

Robin Cook

A Top Performer in Portland's Real Estate Market

by **Judith Spitzer**

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Robin Cook is one of those people other people refer to as a renaissance woman.

Not only is Cook a gifted musician, she is also a dynamic and successful business Realtor with RE/max Equity Group, holding the designation of Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) – one of only four percent of Realtors in the country to hold the title. She also holds the title of Accredited Buyer Representative (ABR).

Additionally she is an avid horsewoman who volunteers her time to Forward Stride, an innovative therapeutic equine program for both children and adults with disabilities, and a doting auntie to her two nephews Cameron and Christopher.

Cook's very nature compels her to perform at the highest levels of excellence. Her undergraduate degree in music and math from Lewis and Clark College in Portland set off her career as a violinist. She earned a master's degree at Boston University and even toured with the Phantom of the Opera at one point.

She returned to her roots in Portland in 1998 and spent four seasons playing with the Oregon Symphony. A car crash on her way to a symphony performance one night resulted in injuries that caused her to reexamine her life's goals.

These days her central focus is on her real estate career and helping clients is her number one priority – whether they're first time home buyers, relocating to the Portland area and looking for a home, or those who are selling a home in the area.

Cook's communication skills top the list of tools she uses to facilitate the process.

"It's crucial to let my clients know what they need to do and what other parties in the process are doing – every step of the way," Cook says. Her dedication to excellence and an unwavering determination to be the best moves her to go beyond and provide unsurpassed services for her clients.

Buyers rely on her to help them objectively assess properties and assist them in each step of the process as they make one of the biggest investments they will make in life.

Sellers depend on her to create an action plan and maximize their home's exposure and appeal. Because she's lived in the Portland area for most of her life, she's also invaluable to those who are relocating to this area.

Her web site <http://www.robincook.net> is a gold mine of information organized to efficiently ease the process of buying or selling a house with links to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), interactive mapping enabling people to search by neighborhood and extensive relocation information via a free Newcomer's Guide to the Area on a special CD.

On Cook's web site you can also request copies of "29 Essential Tips That Get Homes Sold Fast (and For Top Dollar)" and "Home Buyers: How to Avoid Paying Too Much."



As much as she helps clients with buying and selling real estate, Cook is keenly aware of the emotional side of the process.

"It's a very emotional experience," she says with a reassuring smile. "On both sides. Next to marriage, I think it's one of the most stressful decisions we make in life."

Since much of her business is generated by referral, it's critical for her to make sure she provides superior services.

"You know how important location is," she adds. "It's also important that clients find a home that will have appreciated for them when the time to sell comes again. Clients come back to me and refer me to friends and family. So my business is very client-oriented."



The Portland Market

While there's been tremendous growth in the Portland area in the past couple of years (25 percent in 2005 and about 14 percent in the average cost of a single family home in the area in 2006), Cook says home prices have leveled off at this point for the time being.

"Many people don't realize that we do not have the same conditions here as they do in other parts of the country. And interest rates have come back down – under about 6.5 percent. Yesterday I locked in a 5.875 percent loan with a good credit rating," she says. "And we have about four and ½ months of inventory now – so there's more to choose from. Lots of people are still moving here because of the quality of life here."

In a nutshell, Cook says most importantly she provides superior service "above and beyond."

"And constant communication with the client during the process," she says since the process can be overwhelming.

"People do want hand holding," she says. "It's not about the sale. It's about relationships. I treat people like I would want to be treated. I treat them like I would a family member."



Buying a Home: The Process

Cook says the first step with a potential client is a meeting where expectations are outlined and she answers many questions about the process of buying or selling a home. She outlined the other steps she assists with:

2. Prequalify with a lender to determine buying power.
3. Outline home and area needs and evaluate available homes.
4. Select a home and present offer.
5. Negotiations.
6. Offer accepted.
7. Schedule home inspection and negotiate repairs.
8. Setting up escrow.
9. Transaction finalized and closed.

"And within that process trust is vital to the process," she says. And trust is built on the many layers of exceptional service she offers. Being there to explain what an inspection should provide and why it's important to have one done on a brand new home; what a title report contains, how escrow works, how to prequalify for a loan



and any number of questions that can be confusing even for those who aren't first time home buyers.

Drawing on her experience as a professional musician, she approaches real estate with the same commitment to the highest levels of performance.

"There's no way I could be comfortable extending anything less than my best efforts," she says. "After all, people trust me with on the biggest investments of their lives."

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