



Presenting an Offer

Get purchase contract negotiations off on the right foot by presenting your clients' offer effectively.

For more, check out [Sure-Fire Strategies for Presenting an Offer](#) in our [tool kit on negotiation](#).

- Always try to present the buyers' purchase offer in person to the sellers. If that's not possible (with out-of-town sellers, for example), then try to arrange a conference call when all of the decision-makers can participate.
- Anticipate possible sellers' objections ahead of time, and try to gather the information you will need to respond to the objections (an updated CMA, etc.).
- Use language that shows the sellers that you're both working toward a common goal. Don't say, "My buyers," but instead say, "Our buyers."
- Don't just concentrate on the price. Flexibility on closing time, no contingencies, and a well-qualified buyer are all strong aspects of an attractive offer.
- If the sellers won't accept the terms of an offer, wait two or three days and present the offer again.

For more, check out [Tips for Presenting a Counteroffer](#).

Crafting and presenting counteroffers is another test of your negotiating skills. Try these techniques to work toward a win-win situation:

- Keep all counteroffers focused on the big picture. Remind sellers that the value of the concession is probably far less than the profit they are making on their home.
- If you think the price is reasonable, do your best to prevent your seller clients from negotiating for the sake of the game. Remind them that a counteroffer is an entirely new offer that makes the first offer nonbinding. So the buyers could walk away from the deal if they don't like the counter.
- Help sellers put a lower-price offer into perspective. On a \$250,000 home, an offer of \$245,000 is only a 2 percent reduction.

Sure-Fire Strategies for Presenting an Offer

Keep It Legal

Remember if you are the listing agent or a subagent to the seller, your principal fiduciary duty is to the sellers, even if you are also working with the buyers as customers.

- **Get buyer's permission.** Obtain the buyer's permission to disclose evidence of his or her eligibility for financing to the seller.
- **Cover all key points.** Be sure to cover all the key points of the offer, not just the price.
- **Look for motivation.** Look for something in the offer that will tie in with the sellers' motivation. If they are buying another house and need to sell before they close, for example, reinforce that point before you present the offer.
- **Show buyer's soft side.** Make the buyers human to the sellers before presenting the offer. Spend a minute or two telling the sellers some personal details about the buyers and how much they loved the house.
- **Join forces with the sellers.** Reassure sellers that you're working for them. Never say "my buyers," say "our buyers."
- **Don't disparage the sellers' property.** Don't say: "This is a good offer because your house is in a high-crime area and needs a lot of repair." Say instead: This is a good buyer for your property because he sees its potential. You won't need to paint or make major repairs."
- **Avoid telephone presentations.** A seller can say "no" over the phone, but "yes" requires a signature. Simply say, "I want to discuss the terms of the offer in person. Is 7 o'clock tonight OK?" If you must present an offer to out-of-town sellers via telephone, set up a conference call when everyone can be present.
- **Summarize.** Keep the contract out of sight until you're ready for the seller to read it. While you're discussing the offer, put a blank sheet of paper on the desk and write down the offering price, the downpayment, and the proposed settlement date.
- **Stop talking.** Let the seller read the contract uninterrupted.
- **Be thorough.** Go over each paragraph of the offer, explaining what it means and how it affects your client.
- **Get agreement on smaller points,** like leaving behind draperies or appliances. This creates a climate of acceptance for the larger issues.

Tips for Presenting a Counteroffer

TIP: Make a counteroffer to only one buyer at a time, informing other buyers that their offers will be countered if the negotiations don't produce an agreement within a set

number of days. Legal problems could arise if the sellers' multiple counteroffers were accepted.

- **Appeal to fairness.** "We're willing to lower our price by \$5,000, but it's only fair that you not require us to repaint the house."
- **Focus on the points of acceptance.** "The buyers felt that everything in your offer was acceptable, but one minor point..."
- **Explain why delays may be undesirable for the buyer.** "You know, if interest rates are rising or home prices are going up and you have to start your home search over again and your costs may be even higher."
- **Remind buyers what they like about the house.** "When we were deciding on the original offer, you said that this house had the perfect backyard for your children."
- **Present the offer in person.** Just as you would with an initial offer, don't discuss a counteroffer over the telephone.
- **Get the buyers prepared.** When you write up the original offer with buyers, remind them that their first offer may not be accepted. That will wiframe of mind for making a counteroffer that sellers will like.