Five Star Real Estate Agent Award
First Year Markets with Blue Ribbon Panel Review

Program Summary and Research Methodology

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Program Summary
Five Star Professional conducts market-specific research throughout the U.S. and Canada to identify service professionals who provide quality services to their clients.

Now entering its twelfth year, the Five Star Real Estate Agent program is the largest and most widely published real estate award program in North America, covering more than 40 major markets. Five Star Real Estate Agents for each market are listed at no cost in the leading city and regional magazine (city/metro markets only) and on fivestarprofessional.com

Five Star award winners do not pay a fee to be included in the research or the final list of award recipients.

The chart in Appendix A provides a summary of the Five Star Real Estate Agent award program.

Research Objective
The research objective is to develop a list of real estate agents in a given market who satisfy objective criteria that are associated with providing quality services to clients.

To receive the Five Star Real Estate Agent award, a real estate agent must satisfy five objective eligibility and evaluation criteria that are associated with real estate agents who provide quality services to their clients. The award process is conducted annually in each market. The final list of award recipients is not intended to be exhaustive.

Research Methodology
The following steps define the process used to ensure that the research objective is met:

A. Award Candidate Identification Process

The nomination and candidate selection process is designed to identify the broadest possible population of high-quality award candidates in order to ensure that eventual award winners have been drawn from a large and diverse pool. Award candidates are identified by one of three sources; consumer nominations, peer nominations, pre- qualification based on recent production history. Self-nominations are not accepted.

1. Define Research Geography and Relevant Population of Recent Homebuyers
   For city/metro markets, the partnering magazine publication defines the geographical area in which the magazine is distributed. For regional/national markets, we define the geographic bounds of each market, with some research areas limited to cities and others covering larger regions that stretch beyond any one metro area. This is typically a list of counties, but may also include a list of zip codes.

   Within this geography, Five Star Professional defines the population of recent homebuyers to be surveyed as all area residents who purchased a home over a pre-defined minimum ($100,000-$200,000) within an eight to 36-month period depending on market size and sample size requirements.

2. Acquire Recent Homebuyer Lists
   Once the geography and the population of recent homebuyers have been determined, the mail and phone data is acquired. The list of recent homebuyers is provided by an outside list provider.

3. Solicit Recent Homebuyer Evaluations

   Five Star Professional administers a survey, by mail and/or phone, to recent homebuyers. Clients of real estate agents may also submit evaluations online. Each respondent is asked to evaluate only real estate agents with whom they have worked and evaluate them based upon ten criteria: customer service, integrity, market knowledge, communication, negotiation, closing preparation, post-sale service, finds the right home, marketing of home, and overall satisfaction. Additionally, respondents are asked whether they would recommend the agent to a friend. This information is incorporated into a client scoring algorithm as a cross check against their average rating. Recent homebuyers may evaluate up to two real estate agents in order to measure the experience associated with the purchase and sale side of a move.

4. Solicit Industry Peer Evaluations

Five Star Professional administers a survey by email to industry peers and professionals (mortgage professionals, insurance professionals and real estate professionals). Each respondent is asked to evaluate real estate agents with whom they have worked or have close, intimate knowledge of their business practice. Respondents are asked to evaluate them based upon four criteria: industry expertise, customer service skills, market knowledge, and negotiation skills. Additionally, respondents are asked whether they would recommend the agent to a friend if they were unable to provide real estate services. Each industry peer may evaluate up to five real estate agents.

5. Pre-qualification based on recent production history
Five Star Professional works with 3rd party data providers to identify the top producing real estate professionals in a market area. A select group of top producing real estate agents will be identified as award candidates. All candidates will be reviewed by a panel of industry experts prior to being named an award recipient (see section on Blue Ribbon Panel review).

6. Collect Evaluations and Verify Validity
Five Star Professional collects evaluations submitted via mail, phone and through Five Star Professional's web-based evaluation system. Five Star Professional's research staff reviews evaluations for completeness of required information and to guard against self-nomination.

7. Verify Award Candidate License and Contact Information
Each award candidate is matched to a real estate license number. Once found on the state license/registration site, each real estate agent's license status (active or non-active) and disciplinary history are noted. In order to be named a Five Star Real Estate Agent, an individual must hold a current real estate license and be in good standing.

Five Star Professional employees identify contact information, using company and other directories.

8. Assign Evaluation Score
After the consumer and peer evaluation surveys and prequalified candidates are identified, all candidates are reviewed by a panel of industry experts – the Blue Ribbon Panel review. Each Blue Ribbon Panel review member is given a portion of the candidate list to review. Each candidate is reviewed based on their commitment to professional excellence in the industry and demonstration of superior client service. Blue Ribbon Panel review members are asked to remove candidates they feel are not worthy of award consideration. Safeguards are in place to ensure a single panel member is unable to remove a candidate from consideration.

Once all evaluations and panel reviews are complete, the real estate agent's license, regulatory history, and contact information are determined; each real estate agent is given an Evaluation Score. Both favorable and unfavorable evaluations are incorporated. Safeguards are in place to eliminate any bias including; self-nominating, "back-scratching," and "stuffing the ballot."

B. Selection Process

1. Collect Award Candidate Data

   Five Star Professional provides each award candidate with instructions to submit information about themselves and their practice, including specific data related to eligibility and selection criteria.* They are required to certify the information they provide is accurate. Award candidates who satisfy the following five objective eligibility and evaluation criteria associated with providing quality services to their clients receive the Five Star Real Estate Agent award.

   Evaluation Criteria
   1. Qualifying evaluation rating (peer or consumer) OR Industry qualified based on recent production history

   Eligibility Criteria
   2. Actively licensed as a Real Estate salesperson
   3. Actively employed as a licensed Real Estate salesperson for a minimum of three years
   4. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review
   5. Successful completion of industry Blue Ribbon Panel Review.

   *Please note that previous year award recipients may not be required to update their candidate form information each year they are identified as a candidate. Updated information requests will be sent only to candidates with outdated or insufficient information on file.

2. Evaluate Award Candidates

   Once the award candidate data forms are collected, award candidates are evaluated based on the 5 eligibility and evaluation criteria. Five Star Professional finalizes the preliminary list of Five Star Real Estate Agents to be no more than 7% of the real estate agents in the area.

3. Award Winner Notification

   Five Star Real Estate Agent award winners are notified of their inclusion on the final list of award winners.

Award List Publication

The contracting magazine publishes a special section, prepared by Five Star Professional, which describes the evaluation process and determination of award winners. For city/metro markets, the special section also presents the resulting list of Five Star Real Estate Agents. Five Star Real Estate Agents are also listed on **fivestarprofessional.com**.

Real Estate Agents do not pay a fee to be included in the research process or to be named a Five Star Real Estate Agent. In connection with publication of the article, real estate agents may elect to pay a fee to include certain profile information in the special section. For additional fees, Five Star Professional will provide real estate agents with other tools to further publicize being named a Five Star Real Estate Agent. A real estate agent's purchase of a profile or other services does not influence Five Star Professional's determination whether to include or exclude a particular real estate agent from any list of Five Star Real Estate Agents.

Appendix A – Five Star Real Estate Program Summary Chart

Research Objective		The research objective is to develop a list of real estate agents in a given market who satisfy objective evaluation and eligibility criteria that are associated with providing quality services to clients.
Award Requirements		To receive the Five Star Real Estate Agent award, a real estate agent must satisfy 5 objective evaluation eligibility criteria that are associated with real estate agents who provide quality services to their clients.
Sources of Award Candidates	**Clients** **Peers** **Pre-qualification**	Clients are defined as anyone who has purchased a home within the past 36 months. Clients are then provided an opportunity, through mail, phone and through an unsolicited online form to submit an evaluation. Five Star Professional works with 3rd party data providers to identify industry peers and top producing real estate agents.
Regulatory Review		Regulatory reviews of reported complaints and disciplinary actions are conducted for each award candidate through the applicable state regulating agency.
Award Evaluation & Eligibility Criteria		Award candidates who move on in the process are asked to submit information related to 5 objective evaluation and eligibility criteria associated with providing quality services to clients. The following 5 criteria are used in determining the Five Star Real Estate Agent award winners: *Evaluation Criteria* 1. Qualifying evaluation rating (peer or consumer) OR Industry qualified based on recent production history *Eligibility Criteria* 2. Actively licensed as a Real Estate salesperson 3. Actively employed as a licensed Real Estate salesperson for a minimum of three years 4. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review 5. Successful completion of industry Blue Ribbon Panel Review. Five Star Professional administers a survey, by mail, phone and through an unsolicited online form, to recent homebuyers (all area residents who purchased a home over $100,000-$200,000 within a 8-36 month period depending on market size). Recent homebuyers are then asked to evaluate a real estate agent they have worked with on ten criteria: customer service, integrity, market knowledge, communication, negotiation, closing preparation, finds the right home, marketing of home, post sale service and overall satisfaction. Additionally, respondents are asked whether they would recommend the agent to a friend. This information is incorporated into a scoring algorithm client satisfaction rating. Recent homebuyers may evaluate up to two real estate agents (buy and sell side).
Award List Publication		Five Star Real Estate Agents for each market are listed at no cost in leading city and regional magazines (city/metro market only) and on fivestarprofessional.com. Five Star award winners do not pay a fee to be included in the research or the final list of award recipients.