



Selling Your Home

Whether you live in an area where homes are easy or difficult to sell, selling a home is usually a stressful experience. You may worry that you are getting the most out of your home, or that you will sell it in time for a possible move to another home. Whatever the case may be, the following are tips to consider before and during the time your home is listed on the market.

Before Your Home is Listed

You have decided you are going to sell your home...now what do you do? Studies show that using a real estate agent is your best option when selling a home. Real estate agents are current on all critical issues related to selling a home and they will normally help you get a higher price for your home. They also add some objectivity to what is an emotional transaction: the sale of your home. According to real estate agents and other sources, the following are some important tips to consider prior to listing your home on the market.

Hire the agent that is right for you. You need to make sure you are comfortable with your real estate agent. Your agent must be totally informed, knowing what properties are going on the market so you can develop competitive pricing for your home. Additionally, you should consider someone who embraces technology as he/she may have many different tools to get your house sold quickly.

Pricing your home competitively. Pricing your home competitively is going to make or break your sale. One rule of thumb is to find out what your home is worth, and if you are in a tough market, shave 15 to 20 percent off the price. You should then receive multiple bids for your home, and those individuals will bid up the price over what it is worth.

Focus on your curb appeal. The first impression is usually the only impression you will get from a potential buyer. No matter how good the inside looks, buyers will judge your home before they walk through the door. Make sure your home is warm and inviting from the outside. Mow your lawn, trim the bushes, weed your yard, reseal your driveway, sweep the porch, add some flowers to your yard, and repaint your front door...whatever it takes. You want to make your home as inviting as you possibly can.

Create room for storage. Storage is a real key to selling your home. Take some time to clean out your closets, putting half of your belongings into storage or box them up for moving purposes. Make sure your closets are organized as buyers will snoop. The more organized and clean they are, the more it looks like you have storage in your home.

Focus on your kitchen. Studies show that you are not just selling your home; you are really selling your kitchen. The more you can afford to do with your kitchen, the better; you will usually get at least 85 percent of your investment back in the sale of your home. The easiest upgrades to your kitchen include painting and new hardware on your cabinets. If you can afford it, you may want to put in one or two upgraded appliances (if applicable).

De-personalize your home. The more personal items you have in your home, the more a buyer will not be able to picture himself/herself in it. Get rid of a third of your things and put them in storage, such as family photos, collections, personal keepsakes, etc. You may also consider hiring a home stager to maximize the full potential of your home.

Makeover what is necessary. You should consider providing some quick fixes to your home prior to selling it. Put on a fresh coat of paint, put up shelving where appropriate, fix leaky faucets, clean the grout, make sure all closet doors are on track, replace door handles and put on new cabinet hardware. You should also clean your walls, and either clean your curtains or consider putting up new ones. Additionally, you should make sure your furniture and carpet is clean, or consider replacing it. If you have to replace carpeting, consider replacing it with hardwood floors; buyers in today's market love hardwood floors.

Maximize the lighting in your home. After the location of your home, good lighting is one thing buyers cite that they want in a home. Take down dark drapes, clean your windows, change your lampshades, increase the wattage in your light bulbs, and even cut back bushes in your front yard that may block light to your home. You may even need to paint certain rooms in your home to lighten things up.

Clear your home of clutter. It is critical that you have nothing out of place prior to your home being viewed for the first time. Get rid of newspapers that are piled up or clutter on an office desk. Clean, open spaces make your home look bigger to prospective buyers.

Make a list of repairs. You may want to conduct a pre-inspection to your home so you will know what you can do to minimize issues in your negotiations at a later time. Keep track of what you have done and plan to do prior to selling your home. Bigger items, such as termites or water issues, will need to be dealt with so you might as well do that prior to the buyers seeing your home.

During the Listing Period

It is important that you work closely with your real estate agent so you can set parameters for open houses, buyer viewing, etc. You want buyers to come as often as possible, but you need to make sure you are prepared when they arrive.

The following are some important tips to consider when your home is listed.

Do not be around when buyers view your home (if possible). You are emotionally attached to your home, and may say or do something that may negate the sale of your home. Leave the discussion in the hands of your agent.

Put fresh flowers in your entry way or in your kitchen area.

Conceal your animals. Not all buyers love dogs and cats, or any other type of animal, so you may want to kennel them during an open house or ask someone to watch them. You should also take away any indication that you have animals by hiding cat litter boxes or dog kennels.

Your house should always be "show ready." You never know when buyers will be ready to view your home. Don't leave your dishes in the sink, keep the dishwasher cleaned out, make sure the bathrooms are always clean, and that your home is dusted and cleaned at all times. While this may be inconvenient for you, it will help in the sale of your home.

Consider dropping your price. If your home has been on the market longer than a couple of months, consider dropping your price. Listen to your agent and take his/her advice.

Don't get discouraged. Some homes will take longer to sell; just hang in there and be patient.

Once you have offers on the table, it is time to negotiate. Let your agent do the talking! Your agent will keep you in the loop, provide you with his/her opinion as to which offer to accept, and if it is a good or bad offer. Review how the offer will affect you financially and make sure you are comfortable with all aspects of the sale. If you have followed your original plan, you should be happy with the sale of your home and ready to venture into a new home within a short period of time.

