateur agents. I recently spoke with David Childers, CEO of Keeping Current Matters, who shared his insights on what agents should be doing now to position themselves to win in the changing environment.

Childers began the interview by discussing the amount of confusion the settlement has created for buyers, sellers and even for agents. He shared the following from Brian Boero, co-founder of 1000watt:



Our recent research at 1000WATT tells us that **consumer sentiment on this issue is malleable and volatile**. People have just been blitzed with “NAR agrees to slash commissions” headlines that may ignite mass consumer price sensitivity. But behavioral inertia is strong, and it’s a long way from a headline to the very personal and very serious decision to get help buying a home.

-Brian Boero, Co-Founder, 1000WATT

Childers focused on the portion of this quote where Boero says, “[Consumer](#) sentiment is malleable and volatile.” When speaking on the word “malleable,” he said, “This means that it can be changed and it is the job of agents to present the facts in a way that brings clarity to buyers and sellers.”

The second word he spoke on was “volatile.” In his words, “it means the subject is being discussed everywhere and the understandings or beliefs about the settlement include some that are true and some that are false.

“In life and in business there can be a big difference between what is said and what is heard. That has largely been the case with the NAR proposed [settlement](#) as headlines and the sheer amount of attention has created confusion with what is happening.”

“The topic of the proposed settlement was brought up by a group of people that didn’t know I was involved in the real estate industry at an event I attended last week,” Childers said. “I kept my mouth shut to just listen to what people heard. The things that people heard and believed were wild.”

“From you don’t need an agent anymore, sellers can’t pay the [buyer’s agent commission](#), and other extreme ideas with much of their thoughts just factually incorrect. The problem is that it is not just the public, but in many cases, agents are still unsure about exactly how these proposed changes will affect their businesses,” Childers said.

Confusion, fear, panic and paralysis

Childers went on to say, “Confusion leads to fear. Fear, when left unchecked, leads to panic and panic, when left uncontrolled, leads to paralysis. We find ourselves in a time when many agents are not sure about exactly what is happening. This leads them to not knowing what to say, and, based on their confusion, they aren’t sure what their course of action should be.

“Keeping Current Matters was founded on the belief that the educated agent in the market wins. I don’t know if there has been a time in history when it has been more important than now to be the educated agent.”

Childers noted several ways agents can educate themselves including reading the [NAR Settlement Fact Sheet](#) and the [NAR Settlement FAQ](#) published by NAR. He also referenced a [webinar](#) he did with Tom Ferry; Jack Miller, CEO of T360; and Alysia Esseg, the former president of her association and an agent coach, where they discussed the details agents need to know and how to answer several of the most common questions agents are receiving from buyers and sellers.

Childers said, “There is no shortage of information about the [settlement](#). The key question is: What are agents doing to educate themselves, so they can be the resource and educator in their local market? Besides educating themselves, agents should also be clear on the facts about consumer sentiment. The following are a few surveys that agents should keep in mind.”

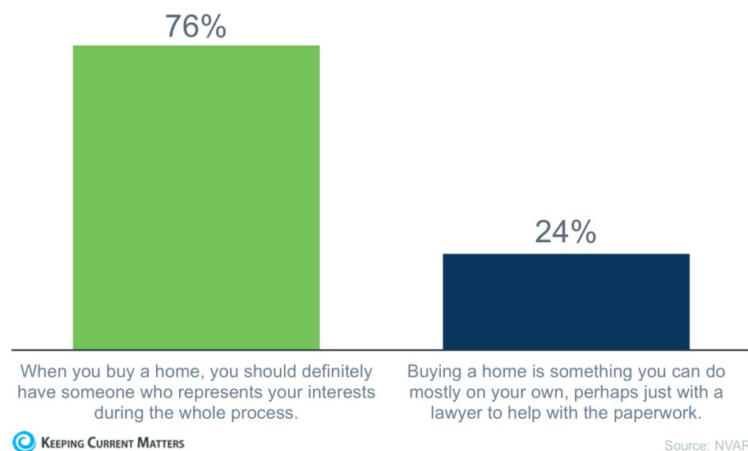


He shared the slide above in reference to a survey recently done by the [Northern Virginia Association of Realtors](#) that asked consumers which of the following statements (mentioned in the slide) they most agree with. The survey showed that 76 percent of consumers believe when buying

a home, you should definitely have someone who represents your interests during the whole process.

He also shared the following slide from a study done by Bright MLS.

Which of the Following Statements Do You Agree With Most?



This slide also shares buyer sentiment in regard to how consumers view the value of an agent in the homebuying process.

After explaining the charts, Childers said, “There are plenty of studies out there that show how valued agents are with consumers. This doesn’t mean there aren’t some who didn’t hear the proposed settlement and say ‘Great, I’ve been waiting for this moment and now we don’t have to use an agent.’ That mindset is alive and well with a certain percentage of people, just as it always has been.”

Calm and confidence

“But what I do know,” Childers continued, “is that the frenzied, volatile nature of the current conversation will subside. The professional agent who brings [calm and confidence](#) to the frenzy will win. There is an unbelievable opportunity in the coming months for professional agents to gain market share and build a personal brand that will elevate their business to a whole new level.”

In closing, he said, “Most agents know what is happening. Good agents understand what is happening. But great agents can explain what is happening.

“Become an educator. Become the person buyers and sellers in your local market look to for clear, concise information that they have complete confidence in. By doing so right now you will create a separation from your competitors that will be difficult for them to ever make up.”

Jimmy Burgess is the CEO for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Beach Properties of Florida in Northwest Florida. Connect with him on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).