CASE #1 Meta-tag Mischief

Rodney Red is an agent who has been licensed for 4 years and works primarily in the residential sector. He has been thinking of expanding the communities he focuses on and is particularly interested in increasing his online presence. Rodney contacts an advertising company that offers digital services and meets with a salesperson to discuss options and pricing. During their conversation, the salesperson discusses what meta-tags he would like included. Meta-tags are invisible tags used by search engines to sort search information such as the webpage title, description and keywords. In addition to basic tags such as Rodney's name, "real estate" and the community name, the salesperson suggests that he might want to include a successful competitors name to boost his search results. Rodney recalls that Suzy Sails, another real estate agent, seems to often have listings/sales in one of his newly-targeted neighbourhoods and appears as a top choice when online searching in the area so they include her name in the meta-tags.

A few weeks later, Suzy Sails is checking her name in online search results and notices that a Rodney Red's website is ranking high in her search criteria. Concerned, she utilizes an online meta-tag extractor which reveals that her name has been included as a tag. She contacts Rodney to discuss her concerns.

Discussion Guide:

Please consider and discuss the following questions with another in the real estate industry.

- **Was it ethical of Rodney to include Suzy's name as a tag on his website? Why or why not?**

- **What legislation/rule/guideline could Rodney have referred to for guidance?**

- **Who was impacted by Rodney's decision to include Suzy in his meta-tag? What is the perception of all of those involved?**

- **What should Rodney have done differently to maintain his ethical behaviour?**

Once you have reviewed and discussed the case study questions, please click here for other possible considerations.