



seller special report

Boost the Selling Power of Your Home in Eight Simple Steps

1) Hire a professional Realtor to market your home

Realtor-real estate agent, they're both the same, right? Wrong! To be classified as a Realtor, one must hold membership in the National Association of Realtors. This elite non-profit trade organization sets forth professional standards to abide by, as well as provides real estate information and education. Members adhere to strict ethical standards and base their business practices on providing fair and honest service to all clients. Since they are monitored by local governing boards, Realtors are more likely to provide you with a higher level of service.

2) Be proactive in the selling process

Studies show that once a home has been placed on the market, the prime selling time for that home is within the first seven weeks. The longer a home is on the market, the less amount of money the seller will net. The key here is to plan a marketing strategy that will bring the most buyers to your home in the quickest amount of time. There are several options available to advertise your home: newspaper ads, open houses, real estate magazines, direct marketing, and the Internet. Communicate with your Realtor regarding effective marketing tools for your property and the time frame for implementing such tools.

3) Spruce up the "curb appeal" of your home

First impressions are everything, and your home is no exception. For potential buyers, the exterior condition reflects the condition of the interior. To boost the overall exterior appearance, make sure that the following elements are accomplished.

- Sweep and wash the driveway and walkways.
- Recycle old newspapers and put toys away. Move extra automobiles to another location.
- Clean and organize the garage. Haul away any clutter. Place trash cans at the side of the home.
- Plant flowers, if necessary, and maintain all plant beds by keeping them weed free and adequately watered. Groom all trees and shrubs.
- Clean all windows and shutters. Powerwash the exterior surface of the home, if necessary.
- Check gutters and roof. Make sure they are clean and in good condition.
- Mow the lawn regularly and keep pet areas neat and orderly.

4) Be forthright about health and safety issues

If you are aware of any problems with your property, it is important that you are direct and up-front about them. In many states it is a legal requirement that problems be disclosed prior to the sale of a home. With the standard procedure of building inspections being conducted as part of the sales contract, problems will eventually be found out anyway. Aside from your home itself, it is important to inform your Realtor and potential buyers of any environmental and overall safety issues of the surrounding area.



5) Put yourself in the buyer's shoes

All prospective buyers seek perfection in the home they plan to buy. If you do everything you can to improve the appearance of your home, you increase your chances for a quick sale. Replace carpets, if necessary, and apply fresh paint of a neutral color to spruce up the appearance of the rooms. Move out excess furniture. Buyers are quickly turned off by rooms that appear small and crowded. As a final touch, implement the following strategies before each showing.

- Remove excess personal affects. Place valuables in a secure location.
- Thoroughly clean the kitchen and bathrooms. Add fresh flowers in select rooms of the home.
- Vacuum carpets and organize all closets. Dust furniture and clean baseboards and doors.
- Put all dishes out of sight, unless they have a decorative purpose.
- Make all of the beds and place clothing and toys away from view.
- Open curtains and blinds. Turn on lights to make for brighter surroundings.
- Turn off all televisions. Play soft, soothing music.
- Move pets outside. Make sure pet areas are clean, tidy, and odor-free.
- Unlock doors so that all rooms are accessible.

6) Vacate the premises while the Realtor shows your home

As a seller, it is natural to want to be in your home during showings to gage the reactions of prospective buyers and answer questions. This is what you hired a Realtor for, and you will be better served if you leave the home and let your Realtor do his/her job. Your Realtor knows how to promote specific attributes of the home, as well as how to effectively handle questions and concerns.

7) Set an accurate sales price for your home

In the competitive real estate market, a price that is merely a few thousand dollars too high could mean the house won't sell. Individuals searching in the price range your home should be set at won't even take the time to look at your home. By the time you lower the price to the correct level, you will have already lost a large pool of buyers. Therefore, it is essential that a seller list the home at a competitive, yet reasonable, price right from the start. This is where the expertise of a Realtor can be worth its weight in gold. Realtors are in tune with market trends as well as how quickly properties are selling.

8) Make moving preparations ahead of time

Research moving companies to ensure that you hire a professional, reliable, and ethical company. If you plan to move on your own, reserve a truck ahead of time and make sure it's the size that meets your needs. Acquire any moving material you might need and pack non essentials ahead of time. Before you start to pack, it's a good idea to complete an inventory of the contents in each room. This will prove useful when the time comes to set forth the value of the items for insurance purposes and shipping. Budget for unexpected costs that may arise.