

A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR

Home Buyers

 **redkey**
REALTY LEADERS



About Me

YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE EXPERT



Bruce Butler

REALTOR®


Proudly hailing from the vibrant city of St. Louis, I've poured my heart into the real estate profession for over 17 wonderful years. Along this journey, I've had the privilege of partnering with countless amazing buyers and sellers, each contributing to the rich wealth of my experience.

What resonates most with my clients, as they kindly share, is my unwavering calmness in the face of challenges and my

relentless dedication to ensuring that every step of their buying or selling process is as smooth, stress-free, and fulfilling as possible. Their satisfaction is my ultimate reward.

In my world, no two clients are alike, and that's the beauty of it. I cherish the opportunity to understand your unique needs, dreams, and aspirations, and to tailor my approach accordingly. With a trusted process honed over years of hands-on experience, I'm here to guide you through every twist and turn, ensuring that your real estate journey is not just successful, but deeply satisfying.

So, whether you're dreaming of finding your perfect home or saying farewell to a beloved property, know that I'm here to walk alongside you, offering warmth, expertise, and a genuine commitment to making your real estate dreams a joyful reality.

 (314) 608-9477

 bruce@redkeystlouis.com

 butlerrealtystl.com

 redkeystlouis.com

Meet My Team

EXPERTS TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS



SHANA KARLS

Transaction Coordinator

Shana, my trusted Transaction Manager, steps in as soon as a contract is signed and accepted, both on the buying and the selling side. Shana's invaluable role is to ensure a smooth and successful closing, working closely with me, as well as with the title company and any outside repair companies. She has been in the real estate industry for over 20 years, working in all aspects of the business including lending, sales, and title work. With Shana's good-natured and calming personality, she keeps everyone on track and stress-free during the crucial time frame between accepted contract and closing.



LAUREN KATTLEMAN

Title Closer

Lauren, my escrow officer, specializes in purchase and refinance transactions in the St. Louis area and beyond. Her background includes all areas of escrow closing: residential, new construction, REO, commercial & SBA. Lauren is passionate about customer service and connecting with others through her work in the real estate industry. Lauren is available to us during the transaction to help sort out any title or survey issues that may arise.



B.J. SONDERMAN

Broker/Director of Compliance

Our Broker makes sure our pricing and contracting work is on point, our paperwork is always compliant, and that we are always supported throughout our transaction.

Title, Mortgage, and Global Real Estate Network

TRUSTED PARTNERS TO SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS

LEADERS TITLE

Leaders Title is a partnership between True Title Company and RedKey Realty Leaders, two firms dedicated to top-tier service. With over 45 years in title and 15 years in real estate, their experienced team understands our local challenges. They use their knowledge to streamline the title process and ensure a smoother, faster experience for real estate agents, mortgage officers, and buyers and sellers in the region.



THE MCRAE MORTGAGE TEAM

The McRae Mortgage Team has been serving clients nationwide for over two decades. They believe that a mortgage is more than just a mortgage. It is a financial planning instrument that can be woven into a plan that will help you and your clients reach your short AND long term financial goals.

Scan the code here to get started and connect with a member of their team today!



Title, Mortgage, and Global Real Estate Network

TRUSTED PARTNERS TO SIMPLIFY THE PROCESS

LEADING REAL ESTATE COMPANIES OF THE WORLD

Outside the St. Louis metro and surrounding counties, if you have questions about vacation property, second homes, or need the right agent to help a family member, I can introduce you to a seasoned real estate professional in any city throughout the United States, North America, Europe, and beyond. Leading RE is a highly vetted network of over 550 independent real estate brokerages in over 70 countries globally and Redkey is proud to have been a valued and active member since 2015.

Leading REAL ESTATE
COMPANIES
OF THE WORLD®

ALL ABOUT *RedKey*

RedKey Realty Leaders is an independent real estate agency founded in 2012 on the basis of love, service, and fun. RedKey Agents and staff showcase their love for their work and the industry by providing top-shelf client service while enjoying life together. RedKey has consistently—and significantly—out-performed the market in both sales amounts and volume.

RedKey is locally owned and focused on serving the Greater St. Louis region while also being globally networked through our exclusive partnership with Leading Real Estate Companies of The World®. Consistently ranked in the top 10 of St. Louis real estate agencies in sales volume, RedKey supports their agents and caters to their clients in business as well as charitable contributions to our communities.

Jill Butler, President and CEO of RedKey, has a very specific vision for the work her agents do. “We believe every real estate transaction is more than just an exchange of numbers.” She says, “It’s a cherished relationship we nurture with care, commitment, and a touch of magic. Your home is not just a property; it’s a chapter of your story, and we’re here to ensure it unfolds with warmth and genuine connection.”

“RedKey is a special place, an agency dedicated to the success of both its agents and clients.” said RedKey’s Director of Agent Success, Holly Even. “It’s a place where the desire to serve is palpable, the energy is contagious, and integrity is valued more than transactions.”



JILL BUTLER

CEO and Founder of Redkey Real Estate Leaders

ALL ABOUT *RedKey*

OUR MISSION:

Our mission is to facilitate the process of buying and selling real estate properties by providing best-in-class service through quality communication, expert marketing, and a clear understanding of the current real estate market. Our success comes from our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of trust with our clients and colleagues. Our ultimate goal is to serve the communities we live in and be a valuable resource to our clients as we work to fulfill their real estate needs.

OUR VALUES:

We cultivate a spirit of collaboration, innovation, and integrity by offering the best marketing and real estate services. We deliver a successful and proven way to professionally transact business with the highest transparency, creativity, quality, and passion which is fundamental to our success and growth.

OUR SERVICE:

We are committed to working with you to market your home. Having already helped thousands of clients successfully sell their homes for top dollar through our proven marketing and expert service, we can confidently say that we can sell your home for the best possible price in today's market.



Client Testimonials

WHAT PAST CLIENTS SAY ABOUT OUR SERVICE

Bruce was a dream to work with. He was capable, responsive, and he often brought levity to tense situations. His knowledge of the industry is unmatched. I would highly recommend him!

JONATHAN & JACKIE B.

St. Louis, MO

Bruce's help has been key for the successful purchase of my condo. His expertise, spirit of cooperation, and incredible patience facilitated a smooth operation; his attention to details and knowledge of the field are a real guarantee for buyers and sellers in St. Louis. I had worked with him in the past and will continue using his services for as long as I need them. All residents of this wonderful city are very fortunate to have him among us, as a friend, as a realtor and as a neighbor.

MABLE M.

St. Louis, MO

We couldn't be happier with our home buying and selling experience. Bruce has a wealth of knowledge and experience that was invaluable to us as first time homeowners.

EMILY K.

Frontenac, MO

Bruce has an unbelievable knowledge of the market and did a superb job of making sure that we found our dream home. Together he and Shana made the process of closing on our house seamless for both buyer and seller and we couldn't be more grateful for their knowledge, professionalism and care. Buying a house can be a stressful process and knowing you are in the best hands in the business is priceless. Thank you Red Key!!!

KIRSTY M.

St. Louis, MO

Home Buying Process

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM START TO FINISH

1 FIND A REAL ESTATE AGENT

Choose a trusted real estate agent to help you navigate the market, find properties that fit your needs, and guide you through the process.

2 PREPARE YOUR FINANCES

Determine your budget, get pre-approved for a mortgage, and begin researching neighborhoods that fit your budget and lifestyle.

3 START YOUR SEARCH

Browse homes online, attend open houses, and work with your agent to find homes that fit your criteria.

4 MAKE AN OFFER

Once you find a home you like, work with your agent to make an offer. The offer should include the purchase price, contingencies, and a deadline for the seller to respond.

5 GET A HOME INSPECTION

Hire a licensed home inspector to evaluate the condition of the home and identify any issues that need to be addressed.

6 GET A HOME APPRAISAL & INSURANCE

A home appraisal, typically ordered by a lender, is an evaluation (or opinion) of the property's value. The appraiser will consider factors such as the home's size, location, condition, and relevant sales in the area.

Homeowner's Insurance is required by all lenders and can be paid for at the closing.

7 CLOSE THE DEAL

Once the seller accepts your offer, work with your agent, lender, and attorney to finalize the transaction.

8 MOVE IN

Congratulations, you're now a homeowner! Coordinate with movers and utilities to make a smooth transition into your new home.



A Lasting Investment

When buying a home, it's essential to recognize it as a significant investment that can appreciate over time. This lays the groundwork for long-term financial stability and the potential for wealth creation.

Terms to Know

HOME INSPECTION:

A detailed examination of the property by a licensed home inspector to identify any potential issues that could affect the sale or value of the property.

CONTINGENCY:

A condition that must be met in order for the sale to proceed, such as the buyer obtaining financing or the completion of a satisfactory home inspection.

ESCALATION CLAUSE:

In cases where we are in competition with other buyers, it may be possible and advantageous to include an Escalation Clause in our offer. Typically, this is what an escalation clause says: If seller receives an offer prior to the acceptance of this offer, with a higher net price to the seller than this offer, the purchase price of this offer will automatically escalate \$ _____ over the other offer, not to exceed \$ _____. Net price will be the Purchase Price minus Seller Credits. The other offer cannot be contingent on a House Sale and must be an arm's length transaction. Upon Acceptance, Seller to provide buyer with a copy of the other offer evidencing the change in Purchase Price. Buyer and Seller agree to sign an Amendment to the Sale Contract agreeing to the new stated Purchase Price.

CLOSING COSTS:

Fees associated with the purchase of a home that are paid at the closing of the sale. This may include appraisal fees, title insurance, and attorney fees.

DISCLOSURE:

The seller's obligation to disclose any known defects or issues with the property that could affect its value or safety.

TITLE:

The legal right to own and sell the property, which is conveyed to the buyer at closing.

EARNEST MONEY:

A good faith deposit that home buyers use to demonstrate their commitment to purchasing a property from a seller.

CLOSING:

The final step in a real estate transaction where the buyer pays for the property and the seller transfers ownership.



MLS Terms to Know

WITHHELD:

There is limited information about the home and informal pics are available to Redkey Agents exclusively. Your home can not be marketed to other agents or buyers until it is in "Coming Soon".

COMING SOON:

The home, pics, home details, and etc. are in the MLS but another agent may not bring a buyer to come see the home

PENDING:

The home is still under contract and all contingencies have been removed or resolved.

ACTIVE:

The home is available for buyers to come see.

UNDER CONTRACT:

There is an accepted offer in place but there are still contingencies that must be resolved like inspections and financing.



Prepare to Buy

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1. Find an Agent

Choosing a real estate agent whom you trust and feel comfortable with can be as challenging as finding your dream home. Given the significant investment you are about to make, it's crucial to work with an agent who is as committed to your needs as you are.

Working with me, you can feel confident that I will help you find your dream home and guide you through the entire home buying process.

MY EXPERTISE

I possess industry knowledge that goes beyond what's available to the general public. This specialized knowledge can help you find the right home at the best possible price, based on market trends and other factors.

NEGOTIATING SKILLS

I have a defined skill set to guide you through the home buying process and help you make informed decisions. I know how to navigate complex negotiations to ensure that you get the best value for your investment.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

I hold myself to the highest standards of professionalism. I undergo regular training and compliance checks to stay up-to-date on changes in legal and administrative procedures. This ensures that you receive reliable and accurate guidance throughout the home buying process.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

I believe that customer service is key. I am committed to providing exceptional service and answering any questions or concerns you may have. I treat my clients with the same level of respect and care that I would want for myself.



2. Prepare Financially

Preparing your financials before a home search is a crucial step and will result in a smoother home buying process.

SET YOUR BUDGET

Determine how much you can afford to spend on a home taking into account your income, expenses, and debts. This includes not only the mortgage payment but also property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and home maintenance costs. For the best guidance on budgeting for a home purchase, you will need to have a conversation with your lender and financial advisor to go through all the options and pick a scenario that works best for you..

PAYING CASH

If you are paying with cash savings, please be prepared to provide current account statements with any offer. It is advised that you black-out your address and any account number info for your privacy. Proof of funds statements can be a screenshot but must be from a financial institution and include your name(s), balance, and date.

DOWN PAYMENT

The down payment is the initial amount of money paid by the home buyer to the seller to secure the purchase of the property. The down payment typically ranges from 10% to 20% of the home's purchase price, although other programs may be available through your lender.

REVIEW YOUR CREDIT SCORE

Your credit score can impact the interest rate on your mortgage. Guidance from a great lender will give you the knowledge and tools you need to make the best financial choices that may impact the loan product you choose.

GET PRE-APPROVED FOR A MORTGAGE

This will give you a clear idea of how much you can afford and will make the home buying process smoother. It's important to research and compare mortgage rates and terms from different lenders to find the best option for your financial situation.

Find Your Dream Home

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3. *Start Your Search*

MAKE A LIST OF MUST-HAVES AND NICE-TO-HAVES

Create a list of features you need in a home, such as the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, location, and yard size, as well as features that would be nice to have, but are not essential.

RESEARCH NEIGHBORHOODS

Research the neighborhoods you are interested in, taking into consideration factors such as schools, safety, access to public transportation, and local amenities.

ATTEND OPEN HOUSES AND HOME SHOWINGS

Attend open houses and book private showings with your agent to get a better sense of the homes you are interested in. Take notes and pictures to help you remember each home.

4. Make an Offer

Once you've found a property you're interested in, work with your real estate agent to submit an offer to the seller. Your offer should include the purchase price, contingencies, and any other terms and conditions you want to include.

PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

The seller may counter your offer with a different price or terms. Be prepared to negotiate and work with your agent to come up with a counteroffer.

BE FLEXIBLE

Negotiations may require some give and take. Be open to compromise and consider factors such as the condition of the property, market trends, and the seller's motivation for selling.



5. *Get a Home Inspection*

A home inspection is an evaluation of the home's condition and structure by a professional home inspector. The purpose of the inspection is to identify any issues that may affect the value of the property or pose a safety hazard.

During the inspection, the inspector will evaluate the home's electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and other systems, as well as the roof, foundation, and overall structural integrity. The inspector will also look for evidence of water damage, pest infestations, and other potential issues.

Based on the findings, the inspector will provide a detailed report outlining any issues that were identified. This report can be used to negotiate with the seller for repairs or to adjust the purchase price.



Final Steps

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6. Appraisal and Homeowner's Insurance

HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE

Contact the homeowners insurance professional of your choice (ask to let them know when you have an accepted contract to purchase a new home. If you don't already know a pro-level insurance agent, I can introduce you to a great broker. Typically you will need to provide the address and sales price. For any reason, if insurance is not available at any home, please tell me ASAP.

PROPERTY TAXES

The appraisal can impact your property taxes as the assessed value of the property is used to determine the amount you will owe. If the appraisal comes in higher than expected, you may need to budget for higher property taxes.

APPRAISAL

At the same time, please instruct your lender to order the appraisal. An appraisal is required in any transaction that carries a mortgage. The cost of the appraisal depends on the purchase price of the home and is typically paid for at the closing. The appraisal is used by the financial institution to ensure that the amount you intend to finance is in line with other relevant homes that have recently sold nearby.

APPRAISAL CONTINGENCY

It can be common for buyers to include an appraisal contingency in their purchase agreement, which allows them the option to negotiate if the appraisal comes in lower than the purchase price.

APPRAISAL COST

The cost of the appraisal is typically paid by the buyer and can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the type of appraisal and the size of the property.

7. Close the Deal

REVIEW THE CLOSING DISCLOSURE

A few days before the closing, you will receive a closing disclosure from your lender that outlines the final details of your loan, including the loan terms, interest rate, and closing costs. Review it carefully to make sure everything is accurate.

CONDUCT A FINAL WALKTHROUGH

Before closing, conduct a final walkthrough of the property to ensure any repairs or requested changes have been made and the property is in the same condition as when you made your offer. Please note that Sellers are obligated to remove all personal property and debris from the home. Although many Sellers will leave the home cleaned up and tidy, they are not required to do so. If it is important to you to move into a freshly cleaned home, we can make arrangements for that separately.

REVIEW AND SIGN CLOSING DOCUMENTS

During the closing you will review and sign several documents including the mortgage note, deed of trust, and the settlement statement. Review them carefully and ask your agent or Title Closer any questions you may have.

PAY CLOSING COSTS

You will be required to bring your closing costs which may include appraisal fees, title insurance, down payment, and other charges.

8. Move In

Congratulations on closing the deal and becoming a homeowner! Moving in is an exciting step in the home buying process. Here's what to expect when you're ready to move into your new home...

Prepare for Moving Day:

- Hire a moving company
- Pack and label your items
- Transfer utilities
- Change your address with the post office and relevant organizations
- Unpack and settle in
- Explore your new neighborhood!





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redkeystlouis.com



10333 CLAYTON RD. | ST. LOUIS, MO 63131 | 314.692.7200

16123 CHESTERFIELD PKWY W | CHESTERFIELD, MO 63017 | 636.237.6000

2299 TECHNOLOGY DRIVE STE 200 | O'FALLON, MO 63368 | 636.626.7007

Buyer's Workbook

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My Resources

REAL ESTATE AGENT

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

LENDER

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

TITLE COMPANY

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

PROPERTY INSPECTOR

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

INSURANCE AGENT

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____

OTHER/NOTES

NAME: _____
COMPANY: _____
PHONE: _____
EMAIL: _____



Home Touring Checklist

DATE VISITED:

ADDRESS:

LISTED PRICE:

LAYOUT/ STYLE:

SQFT:

FLOORS:

BEDROOMS:

BATHROOMS:

YARD SIZE:

GARAGE SIZE:

NEIGHBORHOOD:

Structural Features:

1 2 3 4 5
POOR AVERAGE GREAT

Plumbing:

1 2 3 4 5
POOR AVERAGE GREAT

Flooring:

1 2 3 4 5
POOR AVERAGE GREAT

Lighting & Electrical:

1 2 3 4 5
POOR AVERAGE GREAT

Noise Level:

1 2 3 4 5
POOR AVERAGE GREAT

Location:

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Interior:

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Exterior:

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