

Consumer How to SELL YOUR HOME FAST

If you want to sell your home quickly, there's no super-secret formula. While every neighborhood and property is unique, following these simple, tried-and-true steps will make it much more likely to see a "sold" sign in your front yard as soon as possible.

PRICING

The most important step is to price your home correctly at the outset, and a good real estate agent can help you with that.

Price it too low and you'll leave money on the table. Price it too high, though, and your home will take longer to sell — or won't sell at all — because savvy buyers won't take it seriously.

To hit the pricing bull's eye, you've got to know what is comparable in your market. A good realtor will be able to pull data about recent comps, typically from the last six months, for sales of homes that are similar to yours.

The closer your price is to homes that are actually selling, the more likely you are to get a quick sale.

STAGING

Staging your home is sometimes thought of as an elaborate process that involves redecorating and renting beautiful furniture to make your interior look its best, but it doesn't always have to be that intense.

In its simplest terms, staging is about presenting your home in the most appealing way possible. The goal is to get buyers to imagine putting their own things in your home, so basic steps like clearing out clutter and removing your personal photos can help their imagination go to work.

PHOTOGRAPHY

For most buyers, the first impression of your house won't be made in person. It will be made through photos of your home they see online or in print ads.

That's why it's critical to have good, quality photographs of your home.

In some markets, especially for high-end houses, that might mean having a professional photographer shoot images of your home when it's staged at its best.

For most homes, though, a good, thoughtful realtor or their assistant could do the job. The key is to find someone who knows enough about both photography and real estate to show your property in its best light, inside

and out.

The more clear, well-lit pictures that show off the beauty and features of your home, the more buyers are likely to take the next step and schedule a showing.

THE REALTOR

Picking the right realtor is absolutely key to selling your house quickly.

Not only should you feel good about them personally — knowing you can communicate well with them, trust them and feel good about them listing your home — but you should find an agent who will work their hardest to market and sell your home quickly.

Ask them about their background, how many similar homes to yours they have sold in recent years and what sets them apart as a realtor. You should also look for examples of the agent's listings and make sure they'll quickly add your home to the MLS with good photos and descriptions of your property.

SPREAD THE WORD

While your real estate agent will take the lead in selling your house, there are also some steps you can do personally to help get the word out about your home.

Let your friends, family and neighbors know that your home is on the market. You can share photos with your Facebook friends and do personal networking to help raise awareness about your home's strong points that potential buyers might enjoy.

You never know where the buyer might come from, so spread the word far and wide.

OPEN HOUSES

It's a good idea to schedule some open houses to let potential buyers and local real estate agents tour your home.

You should make your house look its best, obviously, but also take steps to make your house seem comfortable, cozy and homey when people arrive. Make sure the house smells good, perhaps by baking some fresh cookies or treats for visitors who walk in.

FIX IT UP

Finally, you've got to pay attention to details to make sure your home is in tip-top shape cosmetically.

This doesn't necessarily mean you have to spend a lot of money. A little paint and elbow grease can go a long way toward sprucing up most homes.

You'll want to make sure the gardens, flower beds and other landscaping are neat, clean and free of weeds. You should also make a checklist of simple handyman tasks to complete, like replacing burned-out light bulbs, making sure doors and hinges shut properly and don't squeak, and removing stains from your carpet.

Your realtor will be able to help you figure out what needs to be done. They should have the experience and insight to see your home through the eyes of potential buyers, letting you know any steps you can take to improve your chances of a quick sale.

In the end, selling a house quickly takes a lot of work and some specialized knowledge. But it's made much easier when you find the right realtor and take some initiative to find your buyer as fast as possible.

