

# Ten Steps For Successfully Selling Your Home

## Step 1 DEFINE YOUR NEEDS

It is important to set out in writing the reasons that are motivating you to sell. You might ask yourself, "Why am I selling my home is it because I merely what a change or I have to sale because of a career change or a significant financial issue is forcing me to move. There is a big difference between the two. The latter is a homeowner who is motivated to sale and is willing to make the necessary changes for a quick and profitable sale.

## STEP 2 - PRICING STRATEGY

Your next objective is to accurately determine the fair market value of your home. Arriving at this figure is one of the most significant factors for selling your home in a timely manner. Question is how can a homeowner know what is happening in the market and where does the homes value reside in respect to other similar homes that have recently sold. Here are some things to consider when setting a sales price. You can never set your selling price based on what you want from the sale because there are too many factors to consider. You must look at the state of the local market, the condition of your home, and sales of comparable homes in your neighborhood within the past few months just to mention a few. Appraisers and real estate professionals to determine realistic and pricing values by doing extensive comparative market analysis of sold properties. Helpful Real Estate Consultants can provide to you a FREE comparative market analysis. This information will provide the best fair market price that will help sell your home within your desired time frame.

A common seller misunderstanding is that personal improvements equal specific increases to property value, which is not true. You are always better off setting a fair market value price than setting your price high expecting that someone will come along and be willing to purchase it or inflating it for negotiating. Remember, if your home stays on the market for longer then 90 days you probably over priced it, and potential buyers may think that something is wrong with it and you may end up selling it for less than what you could have gotten if you had started out with a realistic. So remember to be reasonable about the price you set

## STEP 3 - PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

A quick and profitable sale will only occur when you home is in a "showing and selling" condition. This is the second most critical step next to pricing and marketing your property! Most of us don't keep our homes in the condition for attracting buyer. Over the years those boxes in the corner of the garage just seem to multiply on their own. How your home looks will have an immense impact on how quickly it sells and whether or not you get full market value for it.

What needs to be changed to make a good first impression? This may mean that all you do is prune the trees and shrubs and other simple thing. On the other hand, it may mean that you completely repaint the house, inside and out and Do a "curb to door" check. Give the potential buyers a clear path to enter the home. The fewer obstacles between the buyer and the true appeal of your home the better. Keep in mind that over time we become accustomed to our surroundings. What's normal for you may be detrimental to the buyer.

Make your home look as spacious as possible. Organize your closets and kitchen cabinets, and if you have things stored in the attic or basement, make sure they are presentable. If you are showing during the day, pull back your curtains and drapes to show how bright and cheery your

home is. If you are showing at night, turn on all of the lights to create a warm and welcoming environment for the prospective buyers. A home that is marked with your personality and style may be harder to sell. You might even consider such things as removing obvious clues to your political affiliation and tucking away any biased literature that may be visible. This will reduce distractions and help the buyers to visualize the home as their own. Last of all if you are not sure what you should do to attract buyers then request a copy of our 75 Point Photo Ready Check List. It will tell you exactly what works and it is FREE.

## **STEP 4 - MARKETING STRATEGY**

Now that your home is ready, it's time to put it up for sale and market it. Establishing a marketing strategy is a must. Exposing your home to the most potential qualified buyers as possible is the third most important eliminate. This is the homeowners biggest challenge and usually is the main reason why homeowners choose to list with an agent to help them find a real offer and not a lowball one.

There are many different ways to get the word out there that your home is for sale. A yard sign, flyers, and direct marketing, adds in the newspaper are just a few of the many options available. If you are in a buyer's market you will have to be extra careful when choosing a plan. You don't want your home to sit with no one showing interest. You should structure your marketing strategy so that the first 3-6 weeks that your house is on the market will be the busiest. If you aren't getting offers and showings get with us and we can implement the right plan for you.

## **STEP 5 – DAYS ON MARKET**

This is usually the most stressful time of the sale, since you never know when a buyer might stop by or call on your home. Ideally you want to keep your home always showable, because you never know when the right buyer might stop by. Most sellers don't keep their home in perfect condition but doing so is critical. Make sure it is a team effort and everyone is on board.

You should always make your home accessible to showings. Both from a knock on the door to a phone call. Remember buyers have jobs and schedule to so they might have odd hours that they can see your home. Realize the less allow buyers to stop by the lower your probability to selling your home in a timely manner.

## **STEP 6 - RECEIVE AN OFFER**

When a buyer decides to make an offer on your home, make sure you understand what is written in the contract because you will be held accountable for what you sign. You should seek professional advice about the conditions of the contract so that you are protected against incomplete or undisclosed issues where the buyer could sue for the sale of the home. After all, there is no reason to review an offer if the person(s) making it will not be able to actually buy your home.

An attorney or a trustworthy real estate agent can review the written document, taking care to note what is required of both parties to execute the transaction legally. The contract should protect the best interests of all parties involved and should be comprehensive in nature. Parties should use the state's real estate forms.

Once you accept the contract, it may be too late to make any changes. The contract, though not limited to this list, should include the following:

- A legal description of the property
- The offering price
- The down payment
- Financing arrangements
- A list of fees and who will pay them
- Amount of the deposit
- Inspection rights and possible repair allowances
- The method of conveying the title and who will handle the closing
- A list of appliances and furnishings which will stay with the home
- The settlement date
- Any relevant contingencies

Remember that the legalities of this phase are very important. If you have any questions or concerns, be certain to address them with your real estate agent right away.

## **STEP 7 - NEGOTIATING TO SELL**

Now that you have an offer on your home, you should take the time to thoroughly read it and make sure you fully understand all the meanings and legal jargon. Be careful to review all the inclusions, dates, dollar figures and any other important information. Realize that as a seller once you have accepted the offer that you usually have little to no recourse to back out of the contract. Ideally you should feel comfortable with the contract if not then counter the buyers back until you have reached a point that you are happy with the offer. If you can't come to an agreement then don't compromise and realize that these buyers might not be the right ones to purchase your home. Seeking professional advice is always a good decision to insure that you have all your ducks in a row before you agree to the terms.

You should also make sure the buyers are completely qualified to purchase your home. You should ask for their lender approval letter to insure you are working with a buyer who really can purchase your home.

## **STEP 8 - SELLING VENDORS**

Once you have accepted an offer to sell your home it is important to contact and consult the right professionals that can assist you in the transaction. For instance, the property may need to be formally appraised, surveyed, inspected or repaired. Depending on the Real Estate Purchase Contract and addendums, you may pay for all, some, or none of these items depending upon what you negotiated with the buyers on the contract.

Both parties will need to coordinate the activities to insure a quick and accurate transaction. If each procedure returns acceptable results as defined by the contract, then the sale may continue. If there are problems with the property the terms set forth in the contract will dictate your next step. Depending on the contract, you or the buyer may decide to walk away, open a new round of negotiations, or close.

## **STEP 9 - PRE-CLOSE PREPARATION**

Keep in mind that once you are under contract that you can not make any changes to the home. The only changes you can make are the ones that the buyer may require of you. Ideally being proactive with any repairs to your home will help you get a better offer and minimize the buyers

from trying to beat you up on potential repairs that the buyers may ask of you during their due diligence process.

Ideally you should have prepared the documents you must bring to the closing via the title company. A good title company should be working with you throughout the whole selling process to minimize any unforeseen issue. The title company will also provide you with information on, when your settlement date will be and how much time to block off for the closing. They also will tell you how much money you will either be getting back after closing or need to bring to closing to settle up any unpaid expenses. A good title company will contact each party to the transaction to be certain that they have taken all actions necessary for closing, so the entire settlement can proceed on the date and time planned.

## **STEP 10 - CLOSING ON A HOME**

"Closing" refers to the meeting where ownership of the property is legally transferred to the buyer. You should have representation present during the closing to help explain the process and forms to you and make sure everything goes as planned. As the seller, you will need to be prepared to give over any necessary documentation regarding the property and, depending on the arrangements made during negotiations, you may be required to have done something specific in order to close. The actual closing doesn't or transfer of ownership from the seller to the buyer doesn't happen until all funding is complete between lenders and the title company. Once this is completed the property will be recorded with the local county in the new owners name.

## **Should I Work With A Buyer's Agent? A Seller's Agent? A Dual Agent?**

You should understand from the beginning of your relationship with your real estate agent what type of relationship exists. In most states, real estate agents (both brokers and sales associates alike) are required by law to let consumers know whether they represent the buyer or the seller.

In the past, real estate agents represented the seller exclusively, whether the agent helped a seller to market and sell the home or helped a buyer find and purchase the home. In other words, agents were at one time legally bound to represent the seller in a residential real estate transaction. In that same scenario, the seller paid both the listing agent and the agent who brought the buyer.

However, in today's real estate market, you may find that you can choose between a wide variety of options for representation. If you want to sell a home, you can work with a "seller's agent". If you are purchasing a home, you can work with a subagent of the seller's agent and, in many areas, you can engage an exclusive "buyer's agent".

An additional situation in some states is dual agency. This type of agency exists when the buyer decides to have the seller's agent prepare the offer on the buyer's behalf. A buyer who elects this situation, and all additional parties to a transaction, should receive full disclosure of

representation. In some states, dual agency also affects the real estate professional's fiduciary responsibilities to the seller.

Keep in mind that real estate laws differ from state to state and even from locale to locale. And within this framework of variety, laws can change. For more in-depth answers for your specific situation, talk with a knowledgeable real estate professional and ask about local practices. Be sure that you understand and are comfortable with the options involved when you engage the services of a real estate agent.

## 10 Biggest Selling Myths Uncovered

Selling a house can be a bit like having a baby -- everyone gives you advice that you may or may not have asked for, in spite of the fact that the experience is unique to each individual every time. And just like having a baby, there are many myths and "old wives' tales" to be de-bunked. Among the truths are the following ten:

1. *Myth: You should always price your home high and gradually correct the sales price downward.*

**Truth: Pricing too high can be as bad as pricing too low.**

Your strategy in listing high may be that you will always have the chance to accept a lower offer. But the truth is that if the listing price is too high, you'll miss out on a percentage of buyers looking in the price range where your home should be. Offers may not even come in, because the buyers who would be most interested in your home are scared off by the price and won't even take the time to look. By the time the listing price is corrected, you may have already lost exposure to a large group of potential buyers. I can offer you a free comparable market analysis on your home to help you know what other similar homes are selling for. This is essentially a document that compares your home to other similar homes in your area, with the goal of helping you to accurately assess your home's true market value. It is the same thing appraisers use.

2. *Myth: Minor repairs can wait until later. There are more important things to be done.*

**Truth: Minor repairs make your house more marketable, allowing you to maximize your return (or minimize loss) on the sale.**

By and large, buyers are looking for an inviting home in move-in condition. Buyers who are willing to tackle the repairs after moving in automatically subtract the cost of needed fix-ups from the price they offer. You save nothing by putting off these items, and you may likely slow the sale of your home.

3. *Myth: Once potential buyers see the inside of your home, curb appeal won't matter.*

**Truth: Buyers probably won't make it to the inside of the home if the outside of your home does not appeal to them.**

Many buyers today will drive by a home before deciding whether or not to look inside. Your home's exterior will have less than a minute to make a good first impression. Spruce up the view of the house by keeping the lawn mowed, shrubs and trees trimmed, and gardens weeded and edged. Clear the walkways and driveways of leaves and other debris. Repair gutters and eaves, touch up the exterior paint, and repair or resurface cracked driveways and sidewalks. You can

also add additional appeal by placing potted flowers out front, hanging a wreath on the outside of the door, positioning new street numbers, and putting out a pleasing welcome mat.

*4. Myth: Once potential buyers fall in love with the exterior look of your home, you put interior improvements on the back burner.*

**Truth: Buyers have no qualms about walking right out the front door within 60 seconds if the house doesn't look like it could be theirs.**

Remember that most buyers are looking for an inviting home in move-in condition. You might consider spending a few dollars on: painting, if the existing paint is in bad shape or an unusual color; carpeting, if it shows excessive wear or an outdated color or style; refacing kitchen cabinets; scrubbing bathrooms until they are sparkling clean; or several other key repairs or replacements. Although you may be uncomfortable with spending a few thousand dollars on your home right before you sell it, it's not uncommon for the right work to more than pay for itself in a higher selling price and shorter marketing time. Your real estate agent will consult with you about the repairs and replacements that will benefit you most.

*5. Myth: Your home must be every home buyer's dream home.*

**Truth: If you get carried away with repairs and replacements to your home, you may end up over-improving the house.**

At some point, improvements that you make to your home can rise far above and beyond what is customary for comparable homes in your area. For instance, there may not be another swimming pool in your entire subdivision. After spending \$20,000 to install an in-ground swimming pool that you hope will lure buyers, you may find that it only raises the market value of your home by \$10,000 because there are no other comparable properties to support the market value of the pool. As a rule of thumb, if your improvements push your home's value higher than 20% above average neighboring home values, don't expect to recoup the entire amount of improvements. Your real estate agent can advise you as to the scope of projects you might consider in preparing your house for sale.

*6. Myth: Buyers are unswayed by sellers that offer creative financing options.*

**Truth: By offering flexibility in financing options, you may lure even more prospective buyers.**

You might consider offering seller financing, lease with option to buy, paying some of the buyer's closing costs, including a one-year home warranty, or other buyer incentives. You might even let a buyer improve your property while the property remains on the market and let the buyer assign the contract to another buyer.

*7. Myth: You are better off selling your home on your own, thus saving the commission you would have paid to a real estate agent.*

**Truth: Statistically, many sellers who attempt to sell their homes on their own cannot usually net less than when a real estate consultant assist them in the sale..**

Statistics show that on average sellers who team with realtors usually net 6% to 15% more than home owners, not to mention the fact that an agent can tell you the latest and greatest things buyers are looking for, so why guess? You probably visit a doctor when you are in ill health. You also likely take your car to a mechanic for repair and maintenance. When you require legal advice, chances are that you seek the services of an attorney. Doesn't it make sense that you

should contact a real estate professional when you are preparing to sell your biggest asset to insure you net as much as you can? Even though selling your home may sound easy it really is a full time job if you really want to do it right and get the best offer you can.

8. *Myth: Good sellers are available to guide prospective buyers through the home, giving the whole process a more personal touch.*

**Truth: Prospective buyers will feel more that "this house could be" their home if the current owners are not there during the showing. But another issue is do you trust the buyers to be in your home when you are not?**

The presence of homeowners and/ or their family members in the home while it is being previewed can make buyers feel like they are intruding. They really do need to be able to visualize this house as their home, which can be difficult to do when they are acutely aware that it is still your home. You as run the risk of possible thief when allowing complete strangers walk through you home.

9. *Myth: Successful sellers insist that the terms of the sale happen their way or no way.*

**Truth: If you approach the sale of your home as an adversary of the buyer, you risk losing a perfectly solid buyer for no good reason.**

Always remember that both you and the buyer have the same basic end goal: for you to sell your home and for the buyer to buy your home. Both parties need to be flexible to keep the transaction a win-win outcome so complete satisfaction is the net result.

10. *Myth: When you receive an offer, you should make the buyer wait. This gives you a better negotiating position.*

**Truth: You should reply immediately to an offer!**

When a buyer makes an offer, that buyer is, at that moment in time, ready to buy your home. Moods can change, and you don't want to lose the sale because you have stalled in replying. NEVER play games with a buyer by prolonging your response. You never know if another home could come on the market that would be a better fit they find it while waiting for you and walk from the deal. Buyers are also very emotional and their emotions are always the highest at the beginning so by waiting too long they start to look at the numbers which could be your down fall.