



# Buying in a **SELLERS' MARKET**

## Find the right agent

Look for availability. Sellers markets move very quickly. When choosing a buyer's agent in a seller's market, note how responsive the agent is from the very first phone call. Is your call returned promptly? Does he follow up quickly on any questions you have? If you end up competing with several other buyers for a home, your agent's responsiveness will become crucial. You'll need to respond quickly to counter-offers before another buyer beats you to the punch.

Look for experience. You'll want an agent who's a go-getter and knows how to structure offers that get sellers' attention. These attributes are common among agents who have had a hand in many deals. When interviewing agents, ask how many previous deals she's closed, and ask for examples of how she's gone the extra mile to get her clients' offers noticed.

## Be flexible

Discuss forgoing contingencies. In a seller's market, sellers will be looking for the deals with the fewest possible stumbling blocks. Contingencies for inspections, mortgages and appraisals all represent potential problems, from a seller's standpoint. While you may not be able to reasonably forgo all of those contingencies, leaving off one or two might give your offer the edge over other buyers.

Be willing to do it yourself. If you put in an offer and your inspection turns up minor issues, such as a leaky faucet or squeaky front door,

- consider doing the work yourself. In a seller's market, even asking for small, relatively inexpensive repairs could make your offer less attractive than others. If you're capable of doing small jobs yourself, consider it a small price to pay to nab the right home.

**In a seller's market, buyers are at a disadvantage by definition. Many properties in a hot market will receive several offers. That means you have to make yours stand out from the crowd. While the price, terms and other details of your offer will be crucial to closing the deal, you'll also need a seasoned, professional agent on your side.**

## Be prepared

Set up notifications. In very hot markets, homes sometimes sell in hours. Know about newly listed homes as soon as they hit the market with automatic email notifications for homes that meet your specified criteria. Ask your agent about the services offered by his firm or the local listing service.

Get pre-approved. Getting pre-approved for a loan is an absolute must in a seller's market. You can bet that many other potential buyers will have done this, giving the seller assurances that they are financially prepared to follow through on the deal. Do the same.

Be available. Don't wait until the weekend to see a home that piques your interest. If you do, you'll likely be at a disadvantage to buyers who are prepared to move more quickly.

- Put your best offer forward. Talk through the offer with your agent, and know how much you're prepared to go up on the offer price and how many contingencies you're willing to forgo. Talking it through will allow you to make an aggressive offer and be quick to respond to counter offers.