

A recent Realty Times article discussed 10 ways you can maximize your home's selling potential:

The real estate market is now in transition, and gone are the days of quick sales and bidding wars. Cooling sales are a problem for any homeowner looking to sell his or her home. Homes are not selling as quickly as in recent years, which is good news for buyers but bad news for sellers. We're also seeing recent sharp increases in value leveling off, but not falling, which is good for real estate buyers and sellers. These changes, however, mean that sellers will have to work harder and compete more to get the best price and a quick sale. Here are several ways you can get a leg up on the competition.

1. **Dump the junk.**

Less clutter in your home makes it look bigger, roomier and cleaner. Go through your home and make piles of items, such as "garbage," "charity" and "maybe." Throw away anything useless, give away anything that may still have use and seriously consider the maybes, such as how long it's been since you've used the item and whether it's broke or damaged.

2. **Price it right.**

A home that is priced well above the local market or above similar homes will not sell quickly, or possibly at all. Work with your agent to price your home correctly the first time.

3. **Find the best.**

Having a good real estate agent or broker can make all the difference in the world when the market becomes more competitive. An agent who knows how to market and advertise your property, and who has good experience and connections, will be an invaluable asset. Interview real estate agents and ask for references.

4. **Require a marketing plan.**

When you decide upon an agent, make sure that he or she develops a customized marketing plan that fits you and your property. The standard approach may not work for every property.

5. **Change the deal.**

If your home isn't selling within a decent time period, consider changing the deal instead of lowering the price. For example, instead of lowering your asking price from \$500,000 to \$480,000, keep the \$500,000 but offer a 2 percent "seller contribution" to help pay for closing costs. This saves you money (you pay \$10,000 in closing costs rather than a \$20,000 price reduction) and is very appealing to many buyers.

6. **Get a HELOC.**

Having a home equity line of credit (HELOC) in place can help you, even if you're not planning to sell your home for several years. This way, you'll have funds available if you want to buy another home while your current home is on the market. Be aware, however, that if your current home doesn't sell in a reasonable time period, you may be saddled with multiple mortgage payments.

7. Fix it.

Buyers will ask for a home inspection. You'll save time by getting a preliminary home inspection yourself and making repairs before putting the house on the market. However, if a repair is requested from a potential buyer, it may be cheaper than finding a new buyer.

8. Ask for feedback.

Find out what potential buyers thought after a showing or open house. Take negative comments as constructive criticism, which you can use to make the next showing or open house better.

9. Beware of the take back.

Watch out for buyers who want you to take back financing. When loans are available everywhere for little or nothing down, don't go into the banking business when there is less risk to you with an outright sale.

10. Ignore inconvenience.

If a potential buyer wants to see the house at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning, so be it. This is a time where you have to be flexible. It is better to show flexibility and have the house seen than to turn away potential buyers.

Disclaimer: The information above is deemed reliable. However, because current demographics, local yellow pages listings, and other neighborhood information such as crime statistics, weather, house values, and other market conditions can change rapidly in any given local area, please check with the exclusive HBMP Realty real estate agent for the data above before acting on this information. HBMP Realty, Inc. is not liable for the accuracy of the data.