



## HOME SELLERS, BUYERS: START PLANNING NOW

For homeowners who are considering selling their homes, it is not too early to start preparing for the spring selling season, which is traditionally the real estate industry's busiest season.

Whether you're thinking of putting your home on the market or planning to buy a home, right now may be the ideal time to meet with a real estate professional who understands the market to discuss your options.

For home sellers in particular, there is much to prepare for, and a real estate professional can help you prioritize and establish a plan of action. A strategic sales and marketing plan is essential to engage active buyers. That plan should include an effective pricing strategy, home presentation suggestions and a comprehensive approach to online marketing.

A competitive market analysis that includes a review of current inventory, recent comparable sales prices and other data is critical information that a real estate licensee can provide. In addition to providing valuable marketing data, a knowledgeable sales associate can also make recommendations on how to prepare your home for maximum appeal and to better position your property on leading real estate websites and portals in the industry. Below are a few practical tips:

**As a seller, focus on curb appeal:** The outside of a house is the first thing potential buyers see and it is important to make a good first impression. If the "curb appeal" is strong, people will want to see what is inside. To improve a home's appearance, consider mowing the lawn, trimming the trees, cutting back overgrowth and possibly adding some pots or containers of colorful plants and flowers. Also, properly store away gardening equipment, bicycles and other toys. The front door should have a "welcome home" feeling so consider adding a fresh coat of paint on the front door – it can work wonders on making that good first impression.

**Remove the clutter:** Homebuyers tend to show less interest in an untidy home. The two most important rooms in a buyer's mind are the kitchen and bathrooms. Make certain these rooms are sparkling clean and show well. If necessary, re-caulk tubs, showers and sinks. It is also helpful to clear out overflowing closets and avoid displaying too many family collectibles and photos. Consider renting a storage unit to store some furniture to free up space in other living areas of the home. Buyers need to imagine themselves living in the home. By neatly displaying and making all available space accessible, the seller affords the buyer a suitable opportunity to look towards the future.

**Make Repairs:** Homebuyers generally expect all features in a home to operate safely and efficiently. It may be beneficial to repair any faulty or outdated electrical outlets and wiring, furnaces and water heaters, along with leaking roofs and other plumbing concerns, prior to putting a house on the market. Potential buyers may also react negatively to holes in window screens, broken windows and burned-out light bulbs.

**Minimize odors:** Make sure to take out the trash, change the cat's litter box frequently, and open the windows to eliminate cooking odors. Another helpful tip is to clean drapes and bathe pets. It is important that the home smells nicely and you should consider adding fresh flowers, scented candles, or freshly baked cookies which can help create a pleasant environment.

**Work with your sales associate:** Being objective about your environment is not always easy and you should utilize your real estate sales professional to gain an independent determination of what actions you should consider to make your home more appealing. Sales associates have the experience and knowledge to help identify potential problem areas and/or suggest some modifications that can help attract more potential buyers.

**Preparation for buyers:** Homebuyers have to do their homework as well and obtaining financing is generally a major priority. With limited inventory on the market in most areas, those buyers who come to the negotiating table pre-approved and ready to make an offer are likely to have stronger bargaining power.

A real estate professional can walk you through the home-buying process and help you identify homes for sale that are in your price range. Real estate licensees can help you research the markets you are interested in, prepare and present offers, negotiate price and other terms and then close the transaction.

I look forward to the spring selling season and ensuring that all of my clients and customers have an effective plan in place to achieve their real estate goals. If you're thinking about buying or selling a home, now is the time to contact me.

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