



## Home Prep Checklist

### Fix Defects:

All cosmetic defects should be fixed before your home is listed. This includes paint touch-ups inside and out, replacing broken tiles or dirty carpets and making any necessary improvements to landscaping.

### De-Clutter/De-Personalize:

Knickknacks on bookshelves and kitchen and bathrooms the countertops should be completely cleared away – including the blender and toaster oven! Even closets and cabinets should look like a model home – with shoes lined up and jars neatly stacked. Remove all picture frames and personal items from sight. Consider storing furnishings that make a room look smaller.

### Check Curb Appeal:

Clear the sidewalks, mow the lawn, put outdoor toys or tools away and make sure your house number can be easily read from the street.

### Make it Sparkle:

Clean your home as if [insert name of person you either fear or revere the most] was coming to visit. Everything from the floors to the ceiling fans to the windows inside and out should be sparkling clean. If you have pets, your potential buyers shouldn't be able to see any signs of them. Display fresh flowers or bake cookies for that added touch.

## Six Steps To Selling Your Home

Knowing how to market your home will help you get the highest price in the shortest amount of time. The better you market your home, the more offers you'll get. The more offers you get, the more choices you'll have when it comes to both price and terms.

### Step 1. Set Your Goals

The most important aspect of marketing your home effectively – besides having a great real estate agent – is pricing it right. Your agent should begin this process by conducting a Comparative Market Analysis of your area. This comparison to other homes for sale in your area, as well as the overall market, the condition of your home and any time constraints, will help you and your agent set the right price. *Research shows that homes priced just 3% higher than their market value take longer to sell.*

### Step 2. Prepare Your Home

Your home should be in condition to sell the day it goes on the market. Has your lawn been scorched by the summer heat? Is your garage so cluttered with tools that there's no room for your cars? Who was the President the last time your house was painted? If you don't remember, then it's probably time for a touch-up. Clear all of the counter surfaces of clutter and fix cosmetic defects such as cracks, stains, broken tiles or dirty carpets before you place it on the market. Make any necessary changes to landscaping so that your home is inviting from the outside. Condition alone will often prompt faster buying decisions. Since first impressions are critical, you'll want to get suggestions from your agent on how you can make your home more appealing to buyers.

### Step 3. Spread the Word

Now that your home is ready to sell, your real estate agent will set up a marketing strategy specifically designed for your property. It's time to start the buzz. Listing your house on the MLS and the Internet is certainly important, but there are other ways to get the word out, including signage and flyers, open houses, advertising, agent-to-agent referrals, social media and personal networking. Your agent will use a combination of these tactics to bring the most qualified buyers to your door. When they do arrive, you and your pets should ideally be somewhere else.

### Step 4. Consider Offers

When you receive an offer, here are all the areas of the offer you and your agent will want to review together: Offer price, Financing arrangements (make sure they're already pre-approved), Option period, Option money, Earnest money, Inspection rights and any requested repair allowances, Home warranty request, Title company responsible for the closing, Appliances and furnishings that convey, Proposed move-in date, List of fees the seller will be responsible for, and any Contingencies.

If you're happy with the terms, you'll sign the contract, which is now legally binding. If you decide to change any of the terms, your agent will work with you to draft a counter-offer. Or if the offer is too far from the goals you originally set out to achieve, you can reject it entirely (the prospective buyer may come back with a better offer, so don't count them out just yet). Most offers will require some negotiating, and your agent will help you navigate through this bargaining process while protecting your best interests.

### Step 5. Prepare to Close

Your real estate agent will help you prepare to close, working with any service providers necessary, such as appraisers, survey companies or inspectors, and keeping in touch with the buyer's agent to make sure everything is proceeding as planned. Once the option period is over, it's time to pack up your boxes and schedule your move. This is typically the least fun part of the process, but hopefully you're excited about where you're heading. A few days before closing, it's time to move out so the buyer's agent can complete one last walk-through. Your agent will make sure all of the necessary documents are ready to sign.

### Step 6. Transfer Ownership

On your scheduled close date, you and your real estate agent will meet with the title company to transfer ownership of the property to the buyer. Sometimes the buyers and sellers complete this process separately, and sometimes it's handled all together (the latter not being quite as awkward as it may sound). If you have any questions, or any last minute issues arise, your agent is there to ensure a smooth transaction. Once you've closed, you'll want to hand over the keys and any applicable owner's manuals or warranties and either cancel or transfer monthly utilities such as electricity, gas and water.