

# First-Time Sellers Can Beat The Competition For Buyers In Today's Market

**R**emember how much you had to learn to buy your first home? If you're getting ready to sell for the first time, you'll need to learn even more. Of course, you picked up quite a bit of information about selling when you purchased your home — how the negotiating process worked, what the sellers' responsibilities were versus yours, and so on. Still, a lot was going on "behind the scenes" on the seller's side that you didn't need to be concerned about as a buyer — now it matters.

In addition, the real estate market has changed since you were buying your home. In many areas, strong seller's markets have shifted more to the buyer's advantage.

Now, more than ever, first-time sellers need the services of real estate professionals who can guide them through the complex selling process in today's market. We can help you through the following steps to get your home sold at the best possible price and within your moving timetable.

## Get Ready

In today's competitive market, you'll want to get your home in model-home condition before you even list it for sale. Buyers prefer homes they can move right into.

✔ **Repair or replace** anything that isn't in proper working order or good condition — fixtures, outlets, plumbing, flooring, carpet, roof, old shrubs, etc. Some sellers even hire a home inspector to do a "pre-inspection" to identify defects so they can be handled before a buyer's inspector comes along.



✔ **Improve** those things that will add to the value of your home. We recommend against major improvements — room additions, a new kitchen, etc. — just before you sell, as you are not likely to recoup the full cost of these big-ticket items. It does pay, however, to spend some money to ensure your home is up-to-date and comparable to neighbors' homes. Stick with lower-cost, big-impact projects such as painting or upgrading appliances or carpet. (We'll be happy to recommend other improvements that are worth doing.)

✔ **De-clutter** your home, removing knick-knacks, family photos, excess furniture, counter-top items and appliances, throw rugs, tools, etc. You want rooms to look spacious and storage to look plentiful, and you want buyers visualizing how they could live in your home.

✔ **Clean** from top to bottom, inside and out, windows too. Remember, being clean isn't enough — your home must also look and smell clean too. Don't forget to weed gardens, trim bushes, edge the lawn and tidy up outside. Curb appeal — making sure your home looks good from the street — is critical to convincing buyers they should take a look inside.

## Get Set

As you're getting your home ready for the market, you'll want to select a real estate professional to help you sell it.

✔ **List** your home by signing a contract with a real estate brokerage to represent you and your home sale in the marketplace and to have your home placed on the multiple listing service. The listing agent



(who works for the licensed broker, or may be the broker) is the person who will work with you personally to get your home sold during the contract period.

You'll need to supply some important information about your home to ensure the listing is complete and accurate: number of rooms, special features, year built, mortgage pay-off, taxes, homeowner or condo fees, utilities, items to be conveyed (sold as part of the property), easements and assessments, and any other items pertinent to the property. (Call us for a complete "pre-list" packet.)

✔ **Set the price** of your home in line with current market conditions. We'll develop a competitive market analysis to determine the listing price most likely to get your home sold within your desired time frame and, of course, net you the most money from the sale. We look at many factors, especially comparable homes on the market, those that have sold recently, and those that didn't sell — usually because the price was set too high.

Although you may be tempted to set your price high, just to see if someone will pay it, we caution our clients that doing so is likely to work against them in the long run. Overpriced homes simply sell the competition. Typically, overpricing sellers eventually have to drop their price, often below market value, to renew interest in their "stale" property listing.

✔ **Decide on terms** you will accept from or offer to a buyer. We'll discuss a variety of important issues with you including how much deposit you want with a purchase offer, your desired move-out date, which contingencies you will accept (inspections, home sale,

**To Purchase Call (703) 698-7750**