

# 6 Critical Secrets To Short-Sale Success In Today's Market

As home prices have dropped in some areas of the country, a growing number of homeowners are finding their home is worth less than the mortgage amount still owed to their lender (known as being “upside down” or “under water” in the mortgage). Owners may find themselves in this situation because they purchased their home at the peak of the local market, just before prices began to drop. Or, using an interest-only or payment-option loan, their monthly payments did not reduce the principal owed — and the home's value dropped. Some tapped too much home equity through second loans or lines of credit, even as much as 125% of the home's value.

Those “upside down” mortgage holders who can still make their monthly mortgage payments are safe if they don't need to move. They can wait out the market — perhaps even benefiting from lower property taxes from a lowered tax assessment — until the correction is complete and home prices again begin to appreciate.

Others, however, find themselves caught by escalating mortgage payments and other household expenses they can no longer afford. Although some borrowers can

negotiate “workouts” and “loan modifications” with their lenders, others don't have those options. The only choice left to avoid foreclosure is a “short sale” where the lender agrees to accept, as fulfillment of the borrower's obligation, a sales price lower than the amount still owed on the mortgage.

If you find yourself in this situation, or you know someone else who is, here are the critical factors every short-sale seller must know.

## Short Sale Beats Foreclosure On Credit Report

A “foreclosure” is a court settlement process involving legal action and possible attorney fees. A “short sale,” on the other hand, is a negotiated settlement with the lender — no attorneys required. Both show up on the borrower's credit profile, but the difference between a foreclosure and a short sale is the difference between broken credit

and badly dented credit. The “short sale” consumer has better options much sooner in terms of buying another home, qualifying for loans or credit cards, securing reasonable interest rates, finding rental housing, even applying for insurance.

## Lenders Often Prefer Short Sale Over Foreclosure

Foreclosing is an expensive, time-consuming process for lenders (costing an average \$50,000 per property, according to a recent report by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress). In a foreclosure, the lender sells the property at auction — which may also result in lower net than the outstanding mortgage — or repossesses and sells the property as “lender owned” real estate, which is a “non-performing asset” that negatively impacts the lender's ability to make loans. In short, lenders want your money not your home.

## Offer Needed Before Short-Sale Approval From Your Lender

Lenders generally do not “pre-approve” borrowers to conduct a short sale. Instead, the seller-borrower finds a buyer, who makes an offer that is presented as part of a short-sale package for the lender's consideration.

## Successful Short Sale Requires Aggressive Pricing, Marketing

Be realistic about price, keeping in mind that the lender must agree to the amount of the mortgage forgiven. Ask us to prepare a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) for you. We'll look at the sales prices from comparable, recently sold homes in the neighborhood or area and price your home competitively to sell it quickly.

To Purchase Call (703) 698-7750