



Selling Your Home? **Get the Inside Story Before You Sign On The Dotted Line**

If you find yourself facing the current real estate market as a “seller” and not a “buyer,” it might surprise you to know there are options available to market your home that did not exist even a year ago.

The thought of selling your home without the assistance of a “Real Estate Agent” sends most people into panic. All the paperwork seems overwhelming not to mention trying to direct buyer traffic to your house. If you want to sell your home fast (and most of us do) the first instinct is to try to find a good real estate agent. You can interview several agents, search the Internet for the most compelling ad, or talk to your friends and neighbors.

Or . . . you can save yourself a lot of money (and headaches) by selling your house yourself.

Hiring a Listing Agent

Hiring a listing agent only entitles you to hope that this agent sends traffic to your house. Make sure you interview the agent before signing the “exclusive” contract. Find out how many homes they personally listed have sold in the last year. It takes a dedicated and systematic agent to be successful. They must have a proven system to succeed for you. If you find an experienced and successful listing agent the traffic does arrive at your door.

What you probably don’t know is that you, the homeowner, are going to do most of the work for them. The buyer’s agent calls you directly to schedule the appointment to show the house. You must keep the house in showing order and, possibly, be there to let them in the house. The contract you sign lets the agent off the hook if anything is stolen or damaged, so keep this in mind when they suggest a lock box.

Once the listing agent has your signature on the dotted line their personal responsibility to you is pretty much over. If they can deliver the traffic then it is just a matter of time before the house is sold. Don’t expect them to show up with any buyers or be there to show the house. The word “listing” says it all.

Hire Yourself and Become a FSBO (For Sale By Owner)

All the tools available to the listing agent are available to you as a FSBO. The multiple-listing service, the popular websites, someone to handle the paperwork, all of it. You can even hire someone to take photos, handle “staging” the house for showing, and be there to show it and clean up afterwards. Find a title company and/or an attorney to handle the paperwork and you are done.

You still have money in your pocket at the end...plus the satisfaction of being in control and selling the house in a way that suits you.

Can You Become a Successful FSBO?

Do you have the patience to meet and greet strangers in your home? Can you talk about price with confidence? Are you organized enough to return phone calls, set up appointments, and stay up-to-date on E-mail inquiries?

If the answer to all those questions is YES, then the last question is: can you envision putting an extra \$10,000+ in your pocket after the sale? If the answer is YES again, then this is what motivates you to play this game.

Do Open Houses Work?

Generally the open house strategy works well for agents who hand out their business cards to generate more business for them.

If you are selling the house yourself in a neighborhood close to a busy avenue, then the odds are in favor of a positive response. An open house does allow your renting neighbors to browse and make an offer.

Making the Decision

If you're afraid you can't be successful as a FSBO, then hiring an agent is the only choice you can make, but don't let fear keep you from investigating all the options.

I have sold one house as a FSBO and another by hiring an agent, so I am familiar with both sides of the decision-making process. Since the current market trend protects the buyer, the seller is left without an advocate, so choose wisely.

For more inside information to help you make this tough decision, see *"Selling Your Home - How the Real Estate World Works."*