

# Selling A Home Timeline

## **As Soon as Possible**

Evaluate two or three agents: don't just hire the one who promises to sell your home for the highest price. Ask each agent which homes she's sold in your area, how she'll market your home. What's most important is an agent who will fight to get the deal that's best for you, not just the deal that's easiest for her. Make sure he or she is providing top-notch service to our clients. Read customer reviews.

Once you have a partner, you need a plan. Before you roll up your sleeves and get to work, Dawn suggests making a list of all your to-dos. This enables you to break the process down into bite-sized chunks so you don't feel overwhelmed. Work with your agent to set priorities, then focus on knocking out one task at a time.

Start Packing: This is where the going gets tough. It's time to part with your stuff—but only for a little while. Take a look around and decide what you can live without until your home sells. Rent a storage unit if you have to. Just pack it up and get it out so you can make room for buyers. Here's an added bonus: The rest of the work will be much easier with less stuff clogging your corners! Also, consider having a tag sale or donating to a local charity.

Look at the calendar and set a date. Strategize with your agent about when to put your home on the market. Things to consider include your personal schedule, the academic and holiday calendar, time of year and day of the week. Homes [listed in winter](#) are 16 percent more likely to sell within six months, sell a week faster and sell for 1.2 percent closer to list price than homes listed in any other season.

Figure out where you're moving. Determine if you're planning to buy a new home right away or down the road or if you're just looking to rent your next place. There are many scenarios to consider, so talk to your agent and come up with the right plan for you.

## **2–3 Months Before Listing**

Uncover Issues: Get a pre-sale home inspection. Of course, your buyer's home inspector will still find things that need to be done. But being proactive enables you to identify potential deal breakers so you can adjust your timeline and budget accordingly.

Tackle Repairs: With your home inspection report in hand, work with your real estate agent to prioritize the findings. Just keep these wise words in mind that it is always less expensive to repair or replace something up front than to wait for the buyer to ask for that in inspection requests. This is especially true for major fixes like a new roof or HVAC unit. That's the kind of stuff that scares people to death. They'll ask \$12,000 for a roof that would cost \$4,500. It's a vast difference! Also, check the plumbing, electrical system, drainage and windows to make sure they are all in good condition.

Deep Cleaning: Before you list your home, do a deep cleaning. Wash the floors, scrub the grout, scour the kitchen, dust the blinds, wash the windows and steam clean the carpets. Remove anything you don't absolutely need (consider putting it in storage, PODS or stacking it neatly in your garage, or having a tag

sale) and organize the rest. Leave some furniture to define the space for listing photos and tours. People can better visualize how big a room is when key pieces of furniture are left in place.

## **1 Month before listing**

Spruce It Up: First impressions count—a lot! Breathe new life into your home with a fresh coat of paint, and pay close attention to curb appeal. Ask your real estate agent to refer a reputable home stager to help you incorporate today’

Stage your home. Keep your home organized and free of clutter when people are touring it. Think about how to use lighting to show off key features of the home and remove any personal items on display. (SEE HOME STAGING INFORMATION AND TIPS BELOW)

Get professional listing photos taken. Getting professional pictures taken is very important. They know how to make rooms look their best. We pay for professional photography for all clients as part of our listing package.

## **1-2 Weeks Before Listing**

Deep Clean: Save this step until it’s almost time to plant the For Sale sign in your yard. You don’t want a month of muddy paw prints traipsing through your home after spending your hard-earned cash to clean the carpets. Make sure every surface sparkles,

## **1 Week Out**

List your home on Thursday or Friday. Most homebuyers look at homes online throughout the week and go out to see homes in person on the weekend. Average daily website traffic on [is 20 percent higher on weekdays](#) than over the weekend, and traffic on Fridays is 29 percent higher than Sundays.

Prepare for the open house. The idea of having complete strangers walk through your home can be unnerving so you will want to put away valuables such as cash and jewelry as well as personal items such as family photos and your personal calendar. No one needs to know when you’re out of town.

## **Ready, Set, Go!**

Don’t wait until the ground thaws to knock out your to-dos. Get a head start on the competition so you can be buyers’ first breath of fresh air when spring comes around. Get started now and call me for any help

## After Listing Your Home:

Ask your agent for homebuyer feedback. A good agent will share this with you automatically, but it doesn't hurt to ask. Once your home is on the market, tour requests should start rolling in. Your agent should call each buyer's agent and ask for feedback on the place and its price. If your home is overpriced or needs a few simple cosmetic changes, the agents representing the buyers will usually let your agent know as a professional courtesy. Once you hear the same feedback from a few buyers, act on it.

Evaluate and negotiate the offers. Your agent will present all of the offers received, advise you on counteroffers and guide you through negotiating prices and terms, if needed. You should consider all the terms of the offer, not just the final listing price, to make sure you get the best deal.

Enter mutual acceptance, close the deal. Sign the offer, negotiate and complete inspection repairs, and start packing!

Closing Day! Work with your agent, lender and the title or escrow company to ensure a smooth transfer of ownership to the buyer. Then it's time to celebrate!

## STAGING YOUR HOME ~ HELPFUL INFORMATION:

### Stage Your Home

Look at you go! Now you're ready to get your home looking its best for potential buyers.

What does "looking its best" mean? You already dusted your shelves and vacuumed your carpets. But if you want to stay calm and confident about selling your home for top dollar, be willing to invest several hundred dollars to stage your home. Sound crazy? It'd actually be crazy to *skip* staging. We'll show you why.

**Why Stage?** In her book *Psychological Staging*, Kristie Barnett—an award-winning staging pro and blogger—says effective staging taps into buyer minds by:

- Making rooms appear bigger
- Giving a home a high-end feel
- Accentuating the positives
- Downplaying the negatives

So is it really worth it? Consider this: Most sellers' agents report that staging a home has a dramatic impact on getting it sold faster. They also found that staging increases the amount of money you can make on your home. In fact, get this: Almost 30% of agents said staging increased the dollar amount of buyer offers by 1-5%, in comparison to similar homes. Okay, you get it. Staging is worth it. But where do you start? Well, before we break down how to give your most important rooms a makeover to impress

buyers, there's something you should do first: Get a pre-listing home inspection. (SEE HOME INSPECTION BELOW)

### **Staging Tips for Every Budget**

The visual impact of your home has the power to attract buyers or immediately turn them away. Let's focus on how to make your home look as appealing as possible.

#### **Must-Dos for Every Room**

Before you dig into the details, you have a little housekeeping to do. Clear the slate with these heavy-hitting tasks:

- Scrub every surface until it shines.
- Minimize clutter to maximize space.
- Pay a pro to deep clean rugs and carpets.

To really make rooms look their best, apply a fresh coat of paint.

#### **Where to Focus Your Staging Wow Factor**

Once you've tackled those housekeeping items, decide where to invest the majority of your staging budget. Of course, where to spend all comes down to how much of a staging budget you have (we'll cover a budget range from zero to max), but most experts agree that three areas bring the most bang for your staging buck:

- Living room
- Master bedroom and bath
- Kitchen and dining room

#### **Zero Budget**

- Living room: Arrange seating with conversation—not channel surfing—in mind. Borrow pieces from other rooms if needed.
- Master bedroom and bath: Go minimal by storing bulky furniture. (That means you, treadmill!) In the bathroom, straighten up your linen closet and hide the hamper.
- Kitchen and dining room: Clear off countertops. Set the table with your best dishes, flatware and linens.

#### **Mini Budget**

- Living room: Add a colorful vase of flowers to your mantle or coffee table. Update lighting fixtures. Buy new throw pillows for your sofa.
- Master bedroom and bath: Create a spa-like feel with fresh new bedding and throw pillows. Showcase the bathroom with fluffy new towels and updated faucets and cabinet handles.
- Kitchen and dining room: Refresh cabinets with new paint and handles. Install an entry-level backsplash. Paint brass light fixtures with an updated color.

#### **Max Budget**

- Living room: Bring worn-out flooring up to standard with the rest of the neighborhood. Replace tired furniture or freshen it up with a tasteful slipcover.
- Master bedroom and bath: Add window treatments. Hire a pro to organize your closet. Upgrade the bathroom with granite countertops and ceramic tile flooring.

- Kitchen and dining room: Upgrade to stainless appliances and/or natural stone countertops. Buy a statement light fixture to hang over your dining table.

### **Get a Home Inspection**

Wait a second. Why should you (the seller) get a home inspection? Isn't that a task for buyers who want to avoid a bad deal? Actually, it's a worthwhile tool for home sellers too. A pre-listing inspection might cost a few hundred dollars, but it's money well spent.

Why? First, it can help you find any hidden issues before you put your home on the market. Hidden issues are *not* a surprise you want in the middle of the home sale, right? It also keeps buyers from demanding big bucks at the negotiation table or, worse, from skipping out on the deal at the last minute.

What's Included in a Home Inspection?

According to the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), a home inspection includes:

- Electrical, plumbing, heating and cooling systems
- Walls, ceilings, floors, windows and doors
- Roof, attic and visible insulation
- Foundation, basement and structural components

### **How It Works**

A home inspection is like a medical checkup for your house—minus the hospital gown and stethoscope. A qualified home inspector will examine every access point of your home to see if there are any health and safety issues. Afterwards, you'll receive a detailed report outlining what works, what doesn't, and recommendations for maintenance and repair.

Don't worry about checking every single to-do off your list, but pay attention to big-ticket issues. Your agent can help you sort through the findings, but the roof and electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems typically take priority. If you have room in your budget, take care of those before planting the "For Sale" sign in your yard.

### **How to Find a Home Inspector**

- Your real estate agent can recommend a trustworthy home inspector.
- If you prefer to pick your own, be aware that licensing and certification requirements vary by state.
- You can search for pros through the [American Society of Home Inspectors](#).

The home inspection will give you a heads-up of any major repairs you need to handle before listing. If you don't want to deal with the repairs yourself, you can notify buyers of whatever issues come up and adjust your listing price accordingly.

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