

WASHINGTON EDITION

# TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE

TOP AGENT  
TIPS AND  
QUESTIONS  
FOR CHOOSING  
YOUR LISTING  
AGENT

ARE YOU  
MISSING OUT  
ON NEW  
HOMES?

FEATURED AGENT  
COLLEEN DUTMERS

COVER STORY  
DAVID COOK

TRY VS DO

BE THEIR  
REALTOR®  
FOR LIFE:  
HOW TO BUILD  
A RELATIONSHIP  
WITH YOUR  
CLIENTS THAT  
WILL LAST  
A LIFETIME



Photo Courtesy of Ryan Fiedler



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*"Real estate is a people business. It's driven by one-on-one, interpersonal relations, trust and referrals."*

**D** | **COOK**  
Real Estate

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About 30 miles east of Seattle, in scenic Snoqualmie Valley near the Cascade Mountains, sits a grouping of small towns that provide oasis lifestyles within commute distance of the city. There, one real estate broker has defied all odds through entrepreneurship, innovation and top-notch customer service while providing an ideal work environment for his loyal agents. David Cook is celebrating 13 years of continued growth with Cook Real Estate in the North Bend, WA. The market is one in which David blazed new trails for small-town real estate, embracing unparalleled use of technology and marketing to position his agents and clients for success.

Ingenuity and hard work pave the way for David, a lifelong entrepreneur whose profitable ventures have included janitorial businesses serving office spaces in Illinois and Seattle. About a decade after he and his wife moved to Seattle from Illinois, David sold his janitorial business to enter property management and commercial real estate. But when his employer was acquired by a real estate syndicate with waning interest in the commercial side, David summoned enterprise creativity. Having noticed the gravely underserved commercial spaces around North Bend, he formed Cook Real Estate Services to provide solutions for





Left to Right:  
Scott Holz, Debi Hill, David Cook, Karin Ayling, Karin Simpson,  
Kathy White of Graystone Mortgage, Brian Davis, Regina Bronner  
and Brad Toft of Graystone Mortgage

Photo Courtesy of Michael Martin

property owners, buyers and REALTORS®. “We put signs everywhere for commercial leasing, but I quickly learned you can’t make it in leasing and added residential sales,” he says, noting that his abundant commercial signage helped him secure a competing presence.

From 2003 through 2006, the firm enjoyed the “bubble” years with both residential and commercial transactions. Buoyed, David sought a brick-and-mortar office presence and purchased a historic site built for a bank in the 1920s. “It had recently been a Bavarian-themed Chinese restaurant,” he said of the building on a prime corner in North Bend. With purchase, rehab and refinance loans, David rebuilt the structure, replicating

its original architectural integrity over two years that marked yet another new phase for his career.

“I thought the flood gates would open when we finished construction in 2007,” he says. But all REALTORS® know what happened from 2007-2011. “Instead, it was the start of a seven-year survival journey,” David says with a light laugh. Back then, his competition consisted of two large franchises with 120 agents between them. David later learned those offices didn’t feel the least bit threatened by him. But had they learned from David’s unconventional approaches to real estate, those offices might have survived intact. “My smaller, boutique model with low overhead became a winning formula,”





he says. “We survived by diversifying. As things turned around, we roared back.”

Diversification included David’s willingness to embrace short sales, increase commercial work, delve into rentals and allow agents to discount commissions. “We became a full-service, discount real estate company without compromising our service,” he says. “We still allow agents to set their own commission when they need to.” His seven agents have remained with David for many years. There are times, says David, that revised commission structures benefit both the agent and the client. “Our services are so good and our marketing and education are so top-of-the-line that I could actually charge more than other agencies,” he says. “But real estate is a people business. It’s driven by one-on-one, interpersonal relations, trust and referrals.”

Service, attention to people’s needs and cutting-edge listings marketing have allowed Cook Real Estate to survive and thrive. They spare no expense, using professional photography, drone videography, websites and social media exposure, plus manually-entered online listings and targeted print advertising.

Willingness to diversify and innovate continues to ignite the company’s growth. “I’ve never subscribed to the idea that agents have to specialize,” says David. “I’ve helped companies find cell tower sites; rented apartments to people coming out of short sales; and helped production companies find filming locations.” By positioning Cook Real Estate as the go-to discount brokerage with unmatched service, David attracts ongoing referrals while giving his agents flexibility to prosper.









Photo Courtesy of Mary Miller

And then there's that restored historic office building. Among the many production companies he has helped, David recently welcomed producers from Showtime's revival of the 1990s program, "Twin Peaks," who filmed scenes in David's building and personal office. "I wanted to clean up the organized

chaos of paperwork in my office, but they said 'Don't touch a thing!'" Next year, "Twin Peaks" will feature David's children's photos in the background of certain scenes. It's a poetic coincidence for a man whose family, of course, holds far greater importance to him than his remarkable success.



To learn more about David Cook, visit [cookreservices.com](http://cookreservices.com), email [david@cookreservices.com](mailto:david@cookreservices.com) or call 425.888.7774