



## Musician-Turned-Real Estate Agent Turns Experiences As A Renter To Help Others Find Their Dream Apartment

*Knowing the mindset of renters in and out has helped real estate agent Aaron Vincel thrive at Trudo Realty.*

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01/26/2017

Real estate agents play a huge role in one of the most important financial decisions of our lives. When it comes to buying, selling, leasing or renting, they're the ones who shepherd us through a process that can only be described as overwhelming.

As a decade-long resident of Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood, Aaron Vincel knows the struggles of renting all too well. From Craigslist listings that aren't quite what they seem, to racing against other renters who are gunning for the same space, hunting down the ideal home in one of Chicago's hottest neighborhoods is nothing short of a nightmare. Today, as a real

estate agent for [Trudo Realty](#) in Chicago, Vincel is utilizing those past experiences to make finding the perfect apartment as seamless and stress-free as possible.

At some point another, every one has had their hellish renting experience. There's the Craigslist listing that boasts an apartment's 'vintage charm.' Then you walk in and find out that 'vintage charm' really just means old and rundown. There's the listing that exaggerates the neighborhood boundaries, and all of a sudden you're touring an apartment that's in no man's land. There's the risk of landing a deadbeat landlord. Or there's the perfect apartment that racks up more than 20 applicants in a single hour. In other words, it's like the Wild Wild West when hunting for an apartment on your own. That's where companies like Trudo Realty come into play.

After Vincel graduated from Columbia College, he went down a very different career path than most real estate agents. As a drummer for the Chicago-based band A Lull, Vincel spent a few years of his life touring the country alongside bands like The Cold War Kids and On An On. But in 2014, Vincel began exploring alternate career paths.

“Music has always been my passion, but I wanted to find a career that offered a little more stability while also giving me the chance to help others. I knew the local housing market very well. During my own experience as a renter, I've seen the nuances that make Logan Square's housing market and pricing strategy unique. I also had a deep interest in architecture and history—something that Logan Square has a lot of,” Vincel said. “But most importantly, I've enjoyed working with and helping other people. I realized how different my own renting journey would have been if I had the help of someone, so I decided to be that resource for others.”

Now, armed with a real estate license and more than four years of experience, Vincel has helped dozens of Chicagoans find their dream apartment through Trudo Realty. He believes that getting help makes all the difference during the apartment hunting process.

“This can be an insanely stressful thing in someone's life. When you work with a real estate agent, he or she will do the leg work for you. We'll send the listings, drive you around to see your favorites and help you negotiate a lease,” Vincel said. “Don't just troll Craigslist and hope something will come along—you'll be pulling your hair out a week into the process.”

Vincel suggests starting the apartment search by establishing a budget. Having in-unit laundry might sound nice, but there's a good chance it won't happen if a tenant is looking for cheaper rent.

“You have to be willing to sacrifice some things if you're on a tight budget,” Vincel said. “It's OK to want a decent-sized bedroom and a dishwasher, but I always tell people that they shouldn't expect granite countertops and a garage parking spot. Remember that this is still a rental—it's only temporary, so don't hold it to the same high expectations that you would for a forever home.”

In neighborhoods like Logan Square, renters need to also be aware of how fast the market

moves. For that reason, Vincel recommends doing some research before enlisting the help of a real estate agent. Consider what kind of access you want to public transportation; what parking availability you need; what kind of noise level you prefer; what kind of outdoor space you require, and more.

“When you have a good sense of what you’re looking for, it’s easier to make a decision. A renter should know going into a building if something will work or won’t work—in popular, in-demand neighborhoods, you won’t have the luxury to wait around for something potentially better. You need to be prepared to apply for an apartment on the day you see it.”

Vincel added that it's also important to be thorough when viewing an apartment.

"Don't just quickly check out an apartment and convince yourself it's OK. Chicago has a lot of older apartments, so take the time to look underneath sinks, open cabinets and turn on faucets. I'd be much happier taking the extra time during a showing than to have an unhappy tenant two months down the road," Vincel added.

Despite the ups and downs that can some times come with being a real estate agent, Vincel says that it’s the moment that he sees renters come into pick up their keys that makes his job worth it. That’s because in a time that’s normally high stress and filled with emotion, he’s able to serve as a calming force for people—and that’s something that can go a long way when on the hunt for the next great Chicago apartment.

“I’ve been there. I know how brutal it can be out there. I’ve made a point to go above and beyond what others have done. Do that and then some. It takes initiative, integrity, perseverance and a level-headed mindset to succeed in the real estate business. But most importantly, it requires being personable and compassionate,” Vincel said. “It’s satisfying to know that I can help others by simply being a good person.”