



**Centralized Showing Services (CSS)
Frequently Asked Questions
12/14/2009**

Can I schedule all of my showing appointments by calling one number?

Yes. You can schedule all your showings through CSS. ALL CMLS Subscribers can place their listings with CSS.

Does CSS provide a local phone number?

Yes. CSS maintains a local phone number, 704-549-0002, as well as a toll-free phone number for outlying areas, which is 866-549-0002.

How does CSS handle the large call volumes?

In the 12 years since inception, CSS has developed formulas that accurately (within approximately 5 percent) predict call volumes based on the number of member agents, active listings, time of year and day of the week. These call volumes are then converted into the man-hours needed and entered into a scheduling system. To ensure a smooth transition, CSS adds an additional 10 percent "buffer" of hours to the normal formulas used for MLS-Wide contracts.

What oversight does CMLS have?

A monthly statistical report will be presented to the CMLS executive officer, in addition to an open line of communication with CSS to discuss service issues and development ideas. CSS will conduct any requested public forum meetings for Realtors® to share their suggestions or concerns with CSS management.

Will CSS or CMLS provide me a letter to explain the service to my sellers?

Because your sellers are your clients, CSS recommends that you write a letter explaining the benefits of the change. CSS will, however, provide marketing materials for you to use via the CMLS Web site that detail how to best use CSS and the benefits of the service.

Do I need to get my seller to sign a listing agreement addendum?

In most areas, this is not necessary. However, it is best to make that decision based on current state laws and regulations.

What training does CSS and CMLS provide?

CSS conducts regular training classes at the CMLS office at 1201 Greenwood Cliff in Charlotte.

How does CSS train its associates?

All CSS customer service representatives (CSRs) undergo five days of training with a full-time trainer. Following this training, new associates are tested and, upon achieving acceptable test scores, they graduate to the call center floor where they sit with a team leader who can answer any questions they might have. Each CSS office has a human resource specialist to ensure that only associates committed to excellent customer service are hired. Each CSS call center also has a certified trainer dedicated to

ensuring our CSRs are well prepared to handle various situations in a professional manner.

How many employees does CSS have servicing CMLS?

There are between 40 and 75 employees servicing CMLS. There is a separate group specifically devoted to CMLS so that both Charlotte-area Realtors® and sellers will have the opportunity to know our customer service representatives on a more personal, yet professional level.

How does CSS know it will be staffed appropriately?

As CSS has grown from 200 to 103,000 member agents, it has developed a system of ratios and formulas that make it possible to accurately predict (within 5 percent) the call volumes of the CSS call centers. These formulas take into account the number of available listings and the estimated number of calls for each day of the coming week. The only variables are weather and the number of new agents enrolled that week. In regard to weather, experience has taught CSS that if there have been three days of bad weather, then the first nice day will result in an increase in calls. Therefore, CSS sends its representatives home on the bad weather days and calls them in for the nice weather day. CSS typically caters lunches for the customer service representatives on that first nice weather day.

What does CSS do to reduce turnover of associates? What is CSS' turnover?

CSS provides its representatives with tuition reimbursement, perfect attendance bonuses, secret caller bonuses and 401(k). CSS offers comprehensive health insurance, of which CSS pays 90 percent of the premium. Additionally, CSS frequently runs contests and games to keep up morale. Most of the current employees have been at their positions for almost two years. In CSS' other locations turnover runs between 10 and 15 percent, which is about half the national average for call centers.

How does CSS handle calls from upset sellers?

All CSS associates are trained as to how to handle an upset seller. If they are still upset by the end of the call, CSS will notify the listing agent in order to ensure he/she doesn't get blind-sided.

Does CSS sell my e-mail address or use my seller's information in any way?

No. CSS does not, and will not, sell information on its Realtor® members or board associations. This provision is also in the CMLS contract.

What liabilities does CMLS have in regard to CSS?

In general, none. Remember, it is ultimately the responsibility of the agent to ensure that all showing instructions (including status) are correct. CSS provides numerous avenues for agents to access this information (phone, Web site, fax)

Does CSS pay for alarms that are set off?

No. Because of the number of alarms that could possibly be set off and the inability to determine exactly where the error was made, it is not feasible for CSS to assume responsibility for alarms that are set off. For example: Was the correct code given to CSS? Did the showing agent enter the code properly? Did the code change? Did the agent incorrectly write down the alarm code? There are simply too many variables.

Does CSS set up appraisals?

Yes. CSS will schedule appraisals. If you don't want CSS to schedule appraisals, you will need to specify this in the instructions.

Do I have to put all of my listings on CSS?

It would be in the best interests of both you and your seller to put each of your listings into CSS to get them as many showings as possible. However, no, you do not have to put all of your listings on CSS. If you choose not to put a listing in CSS, CMLS and CSS ask that you do two things: 1.) notify CSS that it will NOT be entered, 2.) enter into MLS the appropriate phone number to call for scheduling appointments.

Does CSS charge a transfer fee if I transfer offices?

No.

Is there any fee for the CSS Web site?

No. The CSS Web site is included.

What type of backup systems does CSS have?

CSS backs up its data by transferring it to their Kansas City office, thereby ensuring it is safely housed in another call center in the event of an emergency. CSS also has backup procedures in place to transfer calls from the Raleigh/Charlotte call center to one of five other call centers in the event of a disaster-recovery situation.

How do you know if there is a "no show"?

If an appointment is set for between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., for example, and the seller calls at 2:15 p.m., CSS' customer service representatives may ask the seller to hold while CSS calls the showing agent to see if he or she is still going to show. If on the other hand the seller were to make the same call at 2:30 p.m. or later, CSS will mark it as a "no show." It then is reported back to the agent via e-mail and on the showing history reports.

Will my showing code have to change every quarter?

No. The showing code is between you and CSS. CSS does not require that you change it although you can change it whenever you like.

What if I'm in my car with a client and don't want to give CSS my showing code in front of them?

If you let CSS know you are in that type of situation, CSS will ask for the first and third, or second and fourth characters of your code.

What should I use for my showing code?

Choose a code that is easy for you to remember. Do not use your SUPRA code. Eventually, you will need to have a showing code in order to show any property.

What about liabilities? Is CSS liable for things that are stolen?

Remember, all CSS does is schedule appointments. CSS cannot be responsible for every buyer that enters a home. That is the agent's responsibility. In regard to a non-agent accessing CSS information, it should be noted that: 1. CSS does not publish its telephone number, so only agents will have it; 2. CSS employs the use of showing codes for further protection; 3. CSS schedules more than 15 million showings each year and has never had problem.

What happens if a buyer calls CSS?

If a buyer calls CSS, CSS first will ask how he or she got the number. CSS then suggests the buyer call the agent who is helping him or her. If the buyer is unsure who that person is, CSS will direct the prospective buyer to the listing agent on the property.

Does CSS do background checks on their employees?

CSS performs background and employment reference checks on all of its employees. Applicants are also put through typing and reading comprehension tests before they are hired. CSS also conducts random drug testing.

What other quality controls does CSS have?

CSS has an entire department dedicated to quality control. The members of this team act as 'secret callers' and grade the quality performance of CSS representatives. Those figures are worked into the managers' bonuses. CSS also has surveys that are presented to the sellers on the CSS Web site after 30 days on the service (if they have been given access to the CSS Web site.) These surveys also play into the managers' bonuses. CSS also has an individual on staff who collects and corrects e-mail addresses to improve feedback collection.

What does CSS do if a line is busy? Does CSS keep calling?

Yes, if the listing is coded as a "courtesy call," the agent will still be able to show the property, but CSS will continue to call until the end of the appointment period. If an appointment is required to show the listing, CSS will continue to call while giving the showing agent updates on the status of his or her showing. CSS wants to make sure the showing agent knows whether he or she can show the listing.

Does CSS notify the showing agent via e-mail if the seller changes showing instructions?

Only if the seller makes a "change request" via the Web site. If the seller makes a change over the phone, CSS will notify the showing agent if it affects the instructions for more than a day.

Does CSS notify the showing agent if another agent is scheduled to show at the same time?

Yes, CSS will let you know there is someone else scheduled, but CSS will still let you show. Again, CSS' goal is to get as many showings on the property as possible in order to get a faster sale. CSS doesn't want to restrict showings just because an agent has scheduled a showing window from 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

What are the time-frame restrictions on showings?

CSS recommends showing agents allow two hours for showings. Again, however, CSS will not restrict them. CSS wants as many showings as possible. CSS doesn't like long time frames either, but CSS is here to serve you.

How do we get our showing instructions to CSS?

You can fax them into CSS, call CSS with them, or enter them into a special page accessible through the Web site, www.showings.com.

How does CSS get e-mail addresses?

There are several ways CSS accesses e-mail addresses. In addition to receiving them through a download from the MLS, CSS also collects them from agents as they submit their listings via an Agent Information form. Moreover, CSS will occasionally ask agents calling CSS to verify their e-mail address.

Does CSS provide any market-wide statistical information?

Yes. CSS provides information on showing trends based on MLS map area and price. This is a newer feature that has become exceptionally popular with CSS' other board- and MLS-wide customers. This information is available in report form at the CSS Web site, www.showings.com.

What do I do if an agent enters one of my listed properties without an appointment?

It is a violation of the CMLS Rules and Regulations to enter a listed property without making an appointment, and carries a \$100 fine. File a CMLS Violation Report.