

Home Selling Solutions

Quick tips for a quick sale in today's market

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The challenges facing the national real estate market and the mortgage industry at the moment make this a bad time to sell your home, right?

Not necessarily.

In fact, in many respects, the timing is ideal. Because prices have been trending more affordable and there is an overall perception that it is a buyer's market, there are a lot of people out there house-hunting. With so many prospective buyers, people who have taken the initiative and prepared their house for sale will be in a strong position to make the sale that fits best for them, at a price that fully accommodates their future plans. Particularly for those who Active Adults and Baby Boomers looking to make the transition to a condominium-style residential community, the opportunity is there to make a proactive and successful foray into the real estate market.

Here are a few basic home-selling tips to help you put your current house on the market, get a fair price and a speedy sale, and move on to exciting possibilities in your *new* home.

Gain Some Perspective

When preparing to sell your home, try to make sure that you rid yourself of any emotional attachments to maintain an unbiased perspective. If you can make a sincere attempt to see your home as prospective buyers might see it, you will be better prepared to make the kinds of small changes that can make a significant difference to the overall appeal of the property. It is human nature to lose our objectivity a little bit; we live in these homes, and they have become a part of us. But while beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, that beloved rope swing in the front yard might just appear to be a raggedy eyesore to someone else, and potential buyers might not share your appreciation for the moth-eaten carpet that Uncle Bert brought back from Turkey.

Set Realistic Financial Expectations

One of the sticking points for so many people who may be initially hesitant to put their house on the market is the onset of inflated expectations that have seeped into the public consciousness. The real estate boom of a few years ago made real estate transactions seem like opportunities to win the lottery, but that kind of trend was unrealistic and ultimately unsustainable. If you have owned your home for three years or more, you *are* virtually assured of selling your home for more than you bought it for, but don't expect to retire on it. Be realistic. Make a wise pricing decision, and you can sell your home quickly and efficiently still realize a tidy profit.

Work With Some Stagehands

Don't be afraid to hire a trained professional. Someone who can coach you in "staging" a home can be an invaluable asset both before your home is on the market and during the sales process. These are experts at identifying where you can make small adjustments and minor improvements to make a big impact, or even just by putting a few personal items away or reorganizing the furniture to better accentuate the space.

Become a Do-It-Yourselfer

Roll up those sleeves and get busy! Put on a fresh coat of paint, using neutral tones at all times. Make minor repairs, take care of small cleaning projects and fix up those minor blemishes and nagging scuffmarks you've been meaning to take care of. Potential homebuyers have to be able to envision themselves living in your home, and a few trips to your local home improvement center and a little elbow grease is a small price to pay to help make that happen.

Don't Neglect Landscaping

The outside also matters. Your home's exterior and the landscaping that greets prospective buyers can make – or break – a sale. As much as we are told not to judge a book by its cover, it can be difficult to overcome a poor first impression. Avoid an overgrown and out-of-control yard whenever possible. There is no need to emulate the cover of *Home & Garden*, but keeping things neat and trim should be a priority. Don't forget interior landscaping as well; fresh flower arrangements on an end table or dresser can really help brighten up a room.

The Nose Knows

Scent is one of the most powerful and resonant of senses, and people can have unexpectedly strong reaction to smell queues. Air fresheners and cut flowers are always a plus, and smokers and amateur cooks need to be particularly aware of any powerful or pungent odors in their home that may be a potential distraction.

Location, Location, Location

Perhaps most importantly, try to view your home in both regional and local market context. What are people getting who buy homes like yours? What features? What amenities? What school district? Be aware of larger industry trends, but also keep a close eye on *neighborhood* trends. Understanding where your home fits into the bigger picture can not only help you decide on a pricing strategy, but can also help you make the small changes necessary to make your home both more appealing and more profitable.

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