

# opening doors

## Home Seller Guide



### What's Inside:

- Gather Your Paperwork
- Finding an Agent
- Sell it Yourself? The FSBO Path
- Why Hire an Agent?
- Seller Questionnaire
- Buyer Profile
- Prepare Your Home for Sale
- Checklist for Home Staging
- Handling the Stress of Selling
- Pricing Advice
- Contract to Close Process
- Moving Checklist
- Change of Address
- Real Estate Terminology

# opening doors

## Welcome!

If “sell my house” is at the top of your to-do list, you’ve found the right resource. In this handbook, we break down the process into easy-to-follow steps, with insights from our years of experience in helping people buy and sell property. This is designed to help you identify your selling goals, stage your home in the best possible light and what to be aware of during the time your home is on the market. Selling a home isn’t hard if you’ve got the right company behind you!

Selling a house requires not only getting a home into the best possible condition to attract buyers, it means navigating through a myriad of forms, documents, and disclosure requirements. REALTORS® serve as trusted advisors through the listing and marketing stage through the negotiating and closing process. They offer knowledge about comparable properties in the area and provide informed advice about needed improvements and staging that generates interest from consumers and maximizes sale price.

*We look forward to helping you on this amazing journey!*

---

Before listing your home for sale, you should gather all of the documents you have related to your property, including your mortgage information; a copy of your sale agreement from when you purchased your property; a copy of your deed and the title report; your property tax information including your most recent tax bills; any survey reports, and your homeowners insurance information.

- Mortgage loan information
- Final purchase and sale agreement
- Deed
- Title report
- Property tax information, including most recent tax statement
- Homeowners insurance information
- Any reports or documentation that relates to the property
- The HOA information, if it applies
- Lease agreement, if currently renting the property

# opening doors

## FINDING THE RIGHT REAL ESTATE AGENT TO HELP YOU

Once you have decided to sell your home, it is time to hire a Realtor to help you. A real estate professional is a licensed expert who knows the market, knows the local area and has the information you need to make educated decisions. You will share with your agent your motivations for selling, what your goals are in the sale and how you can net the most money. Additionally, your agent can provide you with information about staging your home so it is presented in the best possible light. Sometimes you may need to do a little home maintenance and your agent will coach you on what those items may be. They can also give you practical advice about what you should do to highlight features of your home. And when it is time to review any offers you may receive, your agent will be there to help.

A real estate professional plays a very important role in the home selling process and should be selected with care. Before selecting your agent, ask for recommendations from family and friends and interview several agents, to have a better idea of what each one is like and what each offers you. The relationship between a real estate professional and a seller should be one of mutual respect, similar objectives, and, frequent communication.

The ideal real estate professional...

- Understands your needs and objectives.
- Is professional and dedicated to doing a good job.
- Knows the area in which you are selling.
- Knows and understands the local market conditions.
- Knows the competition you are against.
- Has a valid real estate license.
- Has excellent references from other clients.
- Treats you with the respect that you deserve.



# opening doors

YOU WON'T WANT TO TRY AND SELL IT YOURSELF, HERE'S WHY:

**89%**

of all buyers  
purchased their  
home through a real  
estate agent

**90%**

of all buyers search  
online during their  
home buying process

ONLY  
**28%**

of all buyers look to  
print ads as an offline  
resource

**Typical SOLD price\*:**

**By FSBO: \$190,000**

**By Agent: \$249,000**

**The percentage of homes selling as a FSBO  
has decreased in the last 20 years:**

**14%** (2003)  **8%** (2019)

\*The "typical" price is actually the average price in the NAR survey. However, studies have shown that people are more likely to FSBO in markets with lower price points.  
Info sources: Google, NAR



# opening doors

## CONSIDER THIS:

ActiveRain asked 1,000 real estate agents to rate the top six mistakes made by home sellers:

**77%** Mistake #1:  
Overpriced Home

**34%** Mistake #2:  
Showing Availability

**32%** Mistake #3:  
Cluttered Space

**28%** Mistake #4:  
Unpleasant Odors

**21%** Mistake #5:  
Unwilling to Negotiate

**20%** Mistake #7:  
Won't Make Repairs

## Most difficult tasks for FSBO sellers:

**15%**

Getting the right price

**12%**

Understanding and processing paperwork

**13%**

Selling within the planned length of time

**9%**

Preparing & fixing up home for sale

**3%**

Having enough time for showings and selling activities



## YES, YOU DO WANT AN REALTOR TO HELP YOU...HERE'S WHY:

With so much information readily available online, clients sometimes ask, "Why should we hire a real estate agent?" They wonder, and rightfully so, if they couldn't buy or sell a home through the Internet or through regular marketing and advertising channels without representation, without a real estate agent. Some do OK, many don't. So if you've wondered the same thing, here are reasons why you might want to consider hiring a professional real estate agent.

### 1) EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

You don't need to know everything about buying and selling real estate if you hire a real estate professional who does. Henry Ford once said that when you hire people who are smarter than you are, it proves you are smarter than they are. The trick is to find the right person. For the most part, they all cost about the same. Why not hire a person with more education and experience than you? We're all looking for more precious time in our lives, and hiring pros gives us that time.

### 2) AGENTS ARE BUFFERS

Agents take the spam out of your property showings and visits. If you're a buyer of new homes, your agent will whip out her sword and keep the builder's agents at bay, preventing them from biting or nipping at your heels. If you're a seller, your agent will filter all those phone calls that lead to nowhere from lookie-loos and try to induce serious buyers to immediately write an offer.

### 3) NEIGHBORHOOD KNOWLEDGE

Agents either possess intimate knowledge or they know where to find the industry buzz about your neighborhood. They can identify comparable sales and hand these facts to you, in addition to pointing you in the direction where you can find more data on schools, crime or demographics. For example, you may know that a home down the street was on the market for \$350,000, but an agent will know it had upgrades and sold at \$285,000 after 65 days on the market and after twice falling out of escrow.

### 4) PRICE GUIDANCE

Contrary to what some people believe, agents do not select prices for sellers or buyers. Typically, an agent will provide market information and statistics that guide a seller to choose a price. As a buyer, your real estate agent can also look at that information and guide you to make a successful offer. Equipped with market activity reports, you and your agent will create the offer and then based on market supply, demand and the conditions, your agent can also devise a negotiation strategy.

### 5) MARKET CONDITIONS INFORMATION

Real estate agents can disclose market conditions, which will govern your selling or buying process. Many factors determine how you will proceed. Data such as the average per square foot cost of similar homes, median and average sales prices, average days on market and ratios of list-to-sold prices, among other criteria, will have a huge bearing on what you ultimately decide to do.

### 6) PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Real estate agents network with other professionals, many of whom provide services that you will need to buy or sell a home. Due to legal liability, agents may hesitate to recommend a certain individual or company over another, but they do know which vendors have a reputation for efficiency, competency and competitive pricing.

### 7) NEGOTIATION SKILLS & CONFIDENTIALITY

Top producing agents negotiate well because, unlike most buyers and sellers, they can remove themselves from the emotional aspects of the transaction and because they are skilled. It's part of their job description. Good agents are not messengers, delivering buyer's offers to sellers and vice versa. They are professionals who are trained to present their client's case in the best light and agree to hold client information confidential from competing interests.

### 8) HANDLING VOLUMES OF PAPERWORK

One-page deposit receipts were prevalent in the early 1970s. Today's purchase agreements run 10 pages or more. That does not include the federal and state-mandated disclosures nor disclosures dictated by local rules. Most real estate files average thicknesses from one to three inches of paper. One tiny mistake or omission could land you in court or cost you thousands.

### 9) ANSWER QUESTIONS AFTER CLOSING

Even the smoothest transactions that close without complications can come back to haunt. For example, taxing authorities that collect property tax assessments, doc stamps or transfer tax can fall months behind and mix up invoices, but one call to your agent can straighten out the confusion. Many questions can pop up that were overlooked in the excitement of closing. Good agents stand by ready to assist. Worthy and honest agents don't leave you in the dust to fend for yourself.

# opening doors

## SELLER QUESTIONNAIRE

- How did you get my name? Friend, family member, co-worker, other? \_\_\_\_\_
- Why are you moving? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where are you moving? \_\_\_\_\_
- How soon do you need to be there? \_\_\_\_\_
- What will happen if your home does not sell in the required amount of time? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Will you be receiving any corporate relocation assistance? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Are you thinking about selling your home yourself? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being extremely urgent, how motivated are you to sell your house?  
(circle one)      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
- Tell me a little about your house : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many years have you owned the house? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many square feet? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many stories? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many bedrooms? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many bathrooms? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you done any updates or work on the house since you've owned it? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does it have a pool? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Rate your home on a scale of 1 to 10: \_\_\_\_\_
- What would make it a 10? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much do you owe on your mortgage?    \$ 1st\_\_\_\_\_ 2nd\_\_\_\_\_ LOC?
- How much do you think your house is worth? \_\_\_\_\_
- How much do you want to list the house for?    \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- What price won't you go below? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you up-to-date on payments? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- Are you the sole owner of the house? ☐ YES ☐ NO
- If not, who else is on the title? \_\_\_\_\_
- Do you own other real estate (investment, 2nd home) \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you tried selling it on your own? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the three things you expect from a real estate agent?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you interviewing other agents? ☐ YES ☐ NO

# opening doors

## WHERE DO BUYERS COME FROM?

<b>51%</b>	Internet
<b>30%</b>	Real estate agent
<b>7%</b>	Yard sign/open house sign
<b>6%</b>	Friend, relative, neighbor
<b>5%</b>	Home builder/agent
<b>2%</b>	Directly from the seller
<b>1%</b>	Print advertising

## WHAT TURNS OFF PROSPECTIVE BUYERS?

- Too much clutter
- Extravagant decor & colors
- Too many personal items
- Bad odors (pets, smoking)
- Dark spaces & bad lighting
- Stains, dents, small flaws
- Dirty or outdated bathrooms
- Misrepresenting the home (descriptions, photos)
- Bugs
- Sellers present during showings/open house
- Wallpaper
- Outdated fixtures and appliances
- Poor curb appeal



# opening doors

## PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE

Thinking about selling your house? Then it's time to roll up your sleeves and get to work! Selling a home, after all, entails a whole lot more than just planting a "For Sale" sign on your front lawn or uploading a few random photos of your place—especially if you're wanting to net the most from your sale.

So before you put your house on the market, review this checklist of things you must do in preparation. Some of these tips are surprisingly easy, while others might require a bit more elbow grease. But they're bound to pay off once buyers start coming in the door with eyes wide open—and hopefully presenting a great offer.

### 1. Find a great real estate agent

Think you can sell your home yourself, and pocket the cash you would otherwise pay an agent? It can be tempting, especially in a hot market, but resist the urge. "For Sale by Owner" transactions are almost always a disaster, leading you to sacrifice both money and time.

That said, don't just blindly hire the agent who most recently sent you a flier or the one your uncle's friend's co-worker's cousin used. Do some research to find a real estate agent (or ideally a few) who is knowledgeable about your specific market, and then interview her to make sure she's a good fit.

### 2. Consider your curb appeal

Make sure the first thing prospective buyers see of your home entices them to want to see more. Yes, for better or worse, buyers do tend to judge a book by its cover. By investing some effort in relatively easy fixes like planting colorful flowers and repainting your front door, the outside of your house can beckon them to come on in.

### 3. Declutter living areas

Less is definitely more when it comes to getting your house ready to show. Do a clean sweep of counters, windowsills, tables, and all other visible areas, and then tackle behind closed doors: closets, drawers, and cupboards—since virtually nothing is off-limits for curious buyers. And if the house is overflowing with stuff, they might worry that the house won't have ample space for their own belongings.

Take the excess and donate or pack it up for a storage space. The bonus to taking care of this now is that it's one less chore you'll have to do when it's actually time to move.

### 4. Depersonalize your space

The next step on your declutter list? You want to remove any distractions so the buyers can visualize themselves and their family living in the property. Personal items can be distracting to visiting buyers.

That includes personal items and family photos, as well as bold artwork and furniture that might make your home less appealing to the general public. The goal is to create a blank canvas on which house hunters can project their own visions of living there, and loving it. You want to give them opportunity to imagine themselves there...to consider it as an option for their new home, not eliminate it.

*Continued....*



## PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE, continued

### 5. Repaint walls to neutral tones

You might love that orange accent wall, but if it's your potential buyer's least favorite color, that could be a turnoff. Buyers will have the perspective that it is one more thing they have to do, to paint over that orange, and that connects to time and money they might not want to step up to. Making things generic allows the buyer to focus on the room, not the decor.

### 6. Touch up any scuff marks

Even if you're not doing a full-on repainting project, pay special attention to scrubbing and then touching up baseboards, walls, and doors to make the house sparkle and look cared-for.

### 7. Fix any loose handles

A small thing, sure, but you'd be surprised by the negative effect a loose handle or missing lightbulb can have on a buyer. It can make them stop and think, "What else is broken here?"

### 8. Add some plants

Green is good, because plants create a more welcoming environment. You might also want to consider a bouquet of flowers or bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter or dining table.

### 9. Conduct a smell test

Foul odors, even slight ones, can be a deal breaker, and the problem is that you might not even notice them. Consider inviting an unbiased third party in to try to detect any pet smells or lingering odors from your kitchen.

If the smells are pervasive, you might need to do some deep cleaning, because many buyers are on to your "masking techniques" such as candles or plug-in room deodorizers.

### 10. Clean, clean, clean

And then clean some more. You want your property to look spotless. Take special care with the bathroom, making sure the tile, counters, shower, and floors shine.

### 11. Hide valuables

From art to jewelry, make sure that your treasures are out of sight, either locked up or stored offsite.

### 12. Consider staging

Does your house scream 1985? Nothing invigorates a house like some new furnishings or even just a perfectly chosen mirror. The key is getting your home staged by a professional. Home stagers will evaluate the current condition and belongings in your house and determine what elements might raise the bar. They might recommend you buy or rent some items, or they might just reorganize your knickknacks and bookshelves in a whole new (that is, better) way.

-- Realtor.com

# opening doors

## CHECKLIST FOR HOME STAGING

**Your house** needs to be neat, clean and orderly in preparing it for sale. Organizing and pre-packing items that are not regularly used will create a spacious feeling. Storage is one of the top items on a buyer's list; therefore it's necessary to show that your home has the space desired.

Things to think about:

- ☐ Does each room in your house feel spacious?
- ☐ Is your house clean from top to bottom?
- ☐ Pre-pack all items that you do not need while selling your house
- ☐ Pre-pack off-season clothing and items
- ☐ Decide where you can store your boxes and extra items
- ☐ How does your garage look?
- ☐ If your basement is unfinished and used for storage, how does it look?

**Your exterior** says a lot about how your home is maintained both inside and out. It creates a lasting impression when buyers drive by your home or view photos online, so show them that your property is well cared for. When buyers see an attractive exterior, they will be excited to view the interior as well.

- ☐ What major repairs are needed?
- ☐ What minor repairs are needed?
- ☐ Make a list of what needs to be done
- ☐ Sweep or shovel walkways, driveways, patio/deck (salt in the winter)
- ☐ Maintain front, back and side yard
- ☐ Place flowers or winter arrangements on your front porch and/or in front of the garage
- ☐ Remove all festive lights and decorations

**"Depersonalizing"** is an important step in selling your home. Since you've made the decision to move, you need to commit yourself and remove your identity from the house. You need to let go emotionally, and this can be a tough process. Focus on turning your home into a "model home." By disconnecting yourself from your house, you enable prospective buyers to emotionally connect and envision themselves living there – and not feel as if they are guests in your home.

- ☐ Remove all personal and family photos
- ☐ Remove all memorabilia
- ☐ Pre-pack books and music that do not appeal to a wide range of buyers
- ☐ Pre-pack your collections
- ☐ Remove and pre-pack any items that could be potentially offensive or disagreeable
- ☐ Store away and organize children's toys, games and books

# opening doors

## CHECKLIST FOR HOME STAGING, continued

**Take an objective look** at your house to determine what updates and repairs are necessary. Establish a timeline and budget to determine what needs to be completed to improve the overall presentation of your home. Buyers today are looking to purchase a home that does not require work. They are also willing to pay more for a house that has been taken care of, so show them that your home is in turn-key condition.

- ☐ What is your timeline and budget?
- ☐ What updates have you been putting off?
- ☐ What repairs are needed?
- ☐ Repair or replace even the smallest items
- ☐ What condition are your windows in?
- ☐ What condition are your permanent light fixtures in?
- ☐ What condition are your doors and trim in?
- ☐ Do you have any holes or cracks in your walls?

**Buyers** want to fulfill a wish list, not a to-do list. When they see a bunch of fix-up projects when walking into your house, they'll turn away faster than you can say "water damage." Oftentimes it's not one big thing, but a lot of little things that turn buyers away. If there are problems and a significant to-do list, your house will drop to the bottom of their list, or attract an offer much less than what you're looking for. Present buyers with a complete package that is move-in ready... a home they can be comfortable and happy in.

- ☐ How do the rooms look from where you are standing when you enter the home?
  - ☐ Does your entrance feel spacious?
- ☐ How does the kitchen look and feel when you walk into it?
  - ☐ Determine what needs to be done if your kitchen requires some updating.
  - ☐ How do your cupboards look?
- ☐ Does your living room feel inviting?
  - ☐ How is your furniture positioned?
  - ☐ Are there any repairs or upgrades needed in this room?
- ☐ Does the dining room show its function?
  - ☐ Are there any upgrades or repairs needed?
  - ☐ How is the furniture positioned?
- ☐ What is the focal point in the family room? Is it apparent?
  - ☐ Are there any upgrades or repairs needed?
  - ☐ How is the furniture positioned?
  - ☐ Do you feel calm walking into this room?
  - ☐ How is your furniture positioned?

Take a walk through your home and evaluate each room in this manner.

# opening doors

## How To Handle The Stress Of Selling Your Home

Three things are certain in life: death, taxes ... and undue stress caused by moving. Whether or not you use the services of a REALTOR® to help you wade through the uncertain waters of the buy-and-sell process, moving is stressful, period. And there's not much you can do to avoid it. And we're not just talking about packing and paperwork. Moving is an emotional process. If you're not calming down your nervous children, you're trying to reassure yourself that you'll meet people in your new neighborhood, that you bought the best house within your means, and that your kids' new schools will measure up.

It's easy to forget while we're dealing with all of these jitters that moving actually can represent an exciting adventure, a growth opportunity and the prospect of new beginnings. Once the dust settles after your move, you're entering one of the most memorable times of your life. With any luck, you've recruited a REALTOR® who's familiar with the obvious stresses as well as the insidious (and subsequently more detrimental) ones. Depending upon your relationship with your Realtor, you should be able to rely on him or her for more than just closing the deal. Your Realtor also should be able to calm your trepidations by giving you the support you need -- giving you the facts about that new school district, reassuring you that your jitters are perfectly normal, and giving you as much information about your new hometown as possible, increasing your familiarity with the previously unknown.

Remember that it's perfect normal to feel unsure of your decision right now. You've just made a major commitment, and all of us experience those last-second "What on earth did I just do" worries after signing contracts and making life-changing decisions. Instead of becoming overwhelmed with "what ifs" and dread, reframe this decision as a prime opportunity to begin your lives in a new environment. The old saying "When one door closes, another one opens" definitely applies here. Trust that your Realtor is looking out for your best interests, ask as many questions as you need to throughout the entire process (that's part of what your Realtor is paid for), and look forward to the adventure that lies ahead of you.

If you can, keep an emergency fund in case you run into any unexpected costs. One example: If your buyer comes forward after a home inspection is completed and requests a series of repairs prior to move-in, you'll be prepared. Chances are good that you won't necessarily agree with the buyer's requests, but at least you won't face the additional stress of being short the money for repairs if you plan ahead and save some extra cash (no set amount -- just as much as you can handle. A goal you might try to shoot for would be in the range of \$2,500). It's probably in your best interests not to try to guess what the buyer will want to repair, and then fix it ahead of time. That's because buyers have a habit of isolating areas of your home that you never considered having repaired, and not even noticing the ones you expected them to pinpoint. So save yourself any expenses until you've determined their requests.

And while we're on the subject of finances, try to anticipate and prepare for the initial expenses you'll face upon move-in. Resign yourself to the fact that during the moving process, you're going to feel as if you're holding your wallet upside down, and everyone -- movers, contractors, buyer, etc. -- is sitting underneath, catching the windfall and demanding a larger share. Keep in mind that this is an investment for the good of your family, and that these costs are a one-time inevitability.

Remind yourself of why you're moving in the first place. A job transfer, or is it a voluntary choice? Obviously, whether or not you had some degree of control over the decision will affect your outlook. Regardless of your answer to that question, round up as much information as you can about your new hometown. What kinds of cultural offerings does the town/city offer? What are its landmarks and natural attractions? Research some possible day trips you might take with the family once you're settled. Is your new hometown near state borders, giving you the opportunity to explore different regions of the country without much effort?

Remember to have a little fun occasionally. You're still allowed, even if you feel as if you don't have a penny left to your name. Take the family out to dinner, to a movie or a picnic -- anything that gets all of you out of the house and away from boxes, paperwork, emotions and all of those pre-move concerns. Keep a regular "date" to get out together -- for example, every Friday night leading up to the move. Take your mind off your stress for a few hours, and remind yourself that your family members are experiencing many of the same emotions. Like misery, stress often loves company, so enjoy your time together and remember that this stress won't last forever. Regardless of what you're feeling now, the move will happen and everything will eventually fall into place. Journeying into the unknown is what makes life rewarding, so trust in your Realtor's expertise and in your family's resilience, and look forward to the journey ahead.

-- Realty Times.com



# opening doors

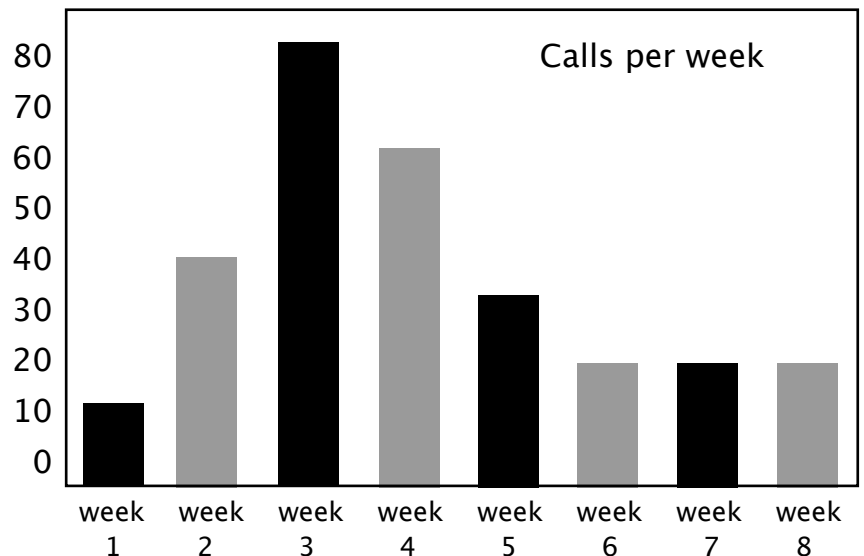
## DETERMINE THE PRICE FOR YOUR HOME

- Pricing is the number one factor home buyers use to determine which homes they will view.
- A home, properly priced from the beginning, will sell more quickly and for a better price than one that was originally overpriced.
- Competitive pricing will attract more buyers, allowing the seller to earn the most money and help them sell as quickly as possible.
- Some sellers believe they should price high so they'll have room for negotiation, but they soon find they have no buyers to negotiate with!

Overpricing will:

- Reduce agent and buyer interest
- Deter interested agent and buyer calls
- Attract the wrong prospects
- Eliminate offers
- Help to sell the competition's home by making them look like a better value.
- Cause appraisal problems; may lead to mortgage rejections once an appraisal is in
- Extend the market time on your listing unnecessarily

A newly listed home will generate an initial surge of activity. This activity peaks in the third week after listing a home. By overpricing, you deter interest in your home when activity is at its peak.



# opening doors

A real estate professional can supply you with all the information you will need to make an educated decision on the pricing of your home.

As you determine the price of your home, consider the pricing on houses similar to yours that have actually sold. When reviewing properties<sup>3</sup> still on the market (your competition) note the asking price and the length of time on the market.

You, the seller, set the price; but it is ultimately the buyer's determination of the value of your home that is most important.

**The Realtor will provide you with the following information:**

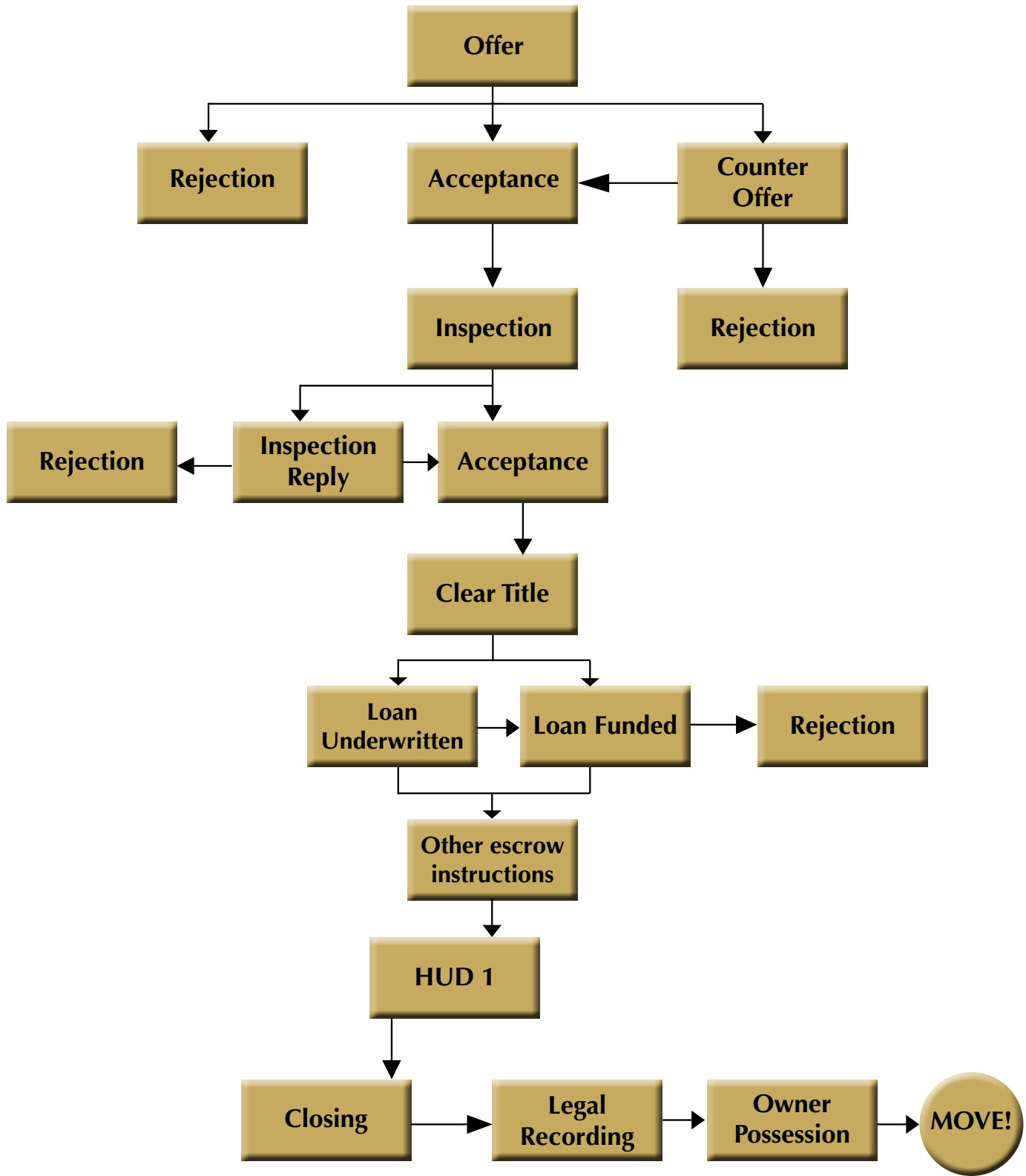
- Current market activity
- What buyers are willing to pay for homes similar to yours
- Which homes will be competing with yours for buyer's attention

**Once you have reviewed the information they have shared, ask yourself these questions:**

- How quickly do you need to sell?
- How much competition is there in your price category and area?
- What other factors would impact the sale of your home (location, condition, etc)

**Remember, there are some factors that DO NOT affect the price of your home:**

- The original cost of your home
- The cost of some improvements and upgrades you have made
- How much it would cost to build your home today
- The opinions of friends, family, neighbors and co-workers
- Emotional attachment



# MOVING CHECKLIST

**You can make moving almost fun! By following this checklist prior to your move, you can ensure that you are as prepared and stress-free as possible on your moving day.**

## 3-4 WEEKS PRIOR TO MOVE

- ☐ Make an inventory of everything to be moved
- ☐ Donate any unwanted clothing or furniture
- ☐ Book the moving elevator and confirm parking arrangement for truck
- ☐ Contact insurance company to transfer policies (life, homeowners)
- ☐ Review Tax deductions on moving expenses
- ☐ Request change of address kit from post-office
- ☐ Prepare a list of friends, business firms and personal accounts who should be notified of your upcoming move

### Arrange cut-off/activation dates for utility companies:

- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Cable
- ☐ Gas/Electricity/Water
- ☐ Garbage

## 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO MOVE

- ☐ Purchase any moving supplies - visit [youmoveme.com](http://youmoveme.com) to access our full catalogue of supplies with free delivery!
- ☐ Make an appointment with a service technician to prepare major appliances for shipment (i.e. plumber, electrician)
- ☐ Have rugs and draperies cleaned and leave wrapped when returned
- ☐ Obtain written appraisal of antique items to verify value

### Make a plan to dispose of flammables that can't be transported:

- ☐ Aerosol Cans
- ☐ Cleaning Fluid
- ☐ Ammunition
- ☐ Fireworks
- ☐ Household Liquids
- ☐ Oil Cans/Paint/Thinner
- ☐ Propane Tanks

## 1 WEEK PRIOR TO MOVE

- ☐ Check furniture for dents and scratches
- ☐ Label items you need to access easily
- ☐ Clean out the refrigerator/plan to defrost and dry day before move

- ☐ Drain equipment: water hoses, propane tank, gas/oil lawnmowers
- ☐ Schedule to have utilities turn on at your new home
- ☐ Make a plan to transport house plants
- ☐ Confirm travel arrangements for pets and family

## DAY OF MOVE

- ☐ Designate boxes and items as "last load" items
- ☐ All loose items are packed in boxes
- ☐ All electronics are unplugged from a power source. Plasma TV's should be unplugged the day before so they are at room temperature on move day.
- ☐ All pictures are removed from the walls
- ☐ All boxes are labeled with their destination room in your new home on the top and sides of each box
- ☐ All heavy and breakable items are removed from dressers and desks
- ☐ All contents are removed from appliances
- ☐ All items are removed from the top of furniture
- ☐ All linens are removed from beds
- ☐ All rooms, closets, cabinets have been checked
- ☐ Disassemble bedroom sets to save time

### Prepare an essentials box:

- ☐ Toilet Paper (unopened)
- ☐ Snacks/Instant Coffee
- ☐ Scissors/Pocket Knife
- ☐ Garbage Bags
- ☐ Change of Clothes
- ☐ Dish Soap and Towel
- ☐ Pet Food and Dish
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Portable Tool Kit
- ☐ Towels
- ☐ All-Purpose Cleaner (unopened)
- ☐ Mug/Plate/Cutlery
- ☐ Shower Curtain
- ☐ Important Records/Documents

### Before you leave the house:

- ☐ Water shut off
- ☐ A/C shut off
- ☐ Lights turned off
- ☐ Windows shut and locked
- ☐ Surrender house keys
- ☐ Check for items left behind

# opening doors

## HELPFUL CHANGE OF ADDRESS LIST:

### ESSENTIALS:

- ☐ POST OFFICE: SET UP FORWARDING ADDRESS
- ☐ EMPLOYER: PAYCHECKS, TAX FORMS, ETC.

### FINANCES:

- ☐ BANK/CREDIT UNION
- ☐ LOAN ISSUERS
- ☐ CREDIT CARDS
- ☐ STUDENT LOANS
- ☐ FINANCIAL AID
- ☐ INVESTMENTS

### INSURANCE:

- ☐ HEALTH INSURANCE
- ☐ DENTAL INSURANCE
- ☐ LIFE INSURANCE
- ☐ CAR INSURANCE
- ☐ HOMEOWNER/RENTER'S INSURANCE

### UTILITIES AND HOME SERVICES:

- ☐ GAS
- ☐ WATER
- ☐ POWER
- ☐ INTERNET/CABLE
- ☐ GARBAGE
- ☐ CELL PHONE SERVICE
- ☐ LAWN CARE
- ☐ CLEANING SERVICE

### PEOPLE:

- ☐ DOCTOR
- ☐ DENTIST
- ☐ CHILDREN'S PHYSICIAN
- ☐ VETERINARIAN
- ☐ LAWYER
- ☐ BABYSITTER

### MEMBERSHIPS/SUBSCRIPTIONS:

- ☐ RETAIL CLUBS/COSTCO, SAM'S, ETC
- ☐ CHURCHES
- ☐ SCOUTS/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS
- ☐ PARENT/TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS
- ☐ MAGAZINES

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

- ☐ DEPT OF MOTOR VEHICLES
- ☐ INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
- ☐ VOTER REGISTRATION
- ☐ SOCIAL SECURITY
- ☐ CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION SERVICES
- ☐ DEPT. OF VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

### ONLINE SERVICES:

- ☐ SHOPPING (AMAZON, ETC)
- ☐ STREAMING SERVICES
- ☐ MAPPING SERVICES

### MISCELLANEOUS:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





## REAL ESTATE TERMINOLOGY

- **Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM)** — The interest rate is tied to a financial index making the monthly mortgage payment go up or down over time.
- **Annual Percentage Rate (APR)** — The percent of interest that will be charged on a home loan.
- **Appraisal** — A report highlighting the estimated value of the property completed by a qualified 3rd party. This is typically done for the benefit of the buyer to ensure the property is worth what they are paying.
- **Association Fee/HOA Fee** — In addition to a mortgage, certain housing communities such as townhomes have a monthly fee associated with maintaining the commons areas and amenities.
- **Balloon Mortgage** — A long-term mortgage loan that starts small but has a large payment due at maturity.
- **Closing** — This is the final meeting where the buyer and seller signs the necessary paperwork, complete the transaction, and release/take possession of the property. Usually the representing agents and attorneys attend.
- **Closing Costs** — The buyer and seller have expenses associated with the transaction other than that of the actual cost of the home. For example, the buyer has a variety of fees due for obtaining a new loan and the seller must pay commission to both agents.
- **Closing Disclosure** — A form that provides the final details about the mortgage loan. It includes loan terms, projected monthly payments, and how much the extra fees will be.
- **Collateral** — Something of value (in this case your home) that is held to ensure repayment of a mortgage or loan.
- **Commission** — A percent of the sale price of the home that is paid to agents. The seller pays commission to both the buyer and listing agent.
- **Comparables** — Homes in the area of interest that have recently sold of which have similar features.
- **Contingencies** — Conditions which must be met in order to close. Contingencies are typically tied to a date, referred to as a deadline. If the contingency is not satisfied the contract may be canceled.
- **Counteroffer** — The response from the sellers in regards to an offer.
- **Debt to Income Ratio** — A lender will look at a borrower's debt versus income to determine the amount of loan they are eligible for and if they can repay their debt plus the home loan.
- **Down Payment** — A percent of the cost of the property that is paid up front as a part of the mortgage.
- **Earnest Money** — The deposit made from the buyer to the seller when submitting an offer. This deposit is typically held in trust by a third party. Upon closing the money will generally be applied to the down payment or closing cost.
- **Escrow** — This term has multiple meanings; earnest money is typically held by a third party until closing in "escrow". It can also be referred to as the time period from when the contract is written and accepted by the seller to when the home sale actually closes.
- **Equity** — The difference in the market value of a home versus what is owned on the home.
- **FHA** — A mortgage that is financed through a private lender and insured by the Federal Housing Administration, often requiring a lower down payment and income to qualify.
- **Fixed Rate** — The interest rate will remain the same for the entire life of the mortgage.

-- Continued...

# opening doors

- **Home Equity Line of Credit** — A loan or line of credit that is determined based on the equity or homes value after subtracting the loans owed.
- **Home Inspection** — The process in which a professional inspect the seller's home for issues that are not openly apparent, then creates a report for the buyer to review.
- **Home Protection Plan** — An annual service that covers the cost of repairs or replacements to items covered in the plan, usually items like stoves, washer/dryers, ect.
- **Hybrid** — A loan that starts with a fixed rate period, then converts to an adjustable rate.
- **Mortgage Insurance** — Insurance written in connection with a mortgage loan that protects the lender in the event the borrow cannot repay their loan. This is usually not required if the borrow has 20% or more for the down payment.
- **Mortgage Note** — A promise to pay a sum of money at a standard interest rate during a specific term and is secured by a mortgage.
- **Multiple Listing Service (MLS)** — The national list of real estate properties that are available for sale. These are the most reliable sources to receive up-to-date listing information.
- **Pre-Approval** — The process in which a buyer must provide a mortgage professional the appropriate information on income, debts, and assets that will be used to make the initial credit only loan decision.
- **Pre-Qualification** — Once approved for a loan, this is the process in which the maximum sale price, loan amount, and month payments are calculated for the borrow. This not a loan approval, however it useful to know prior to searching for a home.
- **Principal** — The underlining amount of the loan which is actually borrowed.
- **Property Taxes** — These are the taxes that are enforced by the city, town, county, and state government entities. These taxes are included in the total monthly mortgage payments and are held in escrow by the lender.
- **REO** — Real estate owned properties or foreclosed properties currently owned by a financial institution such as the bank that made the loan to the previous owner
- **Reverse Mortgage** — This is specifically for seniors and it allows them to convert the equity in their home to cash.
- **Short Sale** — A situation when the seller's lender is willing to accept an offer and allows the sale to be completed for an amount less than the mortgage amount owed by the seller.
- **Title** — A legal document proving current and proper ownership of the property. Also referred to as a Title Deed, this document highlights the history of property ownership and transfers.
- **Underwriting** — The process in which the potential home buyer is evaluated for their financial ability to obtain and repay a loan, normally consisting of a credit check and appraisal of the property.
- **VA Loan** — Loans that are given to Americans who have served in the armed forces. They are administered by the Department of Veteran Affairs.

# opening doors



Dear Home Seller,

Selling a home in any market can be challenging -- and exciting! Some homes sell quickly while others sit on the market...what is the difference? Whether it's our proven sales approach, effective marketing campaigns, or utilizing our extensive network, at Realty One Group Legend no detail is overlooked. And we work hard to sell your home, not just list it.

We pride ourselves in the use of technology and innovation to maximize the exposure of your home. We created this helpful seller's guide to help educate you, and empower you to make the right decision when selecting the best agent to market and sell your home.

Our clients come first. We will educate you on what needs to be done so it leads to the successful sale of your home. There are many components to a happy and stress-free real estate transaction; you can count on us to be there every step of the process and make sure no detail is overlooked.

With a proven track record, the right skill set, and an office full of professionals, Realty One Group Legend has the right tools to successfully sell your home.

After you've had the chance to review this information, we'd like meet you, go over the entire process and get started on helping you sell your home. We can prepare an in-depth, customized marketing plan to review, highlighting the steps we will take together to successfully present & market your home.

At Realty One Group Legend, we are excited to get started on helping you sell your home. Call today for a direct connection to the Realtor who will assist you on this amazing journey!

Realty One Group Legend  
973.772.0660



600 GETTY AVE, SUITE 302  
CLIFTON, NJ 07011  
OFFICE: 973 772 0660  
[realtyonegroupnj.com](http://realtyonegroupnj.com)

*opening doors*

Questions...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Notes...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---