

Behind the Scenes Guide

What a Real Estate Agent Actually Does

Most people see the parts of real estate that look easy — a few showings, a signed contract, a closing day. What they don't see is the 200+ hours of behind-the-scenes work that protects their investment, their timeline, and their sanity. This guide pulls back the curtain.

Jeremy Williams Group · Western Washington

The Listing Side: What Happens Before 'Active'

Before your home appears on the MLS and hits Zillow, Redfin, and Realtor.com, a professional agent has already completed hours of work that directly affect how quickly your home sells and for how much.

Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

A skilled agent pulls sold data, active competition, pending sales, and expired listings to build a data-backed pricing strategy. This isn't a guess — it's a forensic look at what the market is actually telling us. Overpricing by even 5% can cost you 30+ days on market and ultimately a lower sale price.

Pre-Listing Preparation Strategy

We advise on exactly which repairs or updates will generate a return, and which ones to skip. Not every seller should replace carpet or paint — but some should. The strategy depends on price point, neighborhood, and buyer profile.

Coordinating Professional Photography & Media

ProLenz Photography provides MLS-quality photography, aerial drone footage, and 3D Matterport tours for JWG listings. Homes with professional media receive significantly more online engagement and showing requests.

MLS Listing Input & Compliance

Every listing must comply with MLS rules — accurate square footage, correct school district data, required disclosures attached before going active, offer review dates, and more. Errors can trigger MLS fines or legal liability.

Marketing Execution

Syndication to 100+ real estate sites, social media campaigns, email blasts to active buyer agents in the area, and targeted digital advertising are all deployed within the first 48 hours of going active.

The Buyer Side: What Happens Before You Make an Offer

Understanding Your True Buying Power

Pre-approval is just a starting point. An experienced agent helps you understand the difference between what you're approved for and what you can comfortably afford — factoring in property taxes, HOA fees, insurance, utilities, and maintenance reserves.

Property Research & Due Diligence

Before you tour a home, we research permit history, neighborhood trends, flood zone status, sex offender registries, traffic patterns, and school boundaries. By the time you walk through the door, we already know if there are red flags.

Strategic Offer Crafting

Writing a competitive offer in western Washington isn't about offering the most money. It's about understanding what matters to the seller — timeline, certainty of close, terms structure — and crafting an offer that wins on those terms.

Earnest Money & Escrow Guidance

We advise on earnest money amounts appropriate for the price point and market conditions, and guide you through exactly how it's protected and what happens to it at every stage of the transaction.

Under Contract: The Work Nobody Sees

Getting an offer accepted is exciting — but it's also when the real work begins. This phase involves coordinating 8–12 different parties, managing dozens of deadlines, and solving problems before they become deal-killers.

Days 1–3: Open Escrow & Title Order

Earnest money is deposited to escrow, title is ordered, and preliminary title report is reviewed for liens, encumbrances, or easements that could affect your transaction.

Days 1–10: Inspection Coordination

General inspection, sewer scope, radon test, well/septic inspection (if applicable), and specialty inspections are scheduled, attended, and reviewed. We help you understand what's significant versus what's normal maintenance — and build a negotiation strategy.

Inspection Negotiation (Form 35R)

Using the Form 35 and 35R process, we negotiate repairs, credits, or price adjustments based on inspection findings. This step requires experience — asking for too much can kill a deal; asking for too little leaves money on the table.

Appraisal Management

For financed purchases, the lender orders an appraisal. If the property appraises below purchase price, we work through appraisal gap strategy — rebuttals, seller concessions, or renegotiation as appropriate.

Lender & Escrow Coordination

We track loan conditions, coordinate document signing timelines, verify closing disclosure accuracy, and ensure nothing delays the recording date.

Final Walkthrough

Conducted 24–48 hours before closing, we verify the property is in the agreed-upon condition, agreed repairs are complete, and nothing unexpected has occurred.

"The average western Washington transaction involves over 40 contractual deadlines. Missing a single one can cost you your earnest money or the deal entirely."

After Closing: The Relationship Continues

A professional agent's value doesn't end at the closing table. The JWG client relationship includes:

- Annual property value updates and equity check-ins.
- Referrals to trusted contractors, lenders, and other professionals.
- First notification of off-market opportunities.
- Strategic advice as your life circumstances and real estate goals evolve.
- Access to ProLenz Photography media services for investment properties and rental listings.

"The right agent isn't an expense — they're a leverage point. The right representation pays for itself."