

HOW TO SELL YOUR HOME FOR TOP DOLLAR - FAST!

"No matter what I do, I just can't sell my home," you exclaim!

Actually, most homes can be sold in today's market in a reasonable amount of time, generally within two or three months, and most sellers are getting close to their asking prices.

There are nine steps in selling a home. If you're having a problem selling your home, review the following to try and determine where the problem lies:

* STEP 1 - ANALYSIS: The critical element is to correctly predict the price your home will bring in current market conditions. When you get the expected value of your home wrong, you're in for trouble from the start. The typical problem is that a home is priced too high for the market. This is the case for the majority of homes currently for sale. It is either the fault of the agent, the seller or both. You decide.

* STEP 2 - MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE WORDS AND PRICE: The data entered into the Multiple Listing Service computer will affect the number of times your home's information appears in other agents' computer searches of properties to consider. It will also determine whether your home will be shown to a prospective buyer. Carefully review the words and the price.

* STEP 3 - TRAFFIC: A home needs at least three or four showings weekly in order to confirm that it is "in tune" with the market. If few agents call to show your home, the problem is certainly in steps 1 or 2 above.

* STEP 4 - REMEMBERING: It is important that the buyer is able to remember your home. The brochure he or she has picked up in your home will help. It is critical at this stage for the buyer to rank your home among the best of the 30, 40 or 50 he or she has seen and to keep it under active consideration. Be sure your home's brochure is well prepared.

*STEP 5 - RETURN FOR A SECOND VISIT: If the buyer decides to return for a second visit, either he or she has forgotten some detail or, more likely, your home is on his or her "short list." It is most important to alert your agent promptly and to put your home's best foot forward at such a critical time.

* STEP 6 - THE OFFER: When you receive a written offer, your home is almost sold: At this point most buyers have decided your home is the one. But be careful: Many will have a second choice, and a good buyer-broker will not forget to mention this when the contract is presented.

* STEP 7 - AGREEMENT: Assuming you have a serious buyer and you have avoided an emotional conflagration, you will come to an agreement. What is said during negotiations is often less important than how it is said. What is not said can be critical.

* STEP 8 - REMOVAL OF CONTINGENCIES: Although you can hit a bump or two at this stage, they normally are not fatal. Possible problems that can surface very late in the game are a low appraisal or lack of loan approval. While these are serious problems indeed, especially in the week or two before settlement, they can usually be resolved with the help of experienced agents.

* STEP 9 - FINAL INSPECTION AND SETTLEMENT: When you get to the settlement table, the only issue remaining is usually the result of the buyer's final inspection. Any findings are customarily minor. At this point significant problems are unthinkable, so relax and keep signing.

So there you have it. There's no excuse for not selling your home. You and your agent should be able to pinpoint and resolve any problem. Save time and fix the problem *today*.