

Let Us Help You Make The Move.

Ready to sell your home but aren't sure where to start? Follow our easy step-by-step guide to get your home ready for the market. set the right asking price, market effectively, show your home at its best, negotiate a great deal, and complete the sale successfully. Hiring a REALTOR® can help you navigate the process and achieve the best results.

 **DOWNLOAD**

The Complete Guide

Guide to Selling Your Home

Selling your home is a big deal and marks the start of a new chapter in your life. This guide offers simple tips to help make the process smooth. You'll learn how to get your home ready to attract buyers, set the right asking price, market your home effectively, show your home at its best, negotiate a great deal, and complete the sale successfully. However, selling a home can be tricky, and that's where hiring a REALTOR®, to help you navigate every step, ensuring you get the best results and feel confident and optimistic throughout the entire process is so important.

Smart Renovations for Selling Your Home

When preparing your home for sale, it's important to make smart renovation choices. Avoid over-renovating and steer clear of personal touches that might not appeal to buyers. An experienced REALTOR® can guide you on which updates will offer the best return on investment.

Here are a few market-smart improvements to consider:

Kitchen: Updating the kitchen can be a great investment. While new flooring, cabinets, countertops, appliances, and lighting can be expensive, buyers love modern kitchens, and you'll likely recoup much of the cost. Even minor updates like new paint, flooring, cabinet doors, and hardware can lead to a quicker sale at a better price.

Bathrooms: Like kitchens, updated bathrooms can boost both value and marketability, especially in older homes. Focus on good lighting, large mirrors, attractive fixtures, ample storage, and neutral colors.

Energy-Efficient Upgrades: Energy-saving improvements are increasingly popular. Upgrades like double or triple-pane windows and storm doors that maintain comfortable indoor temperatures year-round can attract buyers. Explore your options and consult with a home products professional to find the best improvements for your budget and plans.

These smart renovations can enhance your home's appeal and help you achieve a successful sale.

Small Upgrades and Repairs Can Make a Big Difference

Nothing turns buyers off more than a home that looks neglected. To maximize your chances of getting top dollar, consider making some minor upgrades and definitely address any necessary repairs, even the ones that aren't immediately visible.

Here are some relatively minor upgrades and repairs that can significantly improve how buyers perceive your home:

Exterior

- Repair or replace damaged or worn items such as patios, decks, gutters, eaves, windows, shutters, screens, storm doors, light fixtures, porches, steps, walkways, and fences.
- Touch up exterior paint or repaint the house if needed.
- Fix doorbells, tighten loose doorknobs, and oil squeaky hinges.
- Clean or paint the front door, polish the door hardware, and replace the “Welcome” mat if necessary.
- Green up dry lawn patches, plant extra flowers for color, and place potted plants by the front door.
- These small upgrades and repairs can greatly enhance your home's appeal, making it more attractive to potential buyers.

Interior

- Repair or replace cracked molding or floor tiles, leaky faucets and toilets, loose doorknobs, squeaky hinges, off-track closet or screen doors, outdated bathroom lighting and hardware, toilet seats, and loose caulking or grout.
- Fix and touch up walls, ceilings, and windows.
- Brighten interiors with a fresh coat of paint in light, neutral colors.
- Shampoo carpets and rugs, or replace them if necessary.
- Ensure major appliances are in good working order.
- Upgrade switch and outlet plates and register vents with more elegant ones.
- Add closet organizers or shelving to make closets more functional and spacious-looking.
- Install organizers or shelving in the basement and garage.
- Clean and paint concrete floors and walls.
- Clean the water heater, drain sediment, and change the furnace filter.
- Consider buying new furniture to enhance the look of your current home.



These small upgrades and repairs can significantly improve the interior appeal of your home, making it more attractive to potential buyers.



Reorganization and Maintenance – The Basics You Can't Ignore

Just like necessary repairs, basic reorganization and maintenance tasks are essential. While buyers might not always notice these tasks when they are done, they will definitely notice when they aren't. Neglecting these tasks can make it harder for buyers to see themselves living in your home.

Here are a few reorganization and maintenance tasks that can boost your home's curb appeal and indoor comfort:

Exterior

- Mow and rake the lawn, trim hedges and shrubs, and weed and edge gardens.
- Clean sidewalks and the driveway, and remove any litter.
- Remove unnecessary items from the exterior of the house.
- Power wash the porch, siding, deck, and patio.
- Clean your outdoor furniture and remove any pieces in poor condition.
- Clean your air conditioner.
- Clear out the garage, keeping only cars. If your garage has turned into a storage area, discard unnecessary items and thoroughly organize and clean what remains.
- Ensure your pool is clean and functioning well, or properly closed if it's the off-season.
- These simple steps can make a big difference in how potential buyers perceive your home.

Interior

- Clean and tidy the entrance, and clear stairs and halls.
- Create space by storing excess furniture.
- Pre-pack and store clothes and other items from closets, cabinets, and shelves that you won't need until after moving.
- Organize kitchen countertops, removing unnecessary appliances to make the space look bigger.
- Thoroughly clean everything, both in sight and out of sight.
- Eliminate odors and add pleasant scents like air fresheners or potpourri.
- Remove unnecessary items from an unfinished basement, then organize and clean everything that remains.

A Few Words About Clutter

Clutter can make homes feel smaller, darker, and more high-maintenance. In contrast, clutter-free homes seem brighter, more open, and spacious, making it easier for buyers to imagine their own belongings and interior design ideas. While your belongings may be meaningful to you, they can make selling your home more difficult and potentially cost you thousands of dollars. Consult a REALTOR® for impartial feedback on decluttering to make your home more appealing to buyers.





Determining Your Home's Market Value

When trying to figure out your home's true market value and setting your expectations for the sale, consider these steps:

Be Impartial: Try to view your home objectively.

Research Thoroughly: Look online and visit open houses in your area.

Remember Your Goals: Keep in mind why you are selling.

It's important to understand that the market doesn't care about what you originally paid for your home or how much you need to sell it for to meet your financial goals. Some features you value might even reduce its market value by limiting potential buyers.

Do You Want to Sell or Need to Sell?

In a buyer's market, it's rare to get more than you need to meet your financial goals. Your personal situation might require you to accept less than what the market would offer if you had more time.

Research Your Local Market

You can learn a lot about your local market by researching websites like REALTOR.com®, the top online source for real estate information. Additionally, visit open houses in your area and compare them to your home in terms of location, size, features, and condition.

Pricing Your Home for the Market

In an ideal world, your home's value would match your financial needs and goals. However, the reality is that your home's value is determined by what the market is willing to pay at a given time. This can be challenging, especially if you have specific financial goals or have made an offer on another home contingent on selling your current one at a certain price within a specific timeframe.

Today's buyers are well-informed. They've often researched property values online for months, viewed multiple homes, and aren't in a rush to buy. Many are waiting for the perfect deal, making them more selective and cautious.

Setting the right asking price is crucial and can be one of the most challenging parts of selling your home. It's a balancing act.

Price too high: You risk discouraging serious buyers, leading to fewer showings and offers. This could result in a longer time on the market and ultimately a lower final sale price.

Price too low: While it might attract a lot of interest, it could lead to offers and negotiations that result in you receiving less than your home's true market value.

This balance is even more delicate in today's buyer's market, with various economic uncertainties. This is why it's essential to do thorough research and seek advice from experienced REALTORS® and financial professionals when you decide to sell.

What's Your Home Worth?

Strategically pricing your home is key to getting top market value. Let us help you navigate this process with our expertise and market knowledge.



Get a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) From a REALTOR®

A Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) is a report from a local Multiple Listings Service (MLS) that shows pricing information, property details, and photos of homes like yours that have recently sold, failed to sell, or are currently on the market in your area.

A REALTOR® will typically provide you with a CMA as part of their listing presentation, aiming to represent your interests when you sell. This CMA will suggest a price or price range for your home. The REALTOR® might adjust this figure during their visit after seeing your home's layout, quality, and condition. Even if you don't plan to list your home soon, many REALTORS® are happy to provide a Free Market Evaluation or "mini-CMA."

Studying what has worked and what hasn't in your area will help you strategically price, position, and stage your home to sell for top dollar in a reasonable timeframe with minimal inconvenience.

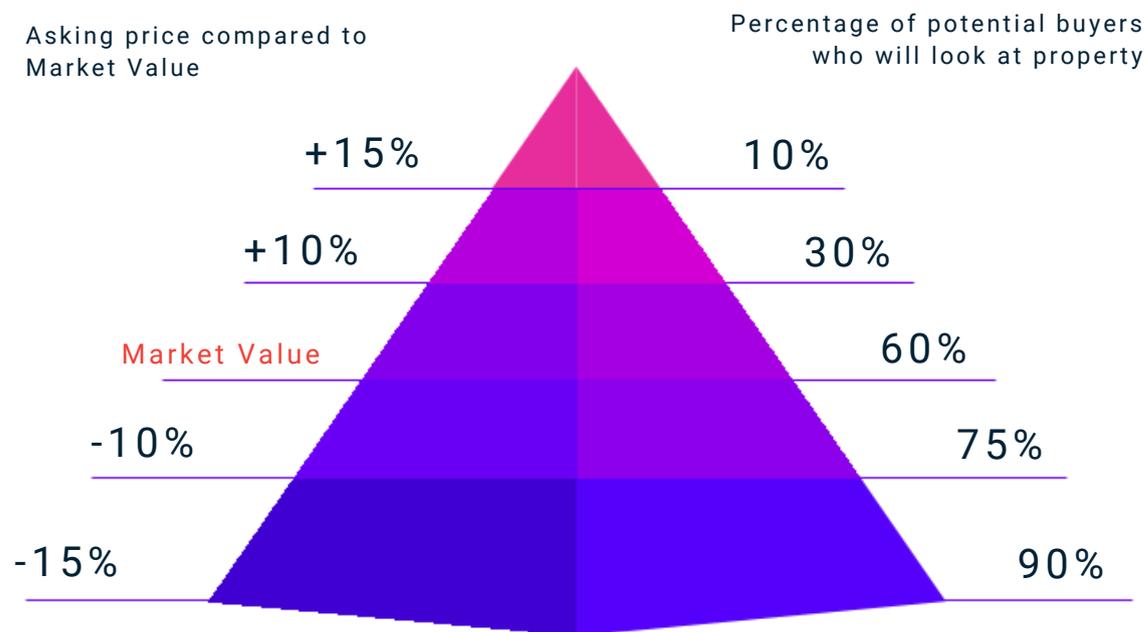


Price Your Home Right from the Start

If your home stays on the market for more than five weeks, it can start to be seen as a stale listing, one that other buyers have already passed over. This leads to less buzz, fewer showings, and offers, and reduces the chances of getting your asking price.

That's why it's important to price your home correctly from the beginning, aiming to receive and accept a solid offer during the first three to four weeks, also known as the "golden window."

Attracting qualified buyers who will pay top market value requires careful timing. Experience shows that homes generally attract the most interest and activity during the second to fifth weeks on the market. So, timing your sale right is crucial to achieving the best results.



Price Your Home for Maximum Exposure and Buyer Interest
The price you set for your home directly influences the number of buyers, showings, and offers you receive, as well as how quickly it sells. This relationship is illustrated in the Pricing Pyramid diagram below.

The Consequences of Overpricing When You List

Overpricing your home with the intention of lowering the price later might seem like a good strategy, but it rarely works. Sellers who overprice their homes, even by just 10%, and then reduce the price multiple times, often end up getting less than if they had priced it realistically from the start, as shown in the Sale Price to Time-on-Market diagram.

Here's why:

- 🏠 Fewer buyers- Even interested buyers may ignore your home if they see it's overpriced.
- 🏠 Fewer showings- Agents are less likely to show an overpriced home to their clients.
- 🏠 Missed opportunities- The right buyers might never see your home because they're searching in a lower price range where your home should be listed.
- 🏠 Attracting the Wrong Buyers- Pricing your home too high will attract buyers looking in that price range, who will likely prefer other homes that are truly worth the asking price.
- 🏠 Making Other Homes Look Better- An overpriced home makes correctly priced homes more attractive, both in your price range and the range where your home should be.

- 🏠 Fewer Serious Offers- Buyers may avoid making offers, thinking it's a waste of time on an overpriced home.
- 🏠 Potential Mortgage Rejection- Even if you receive an offer, an excessive price can lead to mortgage rejection after the lender's appraisal, wasting valuable time.
- 🏠 Stale Listing Perception- Reducing the price later won't generate as much interest because buyers may see your home as a stale listing.

The Bottom Line- Realistic and Strategic Pricing

Pricing your home realistically from the start, aligned with its window of maximum market exposure, is crucial. This approach helps you leverage buyer interest and emotions effectively, especially in today's market.

By pricing your home right from the beginning, you will attract more buyers, and more importantly, the right buyers—qualified, motivated, and willing to pay top market value during the prime listing period.

Marketing Your Home Effectively

Strategically preparing and pricing your home are key to attracting serious, financially-qualified buyers. To maximize the impact of these strategies, your home must be effectively marketed through various advertising channels.

Key Advertising Channels

Today, the internet (including REALTOR.com®, REALTOR® websites, social media, blogs, etc.) and direct contact with REALTORS® are the primary sources of home information for buyers, at 89% and 88%, respectively. Other sources include yard signs, open houses, newspaper and real estate magazine ads, home builders, and television.

Comprehensive Marketing Strategy

Successfully marketing a home involves multiple activities, such as home preparation, pricing, presentation, strategic advertising, and networking. The goal is to maximize your home's exposure, increasing the number of showings and offers, and ultimately achieving top market value. An experienced REALTOR® has the knowledge and resources to coordinate these activities effectively.





How Buyers Find Homes for Sale

The internet is revolutionizing real estate advertising, making an online marketing strategy essential.

Here's what internet buyers look for most on real estate websites:

Property photos: 99%

Detailed property information: 99%

Virtual tours: 88%

Real estate agent contact information: 80%

Interactive maps: 78%

Yard Signs and Direct Calls

Interestingly, yard signs play a crucial role. Buyers who call about a yard sign are already interested in the town, neighborhood, street, and even your front yard. This same level of interest applies to those who find your home on REALTOR.com® mobile apps.

Tips to Maximize Your Home's Attractiveness to Buyers

To make the most of your efforts in preparing your home for sale, ensure it looks its best during open houses, agent tours, and showings. A well-presented home can give you a competitive edge and help it sell faster. Many REALTORS® have expertise in home staging through education and experience. Utilize their skills and impartiality to create an inviting atmosphere for buyers.

Time-Proven Tips for Showing Your Home

- Be Absent- Ideally, you should not be present so buyers feel comfortable making comments.
- Highlight Sheets- Make sure your home highlight sheets are easily visible.
- Maximize Light- Open all drapes and shades during the day to let in as much light as possible, but screen out unattractive views.
- Light Up the House- Ensure the whole house is well-lit, especially dark corners and hallways.
- Use the Fireplace- Light (or turn on) the fireplace.
- Showcase Features- Highlight your home's best features.
- Quiet Background- Turn off the television and play quiet background music.
- Add Color- If you've repainted in neutral tones, add bold splashes of color with throw pillows, crockery, pictures, etc.
- Fresh Flowers- Place fresh flowers where they'll stand out.

Setting the Stage

Aim for perfect open houses and showings by creating an inviting and attractive environment that appeals to potential buyers.

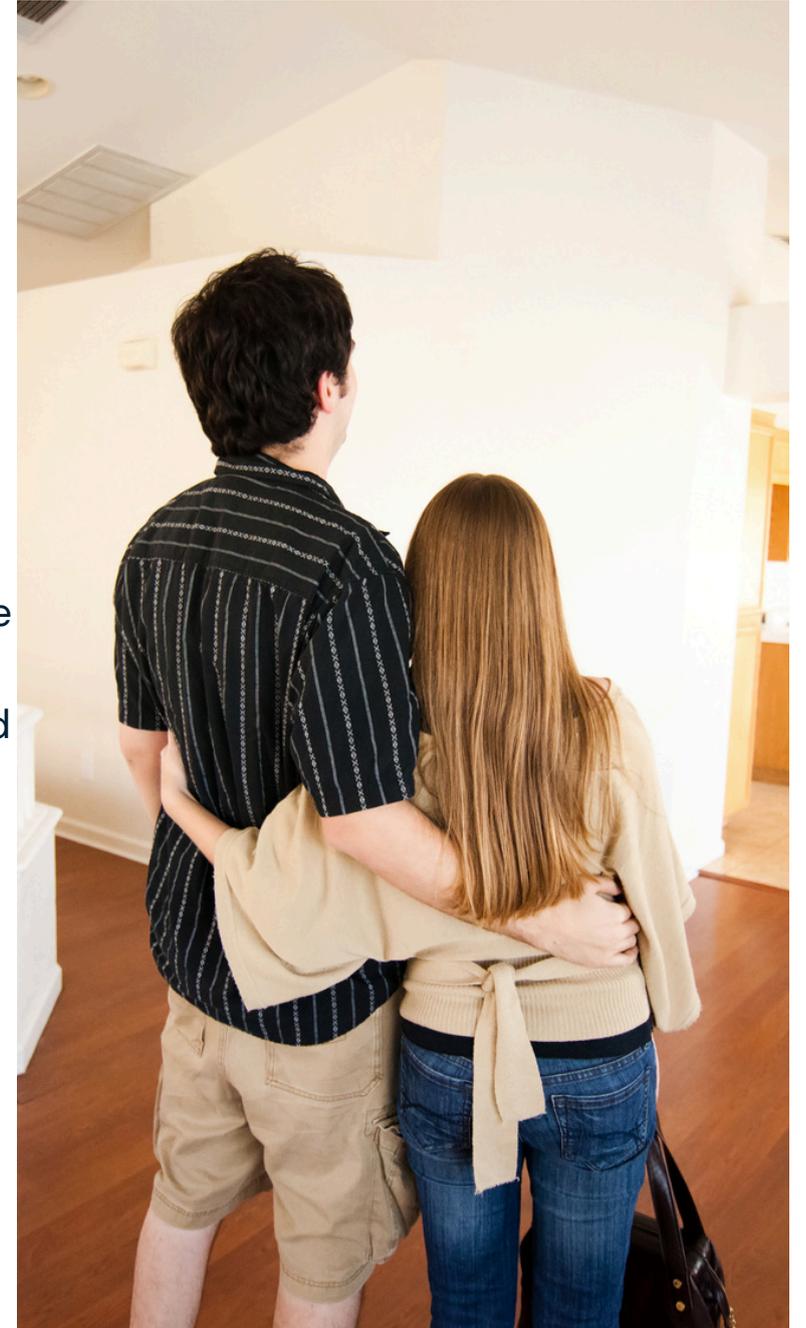
Additional Tips for Showing Your Home

- Open Doors- Keep all doors between rooms open to create an inviting atmosphere.
- Fresh Air- If possible, open windows beforehand to circulate fresh air.
- Tidy Up- Pick up toys, remove all clutter, make beds, and put away clothes.
- Clean Floors- Ensure floors are clean and carpets and rugs are vacuumed.
- Tidy Bins- Make sure trash and recycling bins are tidy and odor-free.
- Sparkling Kitchen & Bathrooms: Ensure the kitchen and bathrooms are spotless.
- Warm Aroma- If possible, bake cookies or put a pan of cinnamon in the oven for a warm and inviting aroma.
- Manage Pets- Ideally, pets should be unseen. Keep pet areas clean and odor-free as not everyone shares a love of animals, and some may be allergic.
- Secure Valuables- Lock away and hide all cash, jewelry, and small valuables.

IMPORTANT

Keep Your Home Available (And Ready) For Showings

Especially during the first weeks after listing your property, real estate agents from various firms will want to show it to their clients. During this peak interest period, it's crucial to make your home available for showings, preferably at the times requested by buyers' agents.





Navigating the Offer and Negotiation Process

Understanding the Offer

When a buyer, typically with the help of a REALTOR®, makes an offer on your home, they will use a contract developed by your local real estate association with legal counsel. This contract allows the buyer to set a sale price and include terms such as closing and possession dates, deposit amount, and other conditions. The buyer's REALTOR® will deliver the offer to your REALTOR®, who will then present it to you. You should review every detail of the offer with your REALTOR®, who will answer all your questions about the offer and the process. You can then accept the offer, reject it, or counter it to start the negotiation process. Offers and counter-offers will be exchanged until an agreement is reached or negotiations fail.

The Negotiation Process

Negotiating the transaction is often the most complex part of selling a home but also the most creative. Here's an overview of the process and strategies for negotiating the best deal:

Key Strategies

Keep Your Situation Private: Do not disclose personal details such as your finances, reasons for selling, or urgency. The buyer's agent aims to get the best deal for their client, so revealing vulnerabilities can weaken your position.

State Your Priorities Clearly: Clearly expressing your priorities can strengthen your negotiating position.

Respect the Buyer's Priorities: Understanding what the buyer values can help you negotiate more effectively. For instance, if the buyer is firm on the price due to financing limits, they may be flexible on other terms like the closing date.

Seal the Deal with the Right Buyer: In a tough market, be prepared to compromise to close a reasonable offer. Waiting for the perfect offer might cost you more in the long run.

Basic Principles of Successful Negotiation

Disclose Everything: Proactively disclose all known defects to avoid legal issues later. Most states have property disclosure forms.

- Ask Questions: Offers may contain complex terms and multiple addenda. Your REALTOR® can help clarify everything.
- Respond Quickly: Buyers can experience remorse, so don't delay in responding to offers.
- Stay Calm and Patient: Keep communication civil and agreeable, even if the buyer becomes tense.
- Defer Small Issues: Focus on resolving major issues first and come back to minor ones later.
- Meet Halfway: For minor disagreements, consider splitting the difference to keep the process moving.
- Take Care with Contingencies: Your signed acceptance of an offer becomes the sales contract, which is binding except for any contingencies.
- Rely on Your REALTOR®: Your agent is there to represent your best interests throughout the process. Your success is their success.
- These principles can help ensure a smooth and successful negotiation process, ultimately leading to a successful sale.

Finalizing the Sale

A pending sales agreement almost always includes contingencies and special conditions that need to be met by both the buyer and seller before the closing date, which usually occurs 30 to 60 days after signing the agreement.

Common Contingencies and Conditions:

Financing: The buyer must secure financing.

Title Search: A historical review of all legal documents related to the property to ensure there are no claims against it.

Title Insurance: Purchased to protect against errors in the records or review process.

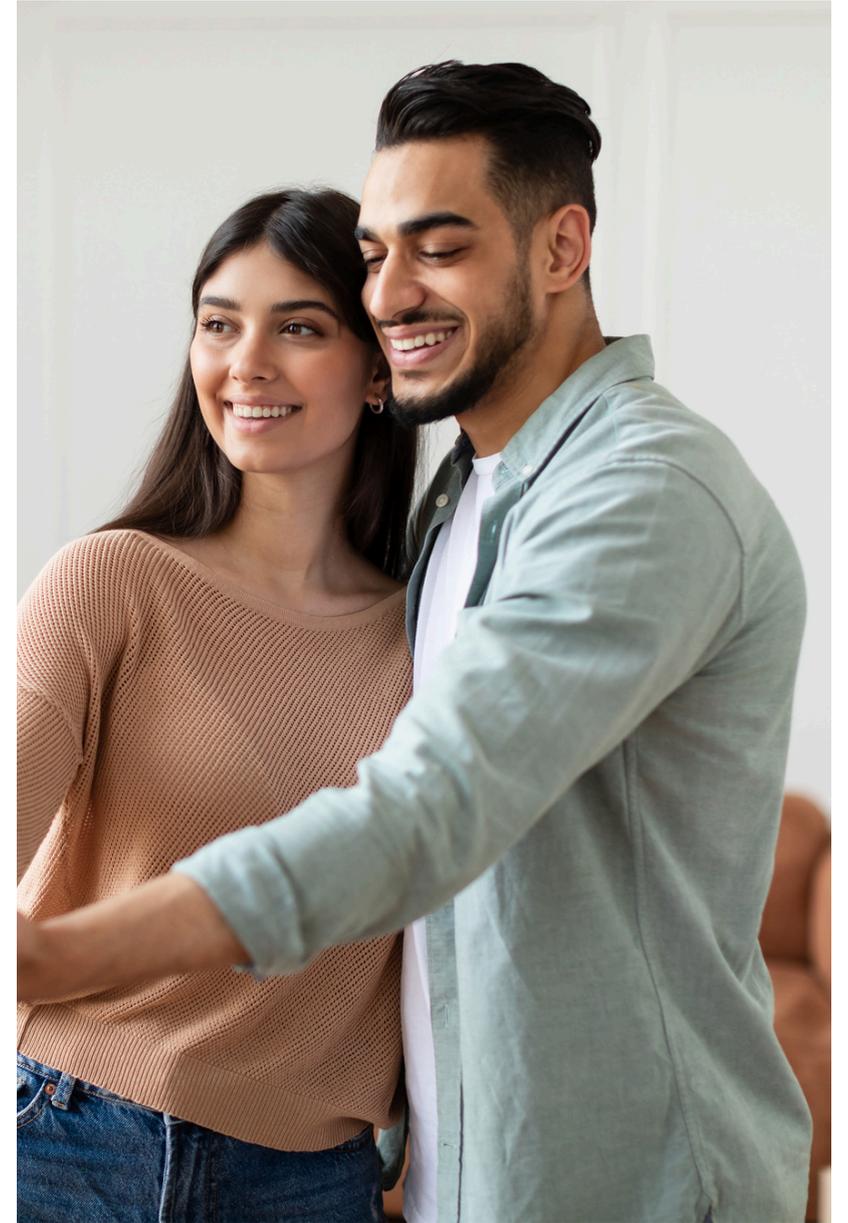
Appraisal: A professional appraisal to ensure the home's value justifies the loan amount.

Contractual Promises: Any additional promises made, such as buyer incentives or home improvements.

Home Inspection: An independent inspection of the home's structural and functional condition (foundation, roof, electrical, heating, plumbing, etc.).

Termite Inspection: An independent termite inspection.

Final Walk-Through: The buyer inspects the home to ensure it's in the same condition as when the agreement was signed.



Completing the Transaction

If both parties fulfill their contractual obligations, the closing process (also known as "escrow" or "settlement") will proceed smoothly.

Steps in the Closing Process:

- Review the Sales Agreement: Ensure you understand your obligations. Your REALTOR® can help you with this.
- Determine Amount Due: The closing agent collects the total amount due from the buyer.
- Adjustments: The closing agent ensures all adjustments (e.g., prepayment of taxes, utilities) are factored into the transaction.
- Transaction Costs: The closing agent ensures transaction costs (closing, legal fees, etc.) are paid.
- Seller's Payments and Credits: The closing agent determines the seller's payments, credits, and adjusted net proceeds.
- Sign Documentation: The seller signs the property title and all other necessary documents.
- Collect Keys: The closing agent collects the keys and any other necessary items from the seller.
- Provide Proceeds: The seller receives the net proceeds and copies of the sale documentation.
- Record Title: The closing agent ensures the buyer's title is properly recorded in the local records office along with any mortgage liens.

Final Steps

Typically, the buyer's possession date is within a few days of the closing date, at which point your former home will have a new occupant. Different areas may handle the final settlement slightly differently, but the general process remains the same. Working closely with your REALTOR® throughout this process will help ensure everything goes smoothly and there are no costly mistakes.

Selling your home is a major step, and with the right guidance, it can be a straightforward and satisfying process. Our comprehensive sellers guide, "Let Us Help You Make The Move," offers essential steps and insights to help you navigate the process with confidence. From smart renovations and minor upgrades to effective marketing strategies and negotiation tips, our guide covers everything you need to know. Rely on our expertise and market knowledge to help you get the best value for your home. Ready to sell your home? Contact us! We would be happy to help you with your transaction.



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