



Three Keys to Selling Your Home in a Buyers Market

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Don't worry about the idea of selling your home in a slow or "buyer's market" because when you follow these three easy steps, success is right around the corner! Why, because most home sellers today are neglecting one or more of these crucial steps discussed below. So if you are serious about selling your home, here are 3 ESSENTIAL STEPS you must take into consideration to make your home stand out from the competition.

Step One - Prepare the Home on the Inside (Home Staging)

Every home seller is aware of the need to spruce up their home (product) so that it sells, but most are not aware of exactly HOW to do this. In fact, according to the National Association of Realtors, the average staging investment is between 1 and 3 percent of the home's asking price, which generates a return of 8 to 10 percent. Home sellers know they need to spend; they just need professional guidance on what to spend on in order to have the greatest return on investment.

After living in a home for more than 2 years, it is almost impossible to "objectively" view the space from a buyer's perspective and thus spend your staging budget wisely. The elements of the home that may have annoyed us originally, we no longer notice. Our homes are like our children: we are filled with sentiment about them, so that objectively altering them to fit a buyer's perspective becomes nearly impossible.

So what does a home seller do to view the home objectively and get the most from their staging budget? Hire a professional home stager who is an expert at marketing the inside of a home, so that buyers emotionally respond to each space. These professionals are called "Home Stagers" and they are adept at working with home sellers in order to help them "disassociate" from the home and begin to view their beloved home as their number-one marketing commodity.

Buyers Need to FEEL HOME in Your Home before Making an Offer...

Successful staging is the art of using marketing and decorating techniques to create an environment that buyers can aspire to: "If I buy this house, I can live like this." An HSR Certified Professional Home Stager uses the art of "positioning" to create several "emotional connection points" throughout the home so that when a buyer steps into the house they "feel home." This is it. This is the one.

So, how does a home seller create a home that has the “feel home” look that buyers like? Here are eight things an HSR Certified Professional Home Stager applies in order to do this:

F **irst Impressions** - Room by room, the home seller and staging professional will walk through and take note of a buyer’s first impressions, what grabs us, what glares at us and what gives to us a feeling of home. They will assess scale, balance, rhythm, pattern, texture and color in order to find simple solutions to create harmony.

E **liminate Clutter** - The packing starts now as we pack away a good percentage of everything in the room in order to create a more clean, open and spacious feel.

E **mphasizing the Positive – *While Downplaying the Negative*** - Finding your beautiful focal points, the staging professional will emphasize what they love about the room and remove or distract from the negative aspects of the rooms.

L **ighten Up** - Focusing on lighting and color, the stager will help you make each room into a bright, warm and inviting space that buyers can respond to.

H **ome Buyers Appeal** - In order for a buyer to “feel home” they need not be reminded of this being your home. The stager will depersonalize the space while retaining the warmth and fun of family living.

O **bligations-Cleaning/Repairs** - The dirty work speaks for itself but is many times overlooked because you’ve lived here for so long. Let’s get rid of the buyer’s mental “repair list” by doing it ourselves.

M **odernizing** - Updating your style and building simple accessories out of what you already have to create clean lines and form. In some cases, the stager will recommend purchases as valuable “investments” in the staging process.

E **motional Connection Points** - Creating the “Wow Factor”. This is the fun part and is a huge focus of the stager’s positioning strategy. They will show you how to build in these subtleties in order to make the buyers subconsciously desire to live here and “feel home”. The “emotional connection points” are where marketing strategy and merchandising really comes in to play!

According to a recent 2007 HomeGain survey of over 2000 real estate agents across the country, the average staging cost, nets a home seller over a 343% return on each dollar spent! A staging professional can consult with you and give you a detailed Action Plan, or do the work themselves along side of you for maximum returns.

Once you completed Step One, it becomes infinitely easier to do Step Two...

Step Two – Get the Word Out (Marketing Campaign)

Did you know that according to the National Association of Realtors over 80% of homebuyers are ONLINE looking at photos of the homes FIRST, before they decide to drive by and visit? Make those photos count by doing these simple photo-taking strategies:

1. **Turn on ALL the lights** – People want light and bright!
2. **Take TONS of photos-** Review the photos on your computer to choose the best grouping considering that MORE is better
3. **Take OFF the Flash** – Try the photos with and without the flash for better lighting choices
4. **Review the Shot** - View the Room through the digital viewer for imperfections that are missed to the naked eye (i.e. sheets sticking out, dirty window glare, etc.)
5. **Take all ANGLES**

Your real estate agent is adept at listing your home in all the venues that homebuyers are looking at in your area. ***Remember to think like a homebuyer and go online to review your listing. Does it visually have appeal and stand out among similar priced homes in your area? If not, go back to Step One and Two to either increase the home's attraction or consider lowering Step Three.***

Step Three - Price the Home Right the First Time

Your real estate agent is an expert on the marketplace and at reading and understanding comparables. Statistically, a home that “sits” loses its new listing buzz and ends up settling for a lower price down the road. In fact, according to a National Association of Realtors survey, the longer a home stays on the market, the further below list price it drops. Homes that sold in the first 4 weeks averaged 1 percent more than the list price; 4 to 12 weeks averaged 5 percent less; 13 to 24 weeks averaged 6.4 percent less than the list price; and 24 weeks averaged more than 10 percent less than list price.

Research the homes for sale in your area and talk with your agent about introducing your home at a price that will encourage potential buyer traffic because the first two steps to selling your home will be sure to promote offers.