

The “I’s” in and the Eyes on the FRI

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A friend of mine who is in Real Estate Sales was asked recently by a man who walked up to him: “So, what’s your name and what do you do?”

Upon hearing his response: “Oh, you sell houses.” “That is paying very well now, isn’t it?” “I bet you make a lot of easy money too, just sitting around living off your listings.”

Well, notwithstanding, he became a little upset. Imagine if that was you in that conversation wherein you just met someone who denigrated your profession like that. I stated profession. Not career, not job, but profession. Why do some people think that Real Estate Brokerage is not a profession? Professions aren’t just in medicine, law, engineering or architecture. The knowledge and work that we need to properly do our job should definitely constitute our career choice as a profession.

There is another misconception: Career choice. How many of you actually chose Real Estate Brokerage as a career? Think back to when you were about to graduate high school or university. Remember your class year books with all the pictures of your fellow classmates. Underneath each picture, it would usually state what the person’s career choice was going to be. Some would indicate: Nurse, lawyer, accountant, mechanic or even soldier. I’ll bet that you won’t find a single one that read Real Estate Broker. So why is it a misconception? Because the answer is that you all chose Real Estate as a career, or you wouldn’t be reading this right now. Temporally speaking we may be a little out of context, in that we didn’t choose it way back then, but we did some years ago and every day that we go to work, we choose it again and again.

So, how could he have responded that would have merited a different reaction? Would the reaction have been the same if he had heard “I’m an M.D. or I’m a C.A.” But more to the

point and in truth, how would he have reacted if he had heard “I’m an FRI”. Logically, his comeback would have been: What’s an FRI? The response: a Fellow of the Real Estate Institute of Canada. Then what? He likely would not have known exactly what to say. Perhaps for a few reasons: First, because unfortunately for us, he probably never heard of it. But, second and far more important, because he may have been too impressed as it is obviously a professional designation of which he was both ignorant and unfamiliar.

He may have then asked how does one go about achieving that professional designation? But for sure, no matter what was said, he would have been far more respectful. At that point one could have walked away, or proffered a descriptive explanation about the intricate knowledge that one has to have in order to properly market and merchandise a Real Estate product in today’s ever changing economy and electronic milieu. He may have said that the FRI requires that one stay on the cutting edge of Real Estate education as well as taking an extra pledge of ethics which is not required of other average Real Estate salespeople. Further, that as an FRI, one makes a choice to define one’s career and to be credentialed within a profession. To undertake extra education as well as to produce a certain volume of sales over a period of time that gives one the required experience that one needs to obtain their designation.

The FRI sets one apart from most of our fellow Real Estate brokers and salespersons in that it gives us an identity, an identity of which I am very proud. A fellowship with brokers and salespersons throughout Canada: not of competition, but of cooperation and networking which can provide one with the one good lead that could possibly help me make a deal that would pay for all of the courses that I took as well as my membership dues for many years. So why become an FRI today?

Why not? When was the last time that you personally challenged yourself without anyone forcing you to do so or by some governing licensing body requiring it? When was the last time that you took a course to simply improve yourself? When was the last time that you dared to stand up and say that you were proud to be involved in the Real Estate Industry? – proud of being a salesperson or broker; proud of making a good living and providing your family with a good livelihood.

I knew of a housewife who started working at the age of 59 and kept on working until her 88th birthday. She loved her job and the people that she got to meet through work. When she passed away, the lady from the obituary department of the newspaper asked what she was. “She was a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother, an aunt, a daughter and a sister”. “No, she said, what did she do? What was her occupation?” That was all that was of interest to her. That was how she identified her. Not that she had been a voter, a licensed driver, a consumer, a homemaker, a car pool mom, a volunteer and many other things. She could only think of her, identify her, only by her occupation. So, John F. Kennedy was only a President. Albert Einstein was only a nuclear physicist. John Wayne was only a movie actor. They weren’t fathers or husbands or sons or brothers. They didn’t vote or drive or golf or sail. Of course they did, but they too were defined by their occupation, their profession.

And so are you. When someone asks what you are, they aren’t asking about whether you are a sports fan or a wine connoisseur or a lover of gardening. They want to know how you make your living, your vocation. Why not therefore respond by telling them that you are already or are currently on your way to becoming one of the most recognized leaders of your profession: a Fellow of the Real Estate Institute of Canada. For you see it

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isn't just about identity or occupation: it's about definition.

You are the only one that can truly define your life. You can bring about career definition. You can define yourself as a professional. You can define today, as the start for you to not only enhance your education, but enrich your career. Not just with money, but with personal enrichment. It isn't simply about having a business card that says Platinum Salesman, or Million Dollar Club, or President's Recognition level. It is about what you make of yourself and the validity of your credentials. You are the only one that can make and keep yourself an FRI. No one else can do that. And what does it do for you? It tells everyone that you are a dedicated career professional. You are no "fly by night" salesperson in Real Estate simply for a quick buck. You're in it for the reputation, the recognition, the definition, the unique personal achievement that only you can bring to your career.

Fortunately many people who shared my field of endeavor in one form or another in Real Estate have become my friends. Some of my closest friends are my fellow FRI and CPM members of my local REIC Chapter. Not only do we attend almost all of the Chapter events together, not just educational seminars or courses, but we have now brought social events into our Chapter wherein our spouses have now also found friends and have taken on a new appreciation for what we do and how we spend our time. Being an FRI is not exclusive; it is inclusive; somewhat elite, but not elitist.

FRI's heartily welcome new members because they know that with every new member, we are enhancing the Real Estate industry as a whole. We believe that FRI's are the true leaders within our industry and we want to be in the forefront with them. How about you? How about your colleague? If you are not an FRI, why not come and join us? We have the room and we would welcome anyone who wants to improve themselves as well as the image of our industry amongst ourselves as well as to the public. Some day we hope to hear from prospective clients: "I want to list my property only with an FRI." FRI is the most trusted and oldest professional designation in Real Estate. We have been around now for more than 50 years. Simply by virtue of that longevity, you must realize that we have something very good and very strong going for us. Why not get involved

now, today?

The FRI has many "I"'s. The "I" for the Institute which provides our education and credentialed designations. The "I" in me, myself and I. The "I"'s in Improvement of Image. The "I" of sharing Information. The "I"'s in Increase of Income. The "eyes" of the public, our clientele and the regulator enforcers of our ethics. The "I"'s of Imaginative Innovation in an Important Industry. The "I" of Inclusivity.

The Bible says that "If a man doesn't stand up for himself, then who will stand up for him? If not now, then when? But, if he is only

thinking of himself, then what is he?" I am asking you to stand up for yourself, your family, your career, your profession. Look into the FRI courses and achieve your FRI designation if you haven't already earned it. Those who have, consider refreshing oneself by reviewing some of the elective courses that weren't previously offered.

Become a Fellow of the Real Estate Institute of Canada. Forget Speedy Muffler. With the Real Estate Institute of Canada, you really will be a somebody. A somebody that we will be proud to identify with and to be recognized as an FRI. ■



Real Estate Institute of Canada
Toronto Chapter

Request for Proxies

2010 - Proposed Amendments to By-Law 07-1

Recently you would have received a formal Proxy Form in the mail from the National Office of the Real Estate Institute of Canada to be used at the upcoming National Annual Business Conference and Annual General Meeting in Niagara Falls; more specifically for use at the Special General Meeting which precedes the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, June 5th, 2010.

We request all Toronto Chapter voting members (Candidates excluded) who will not be attending the Special General Meeting to forward their proxies directly to the Chapter Administrator of the Toronto Chapter by May 28th, 2010 by facsimile, appointing the new Toronto Chapter President, Ron Fraser, CPM, as their proxy as it is generally customary for the President of the Chapter to be selected as a proxy.

Please take the time to fill in your selection and fax it back to our Chapter Administrator Beth McKenzie at (416) 491-1670 today if you can. If you have already sent in your proxy to the National REIC office and now wish to change it, then simply indicate in writing to: "Kindly disregard any previous proxy received with a prior date. Thank you."

On behalf of your Board of Directors, thank you for your participation in this very important vote.