

Seller's Guide To Real Estate

A comprehensive, step-
by-step guide to or
selling your home
Done Right

- Preparation
- Pricing
- Marketing
- Open House
- Closing the Deal



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PREPARING YOUR HOME

Research shows that people often buy based on an emotional response to a home, and they often make that decision within seconds of opening the door. From the curb to the edge of the backyard, here is a checklist of things you can do to ensure prospective buyers have the best experience viewing your home.

Outside

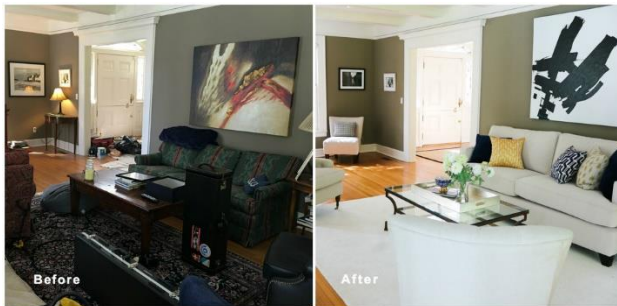
- Remove clutter from lawn
- Trim bushes and shrubs
- Wash windows
- Clean siding
- Pull weeds
- Mow and water lawn
- Re-paint doors
- Replace old bulbs
- Add vibrant landscaping
- Replace welcome mat
- Clean out gutters
- Clean outside grill equipment
- Power wash the driveway
- Clean patio furniture
- Replace old patio cushions
- Remedy patchy lawn

Inside

- De-clutter
- Professional home staging**
- Remove personal items
- Scrub bathroom fixtures
- Clean flooring throughout
- Repaint walls neutral colors
- Clean and organize cabinets
- Clean and polish appliances
- Remove excess furniture to open living space
- Dust and remove cobwebs
- Clean carpet if necessary
- Remove pet odors
- Maintain minimal artwork
- Clean or replace blinds / drapes
- Update handles, faucets, and fixtures

Pro Tip

Home staging increases sales prices up to **11%**



Suggested Repairs

- Hire contractor for large jobs (Reach out for recommendation)
- Repair peeling paint
- Replace carpet if needed
- Fix bad or missing caulking
- Correct water damage
- Fix or replace leaky faucets
- Repair switches and lights that don't work
- Fix driveway and porch cracks
- Refinish floors and / or decks

PRICING

Pricing is the most important factor when it comes to selling a home. Pricing a home correctly from the beginning gives you the BEST chance of selling for top dollar because your home has the most interest right when it hits the market.

Accurate Pricing Best Practices

- **Would You Like a Free Market Analysis?**
 - Real estate professionals have the efficacy and tools necessary to prepare a market analysis to help you determine a reasonable asking price. Call or text me if you would like me to provide one for you!
- Base your asking price on properties that have already sold, not homes that are currently listed
- Look for properties currently for sale in your neighborhood or subdivision to see what your competition is, and look for ways to gain a competitive edge
- Consider your home value as a tentative number, as the market will ultimately dictate what your house is worth
- If you are looking at comparables on your own as opposed to relying on an agent, be sure to try and find the most recent sales available
- Be careful not to compare two-story and ranch style homes. Ranch homes take up a larger footprint and cost more to build, so be sure to account for this

How to Find the Most Accurate Comparables

Comparable Qualities	What to Look For
Square Footage	Properties within 10% of the square footage of your home are always best. Do this based on above grade square footage. Finished basements don't add as much value
Beds & Baths	Find homes with similar bed and bath counts
Condition	Find homes in similar visual condition. Moderately updated homes should be compared with one other, just as fully updated should, dilapidated, etc.
Neighborhood	Try to look for homes in close proximity to yours. The closer they are, the more comparable they are, especially to appraisers
School District	Schools are always a huge factor for families, so compare your home to others in the same district

MARKETING

Marketing is an integral part of creating interest in your home. It is important to have a robust marketing plan, combining traditional advertising with digital and social media marketing. As your agent, here are some ways I market your property.

Marketing [Action Plan](#)

❑ For Sale Sign

- A For Sale sign in your yard is the best way to let passerbys know that your property is for sale

❑ Online Advertising

- Research shows that well over half of all people who buy homes turn to the internet as their first step, so this is crucial
- We always list your home [Zillow](#) (which automatically gets listed on its sister site [Trulia](#) as well)
- I write a concise and captivating description of your home for potential buyers to read as they navigate your listing

❑ Facebook

- More than 800 million people use Facebook every single month, so listing your house there is essential (see our Facebook page)
- Share your listing on local buy / sell groups for more targeted, local exposure

❑ Photography

- Good photos entice people to see your house in the first place, so make this a high priority
- Local agents are not paying to have professional photos taken for all their listings. Since most buyers find homes on the internet, we find it crucial to represent your home with professional photos. We will take high quality photographs, both inside and outside the home

❑ Incentives

- Agents pay the buyer's agent commission, and notate that in your listing to encourage agents to show the home
- Consider offering home warranty with the sale as a buyer incentive

UNDERSTANDING OFFER TERMS

So, you've got an offer on the table that interests you, now what? There are several considerations to be made before accepting. Follow these guidelines when reviewing an offer together.

What to Consider Before Accepting an Offer

- **Price** – Is the offer price reasonable? Consider the type of market you are in (buyer vs. seller), how long your home has been on the market, if the comparable sales justify the offer, and if you are comfortable with the rough net profit you will receive
- **Financing** – Note if the sale is contingent on obtaining a mortgage. We always ask for a copy of the pre-approval letter from the buyer before accepting to mitigate the risk of the formal loan application being denied
- **Home Inspection** – Most contracts have a specified window that the buyer is entitled to for conducting home inspections. Be aware of this and know the buyer is usually entitled to back out if there are unacceptable conditions
- **Appraisal** – Appraisal is almost always required if a mortgage is involved as lenders want to protect their investment. If an appraisal comes in low, either the sales price will have to be negotiated down, or the buyer will have to pay more out of pocket to keep the deal together. I will prepare a market analysis for you, so you have a rough idea of where the appraisal may come in at
- **Contingent on Sale Clause** – If the purchase is contingent on the buyer selling their home, be mindful of the stipulation that puts on the sale. If not specified, I will find out if they already have an accepted offer on their home or if the home is actively for sale
- **Settlement Date** – Review the closing window, especially if you need the proceeds to bring to the closing table on a new home. If financing is involved, expect a 45 day closing window as it takes time to get to clear-to-close
- **Earnest Money** – A serious buyer will almost always pay forward an earnest money deposit to be held in escrow upon offer acceptance. This shows good faith that they will purchase the home. It gives you, the seller, security knowing that you are entitled to the deposit if the buyer backs out in violation of the contract. Note that the average earnest deposit is 1-2% of the sales price
- **Closing Costs** - A buyer with a mortgage usually will have closing costs between 2-5% of the purchase price and may ask for some or all of these costs covered, depending on the type of loan. This would detract from your net proceeds

CLOSING THE DEAL

Once you and a buyer have come to an agreement and have a purchase agreement signed, it's important to prepare yourself for what you are responsible for and what further negotiations may take place.

Further Negotiations

- Most contracts have an inspection window in which the buyer is also able to request repairs or a reduction in sales price if there are any unsatisfactory items. Note the time frame available for these negotiations in the contract
- As mentioned earlier, if an appraisal comes in low, there will have to be negotiations to keep the financing in place, or the deal could fall through

Working with a Title Company

- In Maine, closings are conducted through a title company or attorney's office. They work to convey title correctly, as well as issue a title insurance policy
- We will set you up with a title company once you have an accepted offer and they will start the process of getting you and your buyer to the closing table

Seller Closing Costs

It's important to know what your estimated closing costs are before accepting an offer to give you a general idea of your net profits and avoid surprises at closing. Note that the buyer may ask for some of their costs to be covered in the purchase agreement. However, the costs below are those that are automatically assumed by the seller, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Seller Expense	Overview	Average Cost
Prorations	Covers the taxes on public water, public sewer and the property	\$350-2,000
Transfer Tax	Tax based on sales price levied by the city and county	\$1.10 per \$500 of sales price
Deed Prep Fee	Often charged by title company to cover preparation and handling of deed	\$200-400
Pre-Payment Penalty	Lenders may charge a penalty for paying off your loan early	Varying; Check with your lender

Lenders, government, and title companies may charge additional fees

Average seller closing costs are **6-7%** of the sales price

SAMPLE NET SHEET

Sales Price	\$200,000
Mortgages/Liens	
1st Mortgage Payoff	\$50,000
Pre-payment Penalties	\$0
Additional Lien	\$0
Additional Lien	\$0
Closing Costs	
Transfer Tax	\$440
Agent Fees (Both agents)	\$12,000
Tax Prorations	\$700
Deed Preparation Fee	\$300
Buyer Closing Costs	\$0
Total Estimated Costs	\$63,440
Estimated Net Proceeds	\$136,560