



From DePaul's freshman dorms to Chicago real estate, Jason and Bob Lattas work together on many transactions per year.

make a change, decided to go with Jason rather than one of the large companies because she wanted a small operation. "I sat down with him and it was just amazing all that he had accomplished and his visions for the company. Even though he owns the company, he wants everybody in the company to succeed. He's always saying, 'I want to make you a millionaire.' Jason probably has more vision and more drive to succeed than probably any other person I've ever met. His mind works differently than most people. He's constantly looking for the next big deal." Jason works unbelievable hours, rarely taking time off, but if an employee needs to take time, he not only doesn't make them feel guilty, he encourages it. "He doesn't want you to burn yourself out."

It was inevitable the state of the market would enter into the conversation. The market was probably in a state of flux as we spoke. One of the problems, Jason noted, was in dealing with people's expectations. Most people are impatient and can't understand why their house isn't being sold immediately. Jason tries to explain that it isn't always the market in general that makes a difference. "The market can be good in certain price points, and bad in others." His advantage, of course, is that he knows the market. He will give the people all the facts, focusing on the market conditions in their specific area. He will assess their house at a reasonable sale price. When I related that my favorite consumer comment is when people say, "but my neighbor sold his house in two days for such-and-such dollars, and my house is even nicer," Jason said it isn't that he's unsympathetic to owner's pride, but as the professional, he has to be realistic. It's his responsibility to get the job done. Then, almost as an afterthought to my comment: "I've never met anybody who didn't want to get top dollar for their property."

Sometimes, in talking with someone as young as Jason, you can't help focusing on just how young they are. With Jason, it was never an issue; age becomes totally irrelevant, you just get caught up in his enthusiasm. "We try to be 100% honest and realistic with people, and

if we lose out on a listing, so be it. There will be other listings. I don't want to have listings just for the sake of having a lot of listings." Jason mentioned the amount of listings he believed he has right now, but it's pointless to mention the exact number. From the writing of this to the reading, it will have changed, I'm sure — a lot. He just can't see the point of taking a listing with unrealistic expectations. Accepting what he considers unrealistic listings would just take time away from the clients with whom he is already working. If a prospective client goes elsewhere where they are promised a higher price, Jason feels if that anticipated price fails to materialize, he would rather the people come back then with more realistic expectations and the house has a better chance of selling.

Everyone seems to be complaining about the market today, so why are they so busy? Jason spends an inordinate amount of time studying the market. He retains mountains of information in his head. He candidly admits to having a really huge base of people that trust him. "They know I won't look out for my own interest before their interest." It becomes a win-win situation. The more he does for a client, the more it is apt to come back to him. He is well aware his attitude about listings this way can cost him opportunities. Still, he's adamant they are doing the right thing in their approach. He stresses how important knowledge is. "Doing the volume that we do, we know what the places are really worth and what they're really selling for, if you want to sell in this market." He believes in being very up front, even if sometimes it means telling people they might want to consider renting their place for another six months. In other words, take the place off the market and wait for the next market cycle. Let's face it. Selling real estate is for the purpose of making money. Jason maintains he never looks at it as just a way to get a commission out of a person. Even so, in all honesty, he admits it can hurt to lose a client because they will go to someone who will tell them what they want to hear.