

Step by Step Guide to Selling

Step 1 - Realtor Interviews and the Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

There are hundreds of critical mistakes you can make when selling your home, however there is a universal cure for them all . . . qualifying and choosing the right agent. Ask your agent lots of questions to ensure their motives are in the right place and they have the ability to properly represent you. Furthermore, you need to find out if you are comfortable with this person's style of business.

In addition to an interview with an agent, have them look at your house and give you an idea of value. The agent will then assess the other homes in the area that are comparable to yours, make financial adjustments for the differences and give you an approximate value. This process is called a CMA.

Step 2 - Document & Material Preparation

In order to sell, there are certain documents and materials that you should obtain. These include an updated survey of your property called a Real Property Report (you likely have one from when you bought the home), any relevant repair receipts (such as a new roof or furnace), any home warranty documents, a spare set of keys, relevant rental or lease agreements, etc. If you live in a condo, pull all the documents you have received from the board or management company. Your Realtor should help you with the rest.

Step 3 - Home Preparation

If there are major repairs that need to be made, consider fixing them before you sell, or offering a credit to a buyer for the repair. If you try to hide it or don't address the issue, then in the buyer's mind it will drastically reduce the quality and price of the property . . . "If this is wrong, then what else is wrong". In terms of a simple cleaning, the key is to de-clutter rooms (knick-knacks and excess furniture), and make sure the house looks clean and well maintained.

Step 4 - The Listing Documents

When you sign the listing documents, be sure that you understand you are signing a legal contract. Your Realtor should clearly explain each clause and the implications. When does the contract begin and how does the contract end? What are my rights and responsibilities within the agreement? Most standard contracts are written to protect you (the seller) and the brokerage as well.

Step 5 - Marketing

Be sure your agent mentions all the features of the house that convinced you to initially make your purchase, because other buyers will likely feel the same way. Look over the marketing materials and if you have any suggestions for additional information, feel free to let us know. Any house will sell if the value exists or is perceived in the mind of the buyer . . . this is the key.

Step 6 - Showings

No one likes to be forced out of their home, but it is extremely uncomfortable for a buyer if you are present during a showing. If possible, make arrangements with a friend, neighbor or relative to escape during showings. The more flexible you can be the better, however if there are specific times that will not work, or if you want a break, simply tell your Realtor. We are all human and buyers will understand that the home will not be accessible 24/7.

Step 7 - Strategy Assessment

After a couple of weeks on the market, we should have enough feedback to assess the current marketing strategy, and it may be time to make some adjustments. This may include changing the marketing medium (newspaper vs websites, etc), the features that are focused on, price, agent incentives, etc. Your agent should remain proactive so the listing doesn't go stale.

Step 8 - Offer & Negotiation

When someone decides to write an offer, you will be contacted by your Realtor and a time will be set to present it to you. The agent bringing the offer may want to present in person, however you ultimately have the choice. After some negotiations, signatures and initials will be required to finalize the agreement. The goal in a successful negotiation is to come to a win-win solution. Remember, people will pay your price if they feel they are getting the value somewhere else.

Step 9 - Conditions

It is most common for an offer to have some sort of condition on it. This might be that the buyers agree to purchase your house as long as they can get a home inspection first, or subject to their financing being approved. A due date is usually between 7 – 10 days and your house will be considered "conditionally sold" during this time. The shorter the condition dates the better, but it is important to give the buyers a realistic amount of time to save the headache of extensions on dates.

Step 10 - Preparation for Possession

Once the conditions are removed, the deal is considered "firm" and you can prepare for possession. You will need to book an appointment with the lawyer (usually a date about a week before possession), and fulfill any part of the contract that you agreed to. If you said you would paint, clean, or something else, then this must be done before possession to avoid a contract breach.

Step 11 - Closing and Possession

Possession typically happens at 12:00pm unless otherwise agreed to in writing. It is best to have your furniture moved on the previous day as some people like to get in a couple hours early to do a walk through (this is not a requirement and is simply a show of good faith). Keys do not get released to the new owners until noon and only if the money has been transferred to your lawyer (they will notify the Realtors). Typically your cheque will be ready a couple days after, and if you are buying a new home, the lawyers will handle any money transfers that need to happen.