

Select Sellers

Thinking About Selling Your Home?

Now that you have taken the time to find a professional that truly listens, here are some simple steps that will help your home sell faster and at a higher price than one that is run down..

Exterior

- Remove peeling paint and replace with a fresh coat.
- Clear gutters and downspouts.
- Ensure good exterior lighting and all walkway lights and front door lanterns are working.
- Remove moss from the roof.

Yard

- Mow and trim grass; re-seed and fertilize where necessary.
- Prune all overgrown trees and shrubs.
- Remove or replace dead or diseased plants, shrubs and trees.
- Clean grease and oil stains from driveway.
- Weed flower beds.

Decks and Patios

- Paint or stain worn areas in wood decks.
- Remove grass growing in concrete cracks; sweep off debris from shrubs and trees.
- Clean all fencing and make sure it's secure; replace missing slats or posts.

Front Door

- Polish hardware on the door until it shines, or replace with a new set.
- Add a fresh coat of paint to get rid of nicks.
- Clean the glass on the storm door; make certain the screen is secure.
- Make sure the doorbell operates properly and there are no squeaks when the door opens and closes.
- Add some color to the entry area, to make it feel welcoming to buyers.

Windows

- Clean all windows - inside and out.
- If needed, add a fresh coat of paint to the window trims and sills.
- Make sure all windows open and close easily.
- Replace cracked windowpanes and those with broken seals.
- Make sure window screens are secure; replace any screens with holes or tears.

Entry

- Clean entryway floors and area rugs.
- Downsize clutter in entry closet to give the appearance of spaciousness.
- Double-check entry lighting to make sure it is operating.

Living/Family/Dining Rooms

- Give the room a fresh coat of paint, if necessary. Repaint any wood work that is worn or chipped.

- Repair cracks and holes in ceilings and walls. Make sure all wallpaper is secure.
- Clean draperies and blinds, make sure they open and close, and open them to maximize the light.
- Wash windows, steam clean carpets, clean rugs and wood flooring. Remove stains and odors.
- Position furniture to showcase the size and space of the room.
- Remove and replace attached items that you wish to keep, such as draperies, chandeliers, etc.
- Put away toys and hobby supplies, remove extra magazines and books from tables.

Kitchen

- Make sure countertops and sinks are clean and stain-free.
- Fix dripping faucets.
- Organize pantry and cupboards so they appear clean, neat and spacious.
- Make sure the refrigerator and freezer are defrosted and free of odors.
- Clean the oven and cook-top thoroughly.

Bathrooms

- Make sure sinks, tubs, showers and countertops are clean and free of stains.
- Repair any leaky faucets.
- Remove grout and soap stains from tile.
- Replace any missing or cracked tiles or grout.
- Make sure all joints are caulked.
- Make sure all fixtures, including heat lamps and exhaust fans are operating.
- Install a new shower curtain.
- Store all supplies, like toilet paper, shampoo bottles and cleansers out of sight.

Bedrooms

- Repair cracks in ceiling and walls.
- Apply a fresh coat of paint if necessary.
- Make sure wallpaper is secure.
- Clean draperies and blinds, open them to maximize light.
- Put away toys, clothes.
- Neatly make up the beds.

Basement

- Remove any evidence of water penetration or dampness.
- Get rid of musty odors.
- Clean furnace and drains.
- Make sure light fixtures are operating.
- Arrange storage area in a neat and organized manner.
- Sweep floor.
- Make sure the stairway handle is secure.

Tidy Extras

- Plant flowers to brighten a walkway and enrich the entry.
- Remove any indoor houseplants that are brown or losing their leaves.
- Remove all fixer cars, campers and boats from the property.
- Discard the clutter of magazines on the coffee and end tables.
- Hide or get rid of worn-out throw pillows.

- Replace shower curtains and invest in a matching set of towels in the bathrooms.
- At night, turn on the porch light and outdoor lighting. Buyers often drive by homes they are considering at various times of day.

This mini makeover will give your home the best possible presentation when shown to potential buyers. Once you are ready, we will do a final walk-through to make sure no details have been overlooked. One of the luxury services that I offer could be as simple as taking photos of your home, to help you see it through the buyer's eyes. This is often the easiest way to take a new point of view and point out items that may need to be repaired, replaced or made just a little more tidy.

Showing Your Home

Once your home is ready to show, we will write up the listing agreement and I will begin marketing your home to its fullest potential. Buyers feel most comfortable asking their agent candid questions when the seller is not there. If possible, leave the home when the buyers are present so they can envision themselves living there. Other helpful tips presenting your home in the best light include:

- Remove your pets. Take them with you or keep them penned in the yard or garage.
- Open shades and curtains to let the natural light in.
- Turn on enough lights so the home is well lit.
- Remove clutter from tables and bookshelves. Neatness makes the rooms seem larger.
- Put away items in the yard like garden tools, bicycles and toys.
- Light a fire in the fireplace to create a cozy atmosphere.
- Grind up part of a lemon in the disposal or place a drop of vanilla on a light bulb to add a fresh and welcoming scent in the kitchen.
- Keep radios and TVs off, or on a low volume.
- Keep money and other valuables, as well as prescription drugs, out of sight.

The Agreement.

Now that we have found a buyer for your home, I will work with you through the purchase and sale agreement. This is the contract between you and the buyer for your property that outlines the specific details of your property transfer. Some key components that we will discuss are Earnest Money, Default, Purchase Price, Closing Dates, Possession Dates, Financing, Inspections, Pro-rations, Contingency Addendums, Special Condition Addendums, Agency Disclosure and Property Disclosure. Remember, each transaction is different and the terms will vary on every offer, but typically they will consist of the following basics:

- Financing Addendum
- Inspection Addendum
- Conditions and Disclosure Addendum
- Earnest Money Receipt
- Agency Disclosure
- Contingency Addendum - when appropriate
- Addendum outlining special conditions
- Lead-based Paint, Smoke Detector, Farm Proximity Notification - when appropriate

In most transactions, once a buyer has decided to make an offer on your home, it will be contingent upon a professional inspection of the entire property - including improvements. What the inspector is looking for goes beyond the cosmetics, they are looking at the home's general systems and structure to ensure everything is operating properly. A standard inspector will review the home's heating and cooling system; interior plumbing and electrical systems; roof, attic and visible insulation; walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors; foundation, basement and visible structure. The inspector will also look for cracks in cement walls, water stains that indicate leakage and indication of wood rot. No home is perfect, and if major problems are found, I will help negotiate you through the process.

As an experienced seller's agent, I offer customized tools that help organize these crucial deadlines and information to create a successful transaction.

What does it cost to sell?

Whether you decide to use my luxury service, use a discount brokerage or sell your home yourself, it will cost money. One of the benefits of my service, is that I will estimate the costs of selling your home for you. I go one step further than most other agents. Before you even list your home for sale, I will provide you with a range to help you determine realistically what earnings you can expect to retain in the sale.

The Settlement.

During the negotiation state of the transaction, a mutually agreed-upon date for closing is determined. "Closing" is when you and the buyer sign all the paperwork and pay your share of the settlement fees, and the documents are recorded.

Settlement obligations vary widely due to specific contract language, local laws and customs. Prior to closing, the closing agent (usually an escrow or title company or attorney) will complete a detailed settlement statement for both buyer and seller. As your luxury service agent, I assist you in understanding which of the following typical settlement fees apply to you.

Seller Receives:

- Utility deposits held by gas, electric, cable, telephone and other companies
- Prorated portion of pre-paid property taxes
- Prorated mortgage interest from payments made during the current month
- Fuel rebate for oil and propane remaining in storage tank
- Net proceeds after seller's share of expenses are paid

Seller Pays:

- Brokerage commission
- One-half of escrow of legal fees paid to the attorney or escrow company
- Document preparation fees
- Recording and notary fees
- Title search and title insurance
- Local transfer taxes
- State Taxes
- Repairs or inspections the seller has agreed to pay for

There are actually three final phases to closing; signing, recording and possession.

Signing is when all the documents have been received by the escrow company and the seller and buyer are called to schedule an appointment. The parties come in to sign the final documents, which are then notarized so you will need to bring a piece or two of photo ID with you. Once all the documents are signed, they go back to the buyer's lender for review if the property was financed.

Recording is next. The lender will review the final documents, borrower's finances and run the last credit check to ensure they are still able to make the purchase. They will make sure that all the conditions of the loan are met, and once satisfied the funds will be released and transferred to the seller. Escrow will send a courier to the courthouse to record the transaction. Once the recording numbers are released, escrow will call the parties to let them know the transaction has closed. It can take several business days between signing and recording.

Possession is when the home becomes yours. The possession date is determined in the purchase and sale contract. This is the date that the buyers actually take possession of the property, get the keys and move-in. Typically, possession occurs on closing or some date designated after closing.

The process of selling your home is much more complicated than just finding a buyer. Your home is normally one of the largest investments you will ever have. You need a professional who not only makes the process as easy as possible, but who cares about your future. As an experienced agent, I offer customized tools that help organize the crucial deadlines and information to create a successful transaction.