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# Ultimate Service With Mary Anne



**“Providing quality customer care is ultimately what will now determine a long-lasting relationship between a client and a realtor.”**

**By Karen Mills**

Her success is a bonus. Working in real estate has turned out to be a dream career for Mary Anne Gehl. She loves the people she meets and the excitement of never quite knowing what the day will bring.

“I’m so lucky to be able to help people. Finding that dream home for my client is the biggest thrill - there is nothing more rewarding.”

Originally working as a legal secretary for eighteen years and then as an Office Manager for an electrical contractor for five years, Mary Anne, has not always worked in real estate. She had though, often toyed with the idea of becoming a real estate representative but with two young sons and knowing the commitment it would take to build a career, Mary Anne decided to wait until they were a little older.

In the early 90’s, with a recession in full swing and business not as busy as usual, she decided to take the real

estate course part time. In 1992, Mary Anne officially received her real estate license and the rest, is history.

Today, ten years later, she’s with Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Realty, and is one of its top performing sales representatives.

She has won numerous sales awards since she began and is a member of the prestigious President’s Circle. Her office too, Coldwell Banker Peter Benninger Realty, is consistently ranked in the Top 3 Coldwell Banker offices in Canada.

But for Mary Anne, success is not about winning awards. Helping people with their real estate goals is her pay off - the fact she makes a good living doing that, is a big bonus.

That simply for Mary Anne is what she enjoys most about being a realtor - helping people get what they want. She does it well. Listen to what just a few of her clients have to say.

“We both have very busy schedules

and Mary Anne was available for us anytime we needed her. Mary Anne is a very professional and ethical person who never made us doubt her commitment to our best interest. We were very happy with our experience from the day we started looking, to the closing date.” Tammy and Joel Cumming.

And Rainer and Mary Status who say, “When relocating to a new city (London to Kitchener-Waterloo in our case), often a “leap of faith” is needed to find the right realtor. An online presence, abundance of listings and an honest face was all we had to go on, introducing ourselves and often bridging the distance via email and phone. Mary Anne Gehl demonstrated the professionalism that goes with realtor territory. However, we were continually impressed by her outstanding patience, pleasant nature, innate ability to quickly learn what we wanted, her knowledge of the area,

and strong ethics. With these traits, Mary Anne's detailed research, and sharp negotiation, we quickly found the right house and paid much less for it than we thought we would."

So, what would Mary Anne say is the key to her success?

"Providing superior customer service without a doubt," she says, "Today, with the Internet, the customer is incredibly knowledgeable - some will spend many months researching the market before they buy. Providing quality customer care is ultimately what will now determine a long-lasting relationship between a client and their realtor."

Indeed the majority of Mary Anne's business is repeat and referral. An honour she recognizes as truly the greatest compliment.

Mary Anne also represents two homebuilders - Jim Kuntz of Kuntz Homes Ltd and Robert Loeb sack of Robert C. Loeb sack General Contractors Inc, (recently named Builder of the Year). Both builders have a reputation for exceptional quality and craftsmanship and Mary Anne is extremely proud to be associated with them.

"The new homes I sell are in the \$350,000 to \$500,000 price range. The buyers of these homes generally know exactly what they want and demand quality. Most often I work with these homebuyers for quite some time before they actually purchase. Often when we meet they have only begun to consider building a new home. We go through the whole process from selecting a lot and having plans drawn, to making the final selections of paint colours, cabinetry and flooring. It is a lengthy process but is lots of fun and very rewarding."

Continuing education is also paramount to Mary Anne.

Along with the mandatory hours of education she must take as a realtor every year, Mary Anne also tries

to take at least one major course.

"Education provides knowledge and helps me provide an improved service to my clients."

Last year she was awarded her



Accredited Buyer Representative designation by the National Association of Realtors, a claim less than 2000 agents across Canada can make.

She is also a Certified Residential Relocation Specialist helping clients to relocate from all over Canada and the U.S.

In the past, Mary Anne has also been involved in conducting seminars for first time home buyers and seniors who want to explore their housing options. "Along with myself, we would invite a mortgage specialist, a home inspector and a lawyer and discuss every option involved in the buying process."

So knowing how many other reputable real estate firms there are, why did she choose Coldwell Banker?

"In 1906 Corbert Coldwell entered real estate with the philosophy 'the customer's best interest must be the guiding force behind all service. That philosophy appealed to me. Coldwell Banker has a unique focus on customer service."

Coldwell Banker is in 46 countries including Canada and the United States and has more than 3,600 residential and commercial real

estate offices with over 90,000 sales professionals globally.

It owns the patented Ultimate Service\* guarantee - a tangible system with

standards of performance that put the client in control and delivers real value to real estate buyers and sellers assuring the highest possible level of customer satisfaction.

"We also have the only Real Estate Consumer Centre in North America." Says Mary Anne.

Officially opened in September, 2002, this state of the art facility was conceived and designed to accommodate several innovative real estate related services in a "one-stop" shopping concept. It consists of several divisions including The New Homes Division and Gallery, Residential Rentals, Mortgage Financing, Previews Luxury Homes, Recreation/ Cottage Properties and also has a Retirement Lifestyle Division. A full time Concierge Representative, helps clients with any aspect of moving - from moving companies, facilitating the transfer of school records, arranging for utilities, cleaning and decorating and later will coordinate all the services clients. Email too is a daily part of a salesperson's life now - many people preferring not to use the telephone at all." So where does Mary Anne see herself in next decade? "Hopefully doing what I am

doing now. I will continue to help clients with their real estate needs. My husband is planning to retire and join me - he already takes care of photography and necessary to maintain the home. Several computer kiosks on the main floor consumer area, are also available for their clients convenience.

Providing a comprehensive marketing plan is also an imperative part of making sure her client's best interests are represented.

Not only does Mary Anne advertise in the local papers, the Real Estate Book and the K.W Real Estate News, she also showcases her listings on numerous web sites including [www.lovethehouse.com](http://www.lovethehouse.com), [www.coldwellbankerpbr.com](http://www.coldwellbankerpbr.com), [www.mls.ca](http://www.mls.ca) and [www.livingchoices.com](http://www.livingchoices.com). Technology is not lost on Mary Anne who takes full advantage of new advancements, all of her listings benefit from Virtual Tours.

. "The Internet has revolutionized the way we do business. I have sold many homes because of the Internet and it continues to be an incredibly resourceful tool - both for realtors and clients. Email too is a daily part of a salesperson's life now - many people preferring not to use the telephone at all."

So where does Mary Anne see herself in the next decade?

"Hopefully doing what I am doing now. I will continue to help clients with their real estate needs. My husband is planning to retire and join me - he already takes care of photography and virtual tours so this is a natural progression for us both." Family is also very important to Mary Anne and balancing work life with family life has always been her priority. She very much enjoys the company of her two sons and their wives. Gardening too is one of Mary Anne's favourite hobbies and she

spends much of her free time tending to her flower gardens. "It is," she says, "a great way to relax." She is also very active in her local church.

So, if Mary Anne has learnt anything from working in real estate what would it be?

"Simply, that most people are genuinely wonderful and if you work hard, stay focused and be patient the rewards will come."

No doubt they will for Mary Anne. Ultimately though, her dedication to her clients and her love for her family is reward enough - and her success story.

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