Add a Bonus to an Agent's Commission

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A bonus can come from the seller, from the brokerage, or from someone who isn't on the deal at all — and each of those is a different entry. Get the source right and the bonus prints correctly without disturbing anyone's split.

Introduction

Bonuses arrive in real estate from every direction. A seller adds one to move a listing. A brokerage pays an agent for hitting a target or mentoring someone. A builder or a coaching program pays out on a closing they had a hand in. All three land on the same CDA, and all three need to be visible to escrow. But they aren't the same transaction at all, because the money starts in three different places.

The question to answer before you touch the form is: *who is paying this?* Everything else follows from that.

When to Use This

- A seller is offering a bonus to the selling agent on top of the commission.
- Your brokerage is paying an agent a bonus and you don't want it buried inside the split.
- A mentor or team lead is being paid out of the office's share for coaching a new agent.
- A builder or an outside program is paying a bonus at closing and there's no field for it.
- You folded a bonus into a percentage last time and the agent couldn't tell what they were paid for.

Why This Beats Adjusting the Split

The quick way is to nudge the split. Agent's on 70%, bonus is worth a couple of points, make it 73% and everyone's paid. The arithmetic works and it's one field.

What it costs you is the record. A bonus folded into a percentage is invisible the moment it's entered — it isn't itemised on the CDA, escrow can't see who owed it, the agent can't tell a bonus from a split, and next year nobody can answer what the office actually paid out in bonuses. Entering it as its own line takes one extra step and leaves something you can point at.

1. Establish Who Is Paying

Three sources, three mechanisms. Settle this first, because picking the wrong one moves the cost onto the wrong party.

- **The buyer or the seller** — a client fee, collected at closing. Step 2.
- **Your brokerage** — a deduction out of the office's share, paid to the agent. Step 3.
- **Someone outside the deal** — a builder, a coaching program, a relocation company. Step 4.

2. When the Buyer or Seller Pays It

Create a client fee type named for what it is — *Agent Bonus*, *Seller Bonus* — and apply it in the fees and deductions step with the buyer or seller as the payor, entered under the agent so the agent is the one who keeps it.

When a buyer or seller pays something on top of the commission, that's a client fee — collected at closing and routed to your brokerage or to the agent.

See Client Fees

A buyer or seller owes your office something that isn't commission — a broker fee, a retainer, a reimbursement, a tax. Client Fees is the one mechanism that collects it at closing, and it works even when the commission is zero.

See Collect a Fee From the Buyer or Seller

3. When the Brokerage Pays It

Create a deduction type for the bonus and apply it against the brokerage with the agent as the recipient. The amount moves from the office's share into theirs, itemised on the CDA as its own line, and the agent's commission split is left exactly as it was.

Deductions come out of the brokerage's share or an agent's share of a commission and get paid to someone else — an in-house teammate or an outside company.

See Deductions

> This is also how a mentor or team lead gets paid out of the office's cut rather than the new agent's. Take it from the brokerage's share with the mentor as the recipient, and the producing agent's earnings are untouched.

4. When Someone Outside the Deal Pays It

A builder, a relocation company, a coaching program — money from a party who isn't the buyer, the seller, or your office has no field in the Commission Module. Write it into the **Co-op Brokerage Commission & Special Instructions** instead, describing who is paying, how much, and to whom. It prints on the CDA, which is what escrow needs.

Wire instructions, a mailing address, an MLS number, a fee to collect from the other side — real closing details with no box to put them in. There's one field for all of it, and it prints.

See Tell Title Something the CDA Has No Field For