

HOME SELLER GUIDE

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The decision to sell your home is an important one. You may need to sell, or you may want to sell, or it is a combination of both. With the guidance of an experienced listing agent, we can work together to strategically achieve realistic goals and expectations through the home selling process with minimal work involved from you.

So with that in mind, let's take a look at a number of strategies to sell your home in today's market.

#1: Determine Your Motivations



Common reasons why people sell their homes include:

- * Home-related reasons, such as needing a larger home for a growing family, a smaller house with less maintenance, or having a preference for a different neighborhood.
- * Personal reasons such as relocating for a new job, a recent divorce, moving closer to family or simply wanting a fresh start.
- * Financial reasons such as a change of income or wanting to cash in on existing equity.

Once you determine your reasons and have committed to selling your home, you are ready to take the next steps.

#2: Find the Right Realtor



You hire a Realtor to be your advocate and to market and sell your home for the most profit and with the least hassle. Buying and selling real estate can be incredibly complex, regardless of

how many times you've been through the process. Realtors will walk you through all the important steps of the transaction, from pre-listing to closing, and to keep the transaction running as smoothly as possible.

Realtors must adhere to a Code of Ethics which is based on professionalism and protection of the public. This code reflect principles of honesty, competency, and fair dealings to all clients and customers, and the number one objective is to protect the best interests of their client.

To find a great Realtor, start by asking your family and friends whom they recommend, and search for online for the best agents in your area or where you plan to move. Look for an agent who has at least two years of full-time real estate experience. Check for online reviews on Google and Zillow. Talk with agents and ask questions about their experience helping buyers and sellers in their markets.

Chemistry also matters with home sales. Keep in mind that you will be communicating with your agent for (potentially) several months as you search for a home, submit an offer, and go through the buying process. As with most relationship-based decisions, your goal is to feel a strong comfort level. If you find an agent you like who gives you realistic answers to the questions you asked, and if you believe that is someone you can trust, you're likely on the right track.

#2: Pricing Strategies



Setting the right listing price on your home can mean the difference between a fast, painless sale, and weeks or months of frustration. Price is a direct function of marketing, and determining accurate market value, then capitalizing on the higher levels of activity from a new listing, are data driven strategies. Experienced agents know who your target market is and what they're willing to spend, and will view the home through the lens of those buyers. The motivations that influence why homebuyers choose some houses but not others can help create a strategy tailored to the sale itself and get a home under contract as soon as possible.

A comparative market analysis (CMA) factors in the location, age, condition and improvements and puts your home side-by-side against other recently sold neighboring properties similar to yours. The strategy is to size up the competition, add or subtract value based on your home's unique features, and realize an accurate listing price.

To market your house competitively, you need to set a price based on the facts. Unfortunately, many homeowners don't believe this and also think their pride and joy family home of 30 years is worth more than it is. Others yet want to "test" the limits of the market to squeeze a few extra thousand dollars out of their biggest financial asset. Regardless of how great your home is, it will take longer to sell if the price isn't right, and the longer it stays on the market, the more likely you will ultimately settle for less than the original recommended listing price.

#3: Preparing Your Home to Sell



A. Declutter! Try to clear about 50% of the items off of shelves, cabinets and other surfaces to allow the buyers to see the space and beauty of the home. Put away all personal photos and knick-knacks. Organize and pare down closets and cabinets to give the appearance of ample storage and allows buyers to envision the home as their own. Clean windows and walls, and replace any non-functioning light bulbs.

B. Repair the Small Things. Make sure anything that needs to be fixed is taken care of before listing your home (leaky faucets, running toilets, drywall repairs, broken appliances, etc.). Otherwise, buyers could think your home hasn't been well maintained, which can be a turn-off and invite lowball offers. We have references to great contractors and handymen if needed.

C. Exterior Attention: Clear debris from the front yard and clear the walkway to the front door, which would be made visible and accessible to buyers. Mow the lawn, prune hedges and tidy up landscape (weed flower beds, refresh dark mulch, add a bit of seasonal colorful flowers or plants). Replace your doormat. Fix broken screens, doorbells and outdoor lighting. Exterior defects can make a poor first impression on buyers. Clean exterior windows. Pressure wash the house, driveways, walkways, patio and decks.

#4: Professional Photography



We've all heard the old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words". Since 95% of buyers start their home search online, oftentimes the photos are what piques a buyer's interest in your home and prompts them to take the next step in contacting their real estate agent. The best real estate photographers have an eye for the right angles, the best lighting, and provide high-quality photos to capture the best features of your home. And the more photos the better!

On the Day of Photos: Remove your car from the driveway and front of house. Remove trash cans from view. Put away garden hose, rakes, etc. Turn on all inside lamps and lights. Tidy up closets and make sure all beds are made and are wrinkle free. Remove pets, pet bowls, pet beds and toys. Clean and clear kitchen counters (sponges, dishes, detergents, etc.). Hide trash cans. Open window covers and turn blinds horizontal. Add fresh flowers or fruit to the kitchen and dining room. Clean the floors free of all smudges and footprints. Vacuum carpet. Wipe down the countertops in bathrooms (remove soaps, toothbrushes, etc.) and close all toilet lids. Turn off ceiling fans and televisions.

#5: Keeping Your Home Clean for Showings:



From the photo shoot to the revolving door of showings, it's hard to keep a house looking clean and staged while still *living* in it. Time is short, you could be halfway through a movie when suddenly you get a phone call asking for a showing in an hour. Keeping your home clean and ready for showings can be managed with these tips:

- * Wash dishes after every meal to keep the kitchen tidy.
- * Put shower items and toothbrushes in a cabinet after each use.

- * To save you from scrambling, keep all of your cleaning supplies in a caddy so you can zoom through the house and touch things up without running back and forth to your supply closet.
- * Keep a laundry basket handy to pick up all of the everyday items like blankets, toys, books and clothes. It's a quick and easy way to clear your rooms of clutter. Store the basket(s) in a closet or in the laundry room, or take them with you and toss in your trunk until you return home after the showing.
- * Splurge on disposable paper plates, bowls, and plastic cutlery. You'll wash fewer dishes, saving you time to clean other areas of your house. This also means your dishwasher will likely be clean and empty when people come to view your home.
- * Keep certain rooms off-limits to keep them clean. You'll save yourself a lot of headaches if rooms don't get used and cluttered unnecessarily. For example, only let your kids get out toys if you know where they plan on playing with them. Otherwise, a room can get pulled apart very quickly when there's no limit to the number of toys they can play with.
- * Make arrangements for pets to be out of the house for showings, or take them with you.
- * Have a checklist. When you are busy trying to make sure your home looks great for a showing, it's easy to forget something before you head out the door like the dog food dishes in the kitchen. Having a checklist makes sure you don't miss any important prep steps.

#6: Review Offers:



Offers will sent to your agent, and he or she will present them to you without delay. Your agent will discuss the price offered and terms of the contract, and will negotiate on your behalf (with your input) until an offer is accepted. Sometimes the terms of the offer are as important as the price, such as closing date, closing costs requested, contingencies such as home inspection and appraisal, types of financing and amount of down payment.

#7: The Home Inspection:



A professional home inspector will likely be hired by the buyer to inspect your home and prepare a report listing all potential items needing to be addressed. Your agent will help you negotiate any repairs and the cost, with the goal of retaining the most profit for you while keeping the buyers happy.

#8: The Appraisal:



An appraisal is an unbiased professional opinion of the value of a home and is used whenever a mortgage is involved in the buying or refinancing a property. A qualified appraiser creates a report based on a visual inspection, using recent sales of similar properties, current market trends, and aspects of the home (e.g., amenities, floor plan, square footage) to determine the property's appraisal value. When the appraisal value is lower than expected, the transaction can delay or derail the transaction since the bank won't lend more than the home is worth. Chances are, neither you nor the buyer wants the transaction to fall through. Any variation from the listing price may be discussed between you, your agent and the buyers to determine next steps.

#9: Prior to Closing:



Any repairs agreed upon must be completed, and the home kept in the same condition as when the offer was made. The title company will need your cooperation in ordering the mortgage balance payoff from your mortgage company and clearing any liens that may appear on the title. Pack all belongings in preparation of moving, and make arrangements to move on the day of closing (or another date if agreed to on the contract). Closing will take place at the office of a neutral third party.

#10: Closing Day!



Celebrate the sale of your home and the beginning of a new chapter!

