

How to Sell Your Home

10 Steps to Success



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INTRODUCTION

Selling a home is oftentimes the largest financial transaction in someone's life.

Most homeowners who wish to sell their home want a stress-free sale. There is a desire to sell the home quickly, with little effort, and sell at the highest price.

In the perfect world, they list their home for sale; they talk to the buyers; they negotiate the price; they hand over the keys and move on.

The reality is that selling a home includes many moving parts — some which you can control and some that are out of your hands.

If you decide to take on this task by yourself without the help of a professional agent, be prepared and educated for the processes ahead of you.

If done incorrectly your house may not sell or it may sell under value, and you will find yourself losing great sums of money that you could have potentially earned.

I have put together a system of useful tactics and steps that will help you sell your home with great SUCCESS. These steps are proven processes utilized by top selling real estate agents.

In this guide, I have outlined 10 Steps to success.

I am always available to give advice. Feel free to reach me:

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Step One: Establish a Time Line

The sale of a home is not a simple ABC task, even in a booming seller's market. The sale can take two to six months from start to finish, and depending on the market conditions it can take even longer.

Do you have a place to move into? A huge obstacle to selling your home is finding another place to move into.

Do you have a specific time you wish to sell the home?

Do you need to move out fast and avoid paying extra taxes and utilities?

Are you flexible with buyers who need time to move in?

Some buyers can move in immediately while others will have to sell their home first. This can greatly lengthen the time needed to hand over the keys.

Mortgage issues, inspection issues, appraisal issues, open permit issues, title issues can greatly affect the timing of the closing.



Do you have any repairs or updates you need to fix before selling your home?

Be prepared to have an open house and/or time to show your home to prospective buyers once the home is listed.

This requires time. If you are not able to find time to show your home - there is a great chance you will lose out on potential buyers.



Knowing your time line and the variables that affect the sale of your home will help you set the stage for a comfortable transaction.

Step Two: Preparing the Home

Many buyers desire to purchase a home that requires little work. They would like to move right in and start living.

When a buyer has an accepted offer on a home, typically the first step they take is hiring an inspector to evaluate the home.

Inspectors have a responsibility to find all the hazards and structural/mechanical problems with a house that may be dangerous or against state/local regulations.

When receiving an inspector's report - buyers will typically ask the sellers for the repairs or hazards to be fixed before purchasing the home. Alternatively, they may ask for credits at closing to cover the costs for these repairs/updates.

Inspections can cost homeowners money - lowering profits when selling a home.



Be proactive.

A **pre-sale home inspection** can save you money and time in the long run.

This is an optional step that many sellers utilize.

A pre-inspection may cost a few hundred dollars. Knowing in advance any issues that buyers will likely flag after an inspection can greatly expedite the sale and save money and any unwanted delays.



Step Three: To Upgrade or Not To Upgrade

One of the common questions when selling a home is "should I renovate before listing my home?"

For a buyer who flips homes, saving money is the main factor. For these individuals they typically like the home simply for the neighborhood, location, and low price. Renovations and updates may not factor into their decision process and ultimately may price them out of the bidding.

When selling your home, you should make renovation plans based on which type of buyer you are looking to attract.

In some cases you may want to upgrade certain parts of your home to increase the value of your property. Knowing what buyers want is very important.

Will the renovation increase the value of your home?

Will the renovation increase your return on profit?



Kitchens and Bathrooms are often the most expensive part of a home to update - for both buyers and sellers.

Do not overspend on updates. Needless spending can cut into your profits and cost you greatly in the long run. Asking experts for advice can help ease the decision process on what needs updating.

Simple cost effective renovations may include:

- Paint rooms
- Add crown molding
- Rewire lighting fixtures
- Replace/resurface old flooring, remove rugs
- Paint kitchen cabinets
- Update landscaping



Step Four: Get professional photos

A picture is worth a thousand words.

I cannot stress to you enough how important photos are. High-quality photos should never be ignored.

Many homeowners opt to take pictures themselves with their mobile phones hoping to save money.

In an on-line world - visuals are everything. Buyers often skip right by listings when the photos are dark and confusing.

Maximizing your on-line appeal will help set your home apart from the competition.



A professional photographer knows what attracts buyers.

Rooms appear larger, brighter and more attractive with High Definition photos. Professionals have an eye for what angles and directions bring out the best in each room of the house.

Also knowing what to take pictures of is important. Often, times people take too many pictures or too little. Showing too many pictures can hurt your on-line appeal. At the same time too little pictures may not showcase the beauty of your home.

Taking a picture of a newly painted handrail may seem exciting to you - but to a buyer it is wasted time.

Understanding the buyer's desires helps when deciding on what photos to include in your listing and makes the buyers excited to come out and see your home.

Professional photographers can cost \$100 dollars and up depending on the size of your property and the photographers popularity and success.



I cannot stress this enough - a professional photographer is money well spent.

Step Five: Be prepared Legally

Hire a real estate attorney.

The sale of a home is an extremely complicated process. There are many obstacles that can hurt you financially and legally if ignored or handled improperly.

Let the professionals handle this complex process and help you navigate through the detailed legal process. I recommend hiring a Real Estate Attorney rather than just any attorney.

Real Estate attorneys specialize in this process. On average, a real estate attorney may cost approximately \$1,500.00.



Title issues could hold up your sale for weeks or months. In the worst case scenario the home sale can fall apart and buyers may walk away from the deal.

A good attorney can help identify the issues and have a proper course of action to fix them.

These can include:

- Outstanding liens or judgments
- Trust issues
- Mortgage balances
- Tax issues
- Encroachments

Protect yourself - legally and financially with an attorney.



Step Six: Additional Costs and Paperwork

Additional seller costs may include:

- Government transfer tax - estimate \$4.00 per every \$1,000 of the home sale (a \$500,00.00 home would average about \$2,000.00 transfer tax)
- Recording fees
- Outstanding liens
- Credits to be paid at closing for repairs or closing costs

Will you owe taxes on profits of the sale of your primary home?

Sellers typically do not owe taxes on the profits from the sale of their primary home if they have lived in the home 2 out of the previous 5 years before selling it - if the profits are up to \$250,000.00. Married couples can exclude from taxes up to \$500,000.00.

If your profit from the home sale is greater than \$250,000 or \$500,000 for married couples, then you will need to report it to the IRS on your tax return as a capital gain.



Here is a list of some of the documents you will need to provide to sell your home:

- Your home's original purchase contract
- Property survey
- Certificate of occupancy and certificates of compliance with local codes
- Mortgage documents
- Tax records
- Appraisal from your home purchase
- Homeowners insurance
- Home inspection report if executed
- Records of work performed on your home



Step Seven: Setting the Price

When selling your home, this is the most important step.

Often buyers let their emotions set the pricing. They price the home on what they think it is worth - all the memories and experiences inside the home are priceless. However, even in a competitive market buyers do not like to overspend.

Most buyers hire Buyer Agents to help them with comps on houses when determining if a house is worth visiting.

Buyers are well informed on pricing after comparing similar homes (how many bedrooms, bathrooms, liveable space, property size, improvements, location, etc.).

Pricing too high will scare off buyers.

Pricing too low will leave money on the table that could have been gained.



If you have access to a professional - ask for advice on pricing.

Try to find as many comparables through local neighborhood sales. Use comparables from within the past six months. Market prices often fluctuate depending on demand, interest rates, time of the year, etc.

If you price too high and continually lower the price - buyers will be turned away and not consider looking at the property. Sales price reductions may give the buyers the impression that something is wrong with the home or that there are undesirables that prohibit the sale.

If you price too low you may be walking away from great sums of money.

In a seller's market - sometimes a lower price can bring in more potential buyers and create a bidding war with multiple offers. A higher price may scare potential buyers away.



Step Eight: Marketing Your Home

Most home owners neglect the importance of a good marketing and advertising strategy for their home. They try to save money and list on the obvious web sites such as Zillow or Trulia.

However, what they do not realize is that these sites cater to agent listed homes. There are separate tabs that buyers must click on to see the “For Sale By Owner” listings. These are often passed over by uninformed buyers looking on-line.

These sites account for only a small percentage of people looking for a home.

List on the MLS - Multiple Listing Site

To list on the MLS, you will need to hire a broker of some sort for a flat fee.

Also, you will have to provide a commission to any buyer agent who brings in a buyer to purchase the home. Typically this is 2%.

There are thousands of Realtors who will have access to MLS. These agents have pre-approved buyers anxious to find a home. Not only do they have buyers - they have the buyers who can spend top dollar for your home.

Buyer agents typically will not show homes that do not offer commission. These agents have the pre-approved buyers who can offer the asking price and higher for your home. Do not risk losing buyers by refusing the buyer agent commission.

Advertise, Advertise, Advertise

Do not ignore advertising.

Social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok have all been great tools to help spread the word. Even Craigslist can help. Everybody knows somebody looking for a new home.

Print up fliers and distribute them to neighbors, on bulletin boards at community centers, grocery stores, and other visible places.

Letting neighbors know you are selling is also useful. Your neighbors may know people that they would like to move in next door to them.

Even email blasts can help spread the word.

Unfortunately, these processes take time and dedication. However, if done successfully you will attract many potential customers and hopefully have a bidding war on your home.



Step Nine: Staging Your Home

So now you are ready to show your home. Staging your home for the buyers is a great way to boost the home appeal.

Clutter - look around your home and try to eliminate clutter. A messy home is often a distraction or deterrent for a home buyer. Buyers often low-ball bid a home that appears messy.

You may need to remove excess furniture, personal belongings and unsightly items from the home. Rearranging rooms for optimal flow from room to room.

Lighting - bright LED lighting helps to eliminate a dark or dreary room.

Curb Appeal - any small touches to landscaping, yard maintenance can add value to your home.

It is not uncommon for sellers to hire a professional home staging company to help set up the house.



Determine if you will have an Open House.

Open houses are exciting for buyers. Especially in a seller's market. It creates a hype that can help get many buyers racing to your door to be the first ones to see it.

In today's current market, a successful Open House can help you get the house into contract a few days after the showing with multiple offers.

Be prepared to show your home as much as possible for private showings. Be open to the buyers with their timing.

Many people work and can only visit a home after work hours. If you are only showing your home during the day, you may lose out on tons of potential buyers.



Step Ten: Negotiation

If everything went successfully after all the steps above have been completed, you should have multiple offers on your home.

- You can accept an offer as is.
- You can make a counter offer.
- You can reject the offer

With a counter offer - you can negotiate the price, offer credits at closing, and even include furniture/appliances in order to close the deal.

A great negotiation can help you get the price you need as well as a convenient timing for the sale. Answer all offers in a timely manner. Make sure you are in touch with any backup offers just in case the sale falls through.

Before accepting any offer:

Check with the mortgage lender to make sure the buyer's pre-approval is legitimate and solid.

Oftentimes, owners accept offers without verifying with lenders the buyer's pre-approval status. The buyers can fail to obtain a mortgage. The time wasted on a failed offer can cost you time and money. In a seller's market, the backup offer on your home can find another homes during the time your accepted offer fails to get a mortgage.

Sometimes the highest offer is not necessarily the best offer. The following are examples of issues that may make one offer stronger than the other:

- How the buyer is paying (cash versus financing)
- Type of financing
- Down payment amount
- Contingencies
- Requests for credits or personal property
- Proposed closing date

Appraisals - Lenders appraise the homes and determine the value of the loans to the buyers. If a home appraisal comes under the mortgage approval the buyer will need to pay for the difference at closing.

Often, deals collapse because the appraisal fell short and the buyers do not have the additional cash to purchase the home.

Down Payments - When a buyer offers a higher down payment (20% is considered a great down payment) they are using their funds to strengthen the offer. Banks favor individuals who are willing to put their own money down. This increases their odds at securing the mortgage.

Buyers who put less down (FHA loans) may be have a difficult time securing a mortgage.

Cash is king. Buyers willing to pay in cash often are the strongest offers.



As a licensed real estate agent, I handle all of the hard work to get your house sold quickly, at the highest price, and in a timely manner.

- I am a professional with a friendly attitude.
- I have an MBA in Business Marketing (degrees with Villanova University and Hofstra University). I specialize in marketing and sales - utilizing my skills with: MLS, on-line social media, print media, door knocking, TV, and more.
- I have over 20 years of sales experience.
- I have an eye for staging a home and getting the home into prime shape before showings.
- I am an expert negotiator. I will get you the price and terms you want for your home.
- I have a vast network of professional contacts: buyer agents, lawyers, photographers, contractors, and pre-approved buyers.
- I can handle the tedious paperwork that slows down the process
- I can make sure all buyers are pre-approved.
- I can help with pricing strategies.
- I devote all my resources and skills to getting the job done right.
- After working with me, you will have a friend for life.

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