



As a native of Spain who didn't know a word of English when he moved to Chicago in 2002, Santiago Sanchez has come a long way in a relatively short amount of time. Upon relocating to the United States, Santiago was introduced to real estate through the appraisal business, and within two years he not only mastered the English language, he successfully passed his real estate exam and went on to achieve numerous industry awards.

Thanks to the invaluable experience and knowledge acquired by handling appraisals, as a broker with Solid Realty Services, Santiago expertly advises his sellers on how to price their home to get it sold

quickly, and his buyers on whether or not the home they're eyeing is worth the asking price. "I've worked all over Chicago — all 77 communities — for several years now and I know the city very well," says Santiago. "My clients trust me because I know the market, I'm hardworking and honest. I won't over-inflate the value of their home just to get the listing. Honesty and integrity are very important to me."

Santiago's vast knowledge of the real estate industry has led him to sell everything from condos downtown, to 200-acre ranches 90 minutes outside the city and everywhere in between. Fluent in English and Spanish (Castellano, Euskera), Santiago knows the importance of having an agent who speaks your language to represent you. "When an agent has to bring in a second person to translate for you during the transaction process, you're not getting direct negotiations. Buying a home isn't like buying groceries," says Santiago. "It's a major purchase and you have to have the proper guidance from an expert who speaks and completely understands your language."

It's no surprise that nearly 80% of Santiago's business comes from repeat clients and referrals, not just because of his expertise, but also because of the close relationships he forms with his customers. "I'm a very social person, I love to meet new people and make new friends," Santiago says. "My past clients invite me to parties and barbecues all the time so I know they're happy with the job I've done for them."

In fact, his biggest piece of advice to anyone thinking of getting into the real estate business is just that: "You have to be good with people and know how to connect with them, but you also have to take it very seriously. It can be tough at times. You have to know your audience and really know the market and what you're selling very well, but it's a great career to have."

In addition, Santiago stresses the importance of marketing your business early on in your career. "In the beginning I thought marketing was a waste of time and money, but now I definitely see the value in it and have invested a good amount of money into it. If



you want to get your business up and running quickly, you have to market yourself."

Santiago has become a force to be reckoned with since he got his start, and takes great pride in accomplishing so much on his own. He was Rookie of the Year in 2004, has been named Top Producer in Chicago several years in a row, and was the Executive Award winner with RE/MAX every single year from 2004 through 2012. "I don't have an assistant or anyone to help me, but I like it this way and I believe my clients appreciate that they communicate with me and only me throughout the process," says Santiago. "I know I could probably make more money by having some help, but to me it's not about having a lot of money. It's about what I can do to meet the needs of my clients."

Because he is so dedicated to serving the needs of others, Santiago donates a portion of his commission from every transaction to the American Cancer Society, and has done so for many years. "I've lost several friends and family members to cancer, so it's an important cause for me. The Cancer Society works very hard to raise awareness about the disease, educate the public about prevention, and also funds research to find a cure."

Looking toward the future, Santiago would love to get into real estate development, but for the time being, he remains focused on the buying and selling aspect of the business. "It's a really good feeling to know that because of the advice I gave to my clients, they were able to realize their dreams."

Santiago Sanchez

Solid Realty Services | 773.732.3100

BarcelonaRealtor@gmail.com | www.illinoisbienesraices.com