



Houston's First Full-Service, Flat-Fee Brokerage, Leslie Lerner Properties, Celebrates Five Years With New Agents and Focus On Market Expansion

Veteran Realtor Leslie Lerner is marking the five-year anniversary of Houston's first full-service, flat-free brokerage, a business that was born due to the Internet's impact on home buying and selling habits. Leslie Lerner Properties is adding staff and expanding market reach this year; the firm's focus is to save clients money or generate rebates in residential real estate transactions.

HOUSTON ([PRWEB](#)) April 05, 2018 -- As with many people that start a new business venture, fourth-generation Houstonian, Leslie Lerner, entered the residential real estate industry 25 years ago with the goal of providing consumers a better option. The catalyst for a career and life change was a lackluster experience while purchasing her own home. Days after the transaction, the then 20-something teacher and former retail specialist enrolled in real estate school, following in the footsteps of her father, a veteran commercial broker.

As a Realtor, Lerner's background found natural footing, harnessing her love of education, customer service and sales. For two decades, she worked with some of the city's top residential real estate brokerages, including a transformative period under mentor Amy Bernstein. At Bernstein Realty, Lerner refined her niche as an agent dedicated to research-driven acumen and the ability to temper client emotions for the purpose of making smart choices.

In 2013, Lerner was ready to reinvent herself again. As a New Year's resolution exercise, she sat at her kitchen table and began to map out a plan introducing a fresh real estate model for the city. The result was the birth of Leslie Lerner Properties. The concept – Houston's first full-service, flat-fee brokerage – hinged on the dramatic shift in buying and selling habits due to the impact of the Internet.

“With extensive market data and comprehensive listing details readily available to the general public, I saw an opportunity to monetize that knowledge base for clients, while still providing the level of expertise necessary to guide informed decision making and to effectively negotiate deals on their behalf,” said Lerner.

By utilizing a predominantly mobile office structure for the new venture, Lerner also created significant cost-savings to further buoy her strategy and appeal to a wider range of agents.

Her first year in business trumped initial projections, and by her second year, other agencies started taking note. “My early success with this concept certainly made the rounds at larger firms, and having Realtors from cities around Texas call to ask more about the platform reinforced that I was on to something,” Lerner said.

Builders, attorneys and investors were among the early adopters, and her services quickly proved popular with those going through major life changes such as divorces and deaths, where protecting resources is paramount.

Lerner's tiered structure offers a clear and concise roadmap for clients. Sellers pay a flat fee of \$4,500 for homes priced from \$200,000 to \$799,999, \$12,000 for \$800,000 to \$1,499,999, \$25,000 for \$1,500,000 to \$1,999,999 and \$30,000 for those above \$2,000,000. On a \$600,000 home, the commission savings is \$13,500. Full-service components encompass consultation with pricing strategy, signage, lockbox, listing photography, digital marketing collateral, social media outreach, appointment scheduling and feedback, contract negotiation

and closing assistance. Accompanied showings, targeted traditional advertising and open houses – which reflect a nominal percentage of sales nowadays and can increasingly present safety and loss issues – can be included for an additional charge.

Her buyers also benefit with rebates at closing. With most now doing a great deal of their own research when looking for a home, Leslie Lerner Properties rewards those efforts as a cost savings to the firm. For those that narrow down their final search to between one and three homes before engaging contractual services, the Buyer's Agent commission is reduced by half to 1.5%, resulting in a rebate of \$9,000 on a \$600,000 purchase. For a pool of four to six homes, the rebate is 1%.

“That legwork has resulted in clients celebrating their move with new furniture and accessories or budget for painting or renovations,” she said.

While predominantly focused on central neighborhoods such as Bellaire, Meyerland, Memorial, Tanglewood, West University and River Oaks, the five-year mark is a milestone that Leslie Lerner Properties is capitalizing on for future growth. In addition to a branding refresh, the recent addition of two new agents brings the staff to four. Lerner hopes to have three additional hires over the next year, allowing the firm to expand deeper in to the suburbs. Hurricane Harvey has also impacted business, assisting owners in preserving dollars on upside down properties.

According to Lerner, “The launch of this business has been an exciting ride, and it's been particularly rewarding to reach a point where we're over our biggest obstacle – a perception that paying less equates to a lesser service. Our goal is to leave nothing undone.”

Lerner has been recognized by the Houston Association of Realtors in each of the past five years since starting the agency as a Top Producer.