



HOME SELLER'S HANDBOOK

The following information, ideas, and suggestions will help you view your property through the eyes of potential buyers... I am prepared to answer all of your questions and show how you and I can market your home effectively.

Preparing To Sell

Clean Up, Repair, Clear Out

Remember that the actual cash value of your property is the price that someone will pay in today's real estate economy.

The first step is for me to walk through your entire property with you. Do not hesitate to ask for guidance concerning improvements that could be made prior to showing your home to potential buyers. Staging your home is critical!

Examine the exterior carefully to ensure that lawns, trees and shrubs are well manicured and look healthy. Add blooming flowers here and there for that little extra color. Keep in mind that buyers will register their first impression as they drive up to your property. This is "curb appeal" and it's critical. Many a buyer will keep on driving based on their first impression of your home while still in their car.

Mentally place yourself in the buyer's shoes as you enter your home. Does the front door need a fresh coat of paint? Does the hardware or mailbox need replacing? The buyer often makes snap decisions while waiting for the door to be opened!

As you enter, is it odor free? Do the walls need painting? Are the windows and window coverings clean and bright? Does your carpet need cleaning or replacement? Do all of your kitchen appliances operate properly?

And what about the "unseen" items that a buyer's inspector may find such as plumbing leaks or drips, slow flowing toilets or sinks, and electrical outlets that don't work? Home inspections can be deal-breakers. Eliminate as many hurdles to an accepted offer as possible. Disclose any major issues with the property in advance.

Remove everything possible from your closets and storage spaces, even if you have to pack them for moving. See the link to PODS®, a great way to store excess furniture and goods in anticipation of moving! Spacious and tidy closets and cupboards are attractive to prospective buyers.

The same is true for each room in the house. Is there too much furniture? Too many personal treasures sitting around? Too many large plants? Toys? These items tend to visually decrease the size of your rooms.

With a little preparation, you may very well increase the value of your property!

Establishing the Asking Price

The Pricing Pyramid

The higher you price your property, the fewer the people who will come to see it. The first four weeks are critical. Over-pricing to “test” the waters may eliminate the very buyer who is the perfect match, but isn’t shopping in that higher range.

After reviewing recent sale prices of comparable homes in your area, you’re ready to set a fair asking price for your property. Remember that the money spent upgrading the kitchen and the custom shutters in the den do not necessarily equal a higher asking price than what the market currently entertains. Buyers are more sophisticated in comparing properties than sellers because they have no emotional attachments to the properties. After all, it wasn’t their hard-earned dollars that installed the lovely spa in your yard...to a buyer; it’s just a spa.

The bottom line: Set a higher price and play the waiting game; or set a realistic price and prepare to move! Statistics show that the longer a home sits on the market, the less the final selling price. Don’t lose time and money with an over-priced property!

Estimating Net Proceeds

I will be happy to discuss with you the types of closing costs you can expect in order to sell your home. Remember, in Massachusetts, a Stamp Tax is collected by the state in the amount of \$4.56 per thousand of the property sold. Example: Selling Price of Home is \$400,000. Stamp Tax Due is: \$1824. You will need to provide a Quit Claim Deed drawn up by an attorney to convey to the new buyers.

Discharge of any mortgages, lines of credit, equity loans and the recording of said documents will be charged to you as well.

Finally, the commission owed to the brokerage will be subtracted from your final net proceeds. This is all outlined on your HUD Settlement Statement.

Marketing Your Property

The Listing Agreement

When you have set your price and are ready to sell, I will help you complete a Listing Agreement. This agreement authorizes me as your RE/MAX Realty Pros agent to market your property under certain conditions, including but not limited to terms, price, commission and time period of the listing. When signed by both parties, this Listing Agreement becomes a contract between you and RE/MAX Realty Pros.

The Marketing Process

I will now actively begin to show your home to as many real estate agents and prospective buyers as possible. Full-scale marketing programs will ensue including Internet and print media.

The single most important place to promote the sale of your property is through the Multiple Listing Service. Information about your property will be entered into the MLS computer data bank for immediate access by other agents. Approximately 60 percent of all buyers come from referrals between brokers and agents.

A “For Sale” sign will be displayed upon your property and I will create a feature sheet for agents and buyers. At least 20 percent of all buyers come from advertising, signs and other promotional efforts made by me.

We may consider holding an “open house” at your property in an effort to attract extra attention to your home. Be aware that less than 2% of buyers actually come from attending an Open House.

Additionally, your property may be promoted in local classified advertising sections of magazines or newspapers.

The primary advertising is through the Internet. My website will feature your listing in addition to being syndicated to a multitude a related sites including Realtor.com, Yahoo, Boston.com, Trulia, Homes.com and many more. A visual tour will be created for your home and added to each of these sites. This is how consumers shop first—online. I ensure that your property receives the most online exposure possible!

Showing Your Home to Buyers

While Your Property Is On the Market

Keep it neat! A clean, neat home allows buyers to see the “home” itself when previewing your property. Clutter tends to divert attention away from the most saleable features of your home. Dirty dishes, unmade beds, and unkempt rooms leave buyers with a negative impression of your property.

Be sure that all pets are securely closed within their cages or pet yards since some buyers have an aversion to animals or are allergic.

Whether or not you are there when your home is previewed, the sales agent should leave a business card so that I will be able to make an inquiry about the showing. Also, an online feedback program is offered by me to allow you to receive current feedback on your property enabling us both to make informed decisions about your home.

When Buyers Come

Avoid participating in the conversation between the agent and the buyer. When real estate professionals arrive with buyers, graciously greet them and excuse yourself. If asked a specific question about your home, answer as briefly as possible and let the agent continue the conversation. Buyers appreciate the comfort of being able to compliment features or verbalize objections without being overheard by the owner.

And if an open house is scheduled, arrange to be away during that time. Any pets should be removed from the property or appropriately caged. Many a barking dog has scared away potential buyers at the front door!

Also, regrettably in this age in which we live, I must advise you to secure all your valuables, sensitive papers as well as prescription medication.

The Offer

Presentation

When a buyer signs an offer to purchase your home, either I or the buyer’s agent will present the offer to you in person or via phone, depending upon your availability. My personal preference is to always conduct face to face conversations when discussing such important matters.

Qualifications

The written Offer to Purchase should include detailed information about the buyer’s offer. Together we will review the price, the amount of earnest money deposit, the proposed closing and occupancy date, any contingencies, and the buyer’s ability to qualify for a loan.

Acceptance

If possible, your decision should be made following the presentation. Normally, the offer has a time limit of 24-48 hours in which to respond. You have several options in responding to the offer:

1. Accept the offer as written
2. Make a “counter offer”
3. Reject the offer

When you and the buyer have agreed to all terms and conditions of the offer, you have both signed the document, and the buyers have been notified of your acceptance, the document becomes a valid, legal and binding sales contract.

Inspections

Home inspections paid for by the buyer are scheduled to occur within a 10 day period (or sooner) and may include home, pest, radon, lead, and mold. If you own a pool, they may request a separate inspection opportunity for the pool.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Prior to closing, you will need to contact the fire department approximately a month in advance to conduct a smoke and carbon monoxide detector inspection for a fee. This original document must be given to the attorney at the closing table. I am happy to answer questions you may have about this process.

Title V

If you have a septic system, you will need to supply a Title V certificate of compliance prior to closing. It's advisable to have this process completed prior to putting your home on the market so any potential problems can be addressed. This is not an inexpensive process. The certificate is normally good for a two year period.

Appraisal

The buyer's mortgage lender will order an appraisal (buyer's cost) to establish that the value of the property meets the criteria for the financing they are seeking. Again, it is very important to have priced your home appropriately in today's market.

The Offer to Purchase Contract

Normally, within 10 days, a Purchase and Sale Contract is signed outlining in detail the contract to purchase with any agreements between the parties including the dates to secure the financing by the buyers. This is signed following the completion of all inspections with an additional deposit known as "earnest funds" accompanying the document. Earnest funds can range widely from 1-10% depending on what the Offer to Purchase agreement has outlined. The earnest funds are held in escrow by RE/MAX Realty Pros as listing agency. The funds are dispersed at closing to the appropriate parties by the closing attorney. This is a legal binding document. You may wish to retain legal counsel to review the document on your behalf.

Closing the Contract

The day prior to closing, a final walk through may be conducted to insure that the property condition is as outlined in the Purchase and Sale.

At the closing or settlement, you and the buyer will each have completed the conditions and met the terms pursuant to your contractual agreement and the title to the property will be conveyed to the buyer. You will provide the buyer a "Quit Claim Deed" drawn up by an attorney to convey the property to the new owners. This usually costs around \$150 on average.

Always bring your checkbook, just in case there are minor adjustments at the table. Don't worry; I and the closing attorney will have helped you through the myriad steps of closing, including handling of the many details.

Following the closing, you will receive a final HUD settlement statement for your records that clearly illustrates all fees paid by you to close the contract.

QUESTIONS??

I am always available to answer any question that might arise!