

How To Sell Your Home

By Dan Markham

Selling your home can be a daunting task, requiring numerous professionals taking you through every step. Or, you can go it alone. That's been the case for years, and it's still the same now.

Most Americans choose to go through a local real estate agent. An estimated 85 percent of the real estate transactions occur with the help of an agent.

The National Association of Realtors reports a number of reasons why Americans should choose Realtors when selling their homes. They include:

- Your Realtor can give you up-to-date information on what is happening in the marketplace and the price, financing, terms and conditions of competing properties.
- Your Realtor markets your property to other real estate agents and the public. Often, your Realtor can recommend repairs or cosmetic work that will significantly enhance the salability of your home. Additionally, a Realtor acts as marketing coordinator, disbursing information about your property to other agents through a Multiple Listing Service or other cooperative networks.
- Your Realtor will know when, where and how to advertise your property. The NAR says a misconception exists that advertising sells real estate, though studies indicate that 82 percent of sales are the result of agent contacts through previous clients, referrals, friends, family and personal contacts. Additionally, when a Realtor is employed you do not need to allow strangers into your home, as the Realtor will prescreen candidates and accompany qualified prospects through your home.
- Your Realtor will help you objectively evaluate each buyer's proposal without compromising your marketing position.
- Your Realtor can help close the sale of your home, handling paperwork and taking care of any questions that arise between the initial sales agreement and closing.

The NAR asks home sellers this question. "If you had a \$100,000 income tax problem, would you deal with it without the help of a CPA? If you had a \$100,000 legal question, would you deal with it without the help of an attorney? "Considering the small upside cost and the large downside risk, it would be foolish to consider a deal in real estate without the professional assistance of a Realtor."

Many do. And the opportunities to do so without a real estate professional are growing on the Internet. Websites such as ForSaleByOwner.com and FSBO.com have arisen to aid the home

seller who wants to go it alone. Colby Sambrotto, Chief Operating Officer of ForSaleByOwner.com says websites such as his allow the sellers to handle the three main aspects of home sales: setting a price, marketing and transfer of title.

Traditionally, home sellers had only two avenues to sell on their own: through individual classifieds ads and yard signs. The local paper has long been the source for all types of real estate for sale. Whether for sale by a real estate agent, or for sale by owner, area homes for sale are listed in the local paper. This still remains the single best source for marketing source for marketing your home.

Here are some tips to help you sell your home faster.

- A well-manicured lawn, neatly trimmed shrubs and a clutter-free porch welcome prospects. So does a freshly painted or freshly scrubbed front door. If it's autumn, rake the leaves. If it's winter, shovel the walkways. The fewer obstacles between prospects and the true appeal of your home, the better.
- Clean up the living room, the bathroom, and the kitchen. If your woodwork is scuffed or the paint is fading, consider some minor redecoration. Fresh wallpaper adds charm and value to your property. If you're worried about time, hire professional cleaners or painters to get your house ready. Remember, prospects would rather see how great your home really looks than hear how great it could look "with a little work."
- Dripping water rattles the nerves, discolors sinks, and suggests faulty or worn-out plumbing. Burned out bulbs or faulty wiring leave prospects in the dark. Don't let little problems detract from what's right with your home.
- If cabinets or closet doors stick in your home, you can be sure they will also stick in a prospect's mind.
- Homeowners learn to live with all kinds of self-set booby traps: roller skates on the stairs, extension cords, slippery throw rugs and low hanging overhead lights. Make your residence as non-perilous as possible for visitors.
- Organize and clean out your closets and storage space. It helps them appear open and large. This is a good time to rent a mini-warehouse space to store things you don't need for a while.
- Bathrooms sell homes. Check and repair damaged or unsightly caulking in the tubs and showers. For added allure, display your best towels, mats, and shower curtains.
- For a spacious look in the bedrooms, get rid of excess furniture. Colorful bedspreads and fresh curtains are a must.
- Turn on all your lights - both inside and outside - when showing your home in the evening.

- When a showing is scheduled have a minimum amount of people in the home. Plan to be away from your home if your real estate agent is showing the home.
- Watch Your Pets. Keep them out of sight when showing your home

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