



Buying frenzy sapping your energy? 7 ways to take action

In this market, agents are working around the clock to write offer after offer for would-be buyers while also trying to soothe their jangled nerves. So, how can they avoid reaching a breaking point?

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Beware: Burnout is real, and it could be coming for you. Spring is a [busy real estate season](#) during any year, but this year's housing markets are absolutely on *fire*. We're seeing wild-west conditions as homebuyers face the most competitive market in decades, thanks to pent-up [demand and low inventory](#).

We're talking about bidding wars with 20 to 30 offers. Pushy preemptive, all-cash, non-contingent bids. Homes selling gun-slinger-fast within 20 days on average and 10 days in the hottest regions.

That means real estate agents are working around the clock to write offer after offer for would-be buyers while also trying to soothe their jangled nerves. Some frustrated buyers are even firing their agents, flipping to another agent who might magically get them into contract.

Buyers are burning out. Agents are feeling fried — like badly burnt bacon that immediately turns to ash when you pick it up.

"In all the years I've been in real estate, these past three or four months have been the least fun I've ever had," our colleague Diana Smith, Abio Properties associate broker, told us. In the supercharged [San Francisco Bay Area market](#), "all you can do is keep on trucking and hope it doesn't rub off on your clients."

Damon Winney, principal broker at Jump Realty in Ontario, Canada, finds that today's buyers have little compassion for their agent's stress when they are dealing with their own anxiety.

In Ontario, where inventory hit a record low, buyers are touring 20 to 30 properties and making an average of 8 to 15 offers before securing a home. “Our clients are on an emotional rollercoaster, and they don’t understand how much we onboard the stress from them,” Winney said.

So, how can agents avoid reaching the bacon point, er, breaking point? We gathered top tips from real estate pros in some of the busiest markets.

1. Manage buyer expectations

The homebuying journey in 2021 can be grueling, so don’t sugarcoat it for your clients. If you don’t set [realistic expectations](#), you risk having very disappointed and even angry clients.

“Any buyer who comes to us at any price point right now is going to be coached about the prevalence of multiple offers and how much they can expect to pay over list price,” said North Carolina agent Alyssa Hellman of My Southern View Team, Keller Williams.

Warn buyers that they probably will be writing many [offers before winning one](#). “For every new client, we figure we are doing at least one ‘learning offer,’” said Realtor Matt Richling with RE/MAX Hallmark Realty Group in Ottawa, Canada.

Tell buyers they might feel disappointment, anxiety or anger — maybe even be pissed at you, their agent — when their offers aren’t accepted. They might get so tired of looking at their phone that they’ll want to chuck it out a window. This is the “new normal,” at least until inventory increases, interest rates climb, or something else happens to cool the market.

Of course, don’t forget to share your hard-fought, [hard-won success stories](#).

Hellman, whose market includes Raleigh and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, said, “Every time I look up, it’s getting more and more competitive. One client lost seven bidding wars and was close to giving up. The eighth time, he put every dime he had into the deposit. He had major anxiety. I had major anxiety. But he got it!”

2. Set boundaries

It’s easy to market yourself as accessible 24/7 when home sales move at an average pace; few clients actually need that kind of service. But when the market [moves at break-neck speed](#) and your phone is blowing up, always being at clients’ beck and call isn’t healthy or sustainable.

“For me, it’s really about creating work-life balance,” Richling, an Inman brand ambassador, told us. “In those first meetings with clients, you can set some boundaries. Let them know that ‘I’m going to be there for you. But there will be certain times when, if your needs are not critical, I won’t be immediately available.’”

Stick to those boundaries once you set them, “because we are the only ones who can and will,” added Oregon agent Shannon Mathisen with Sotheby’s International Realty. For Mathisen, setting boundaries means taking 50-minute technology fasts.

“Coworkers and clients weren’t too happy, but I recognized my own needs (which happened to be screaming, ‘Time out!’),” Mathisen wrote in an email. “I made them a priority and shut down all devices for a short time. Guess what? Everyone was fine! I came back to nine missed texts, two calls, several emails, and everyone was just fine! And I felt like I could jump back into the race again with renewed focus.”

3. Check in with your team and yourself

If you're a team leader, look for signs of burnout in your agents and support staff. [Keep communication](#) open, and create an environment where people can raise their hands and say they need to take a day off without shame.

Ideas that work: Mental health check-ins at weekly team meetings. Venting sessions (at Abio, we opened a #venting Slack channel where folks can blow off steam). Team workshops with a stress management expert.

"Early in the pandemic, Cascade Sotheby's brought a mental health professional to a Zoom meeting," Mathisen said. "She stressed four important practices to maintain a healthy state of mind, and I've tried to implement them. I can definitely tell when I'm not implementing them because stress levels soar and, to be honest, I'm pretty grouchy!"

4. Practice self-care

The four spokes of self-care are: sleep, exercise, nutrition and interaction with friends. Text is ok, voice is better, but face-to-face is best (even if it has to be [over Zoom or Facetime](#)).

We'll add to that: Schedule dedicated downtime that's completely unplugged. Walk in nature, meditate, play with kids or throw a ball for your new pandemic puppy. While you're at it, cut down on the unhealthy vices you picked up during the pandemic. (You know the ones.)

5. Share the load

Teamwork makes the dream work, right? You don't have to do everything yourself, so share the workload with your people and [your tech tools](#).

For example, if you have a particularly frustrated buyer who's on the verge of firing you, refer that buyer to a fellow agent. The client will feel like they're getting a new chance to win a home. (As luck will have it, they'll probably get into contract right away because that's how crazy unpredictable this market is!)

Technology also is your friend. Use CRM software to track and send automated responses to new leads. Use apps like Cloz.io to coordinate client communications, showing and transaction schedules and project management. Scheduler apps like Cloz.io and ShowingTime are especially helpful for listing agents who are flooded with tour requests these days.

6. Don't take it personally

Even when you are doing your very best, you might lose clients. In this overheated market, buyers are choosing transactions over relationships. It stings, but ... what's that famous Michael Corleone quote from the "Godfather"? *It's not personal. It's strictly business.*

7. Reflect

We love this final advice from our Abio Properties colleague, agent Shannon Kelly: "Think about what you love about this business, what got you into it. For example, I love the relationships I get to build with my clients. I lean on that when things get tough. Bring that energy back."