

# FOR SALE BY Owner

**Information Packet**

**Provided by:**

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## SECTION 1

### Investigate, Evaluate and Prepare

Before you are too far along in the sale of your property, investigate how this sale will affect you. Remember, the better prepared you are for selling, the more likely you are to get the best net return from the sale of your house.

1. Call your loan representative and determine where you stand in terms of your existing mortgage. What is the PAY OFF value, not just the balance?
2. Call the court house (Register of Deeds) and find out if there are any outstanding liens or judgments on your property that could inhibit the sale of your home.
3. Call your accountant and find out how this sale could affect your tax situation.
4. Thinking of hiring an attorney? Make sure to ask what the base price is and how many hours of work that includes. What is the attorney's *normal* hourly fee when more attention is required? Do you have to pay the attorney's fee if the buyers would back out of the contract or not quite qualify for the loan because of income or credit reasons? You may discover that if a transaction would not consummate for one reason or another, you could easily be charged well over \$1,000 and not even have your home sold. Believe it. We've seen it happen!
5. Make an appointment with a local mortgage loan officer and determine the best financing alternatives available to your prospective buyers. The more prepared you are from the financing end, the more comfortable your buyers will be purchasing your home directly. Our past experience has shown us that more times than not, financing plays the major role in whether a transaction is a success or failure. Being knowledgeable on the financing end, naturally, makes the buyers more  
At ease.

## SECTION 2

### Preparing Your Home for Sale

1. The more prepared your home is for sale, the more money you will net. Conduct your own test walk through of the property. Make notes on all items that need improvements or repairs. Make sure to check that the lawn is well manicured. Fresh, clean paint, on both the inside and out, and new looking carpet can make a big difference! Typically the cost of paint and carpet will be more than returned in a higher selling price. Wash painted walls with tri sodium phosphate. Do not use household cleaners, they breakdown the paint. Clean or replace the carpets and wax the floors. Clean all windows and window coverings. Make sure the roof and guttering are in good condition and check all sealants (window, tub, sink, shower, etc.).
2. Make sure **ALL** repairs and improvements are completed **BEFORE** you let anyone into the home. You only have **ONE** shot at a prospective buyer. Never tell buyers..."it wouldn't take that

much to fix this or that." Do the repair work beforehand and avoid creating a negative image of your home. Besides, the appraiser may require some of the repairs for the purchaser's loan anyway. When you have a question on repairs, call us. We will advise you on any improvements that may be required or those that may increase the value of your home.

3. Bring an outside third party over to inspect your home before you show it. Have them be brutally honest with you, to give you the feedback you need to make the right decisions. This is critical. We

will be happy to offer suggestions and tips on how best to show your home.

4. The condition of your home is one of the three major aspects in the sale of your home, along with price and location. Make all cosmetic and minor repairs to improve the condition of your property. Major projects rarely are practical or profitable. Remember, above all else, that buying a home is an emotional experience. People fall in love with homes. The more prepared your home is for potential buyers, the more money you will obtain from its eventual sale.

## SECTION 3

### Establishing the Price

The PRICE of your home is the most important factor in determining how quickly your home will sell. If it is too high you may never sell it, and if it is too low you may lose money. Fairy tales and overly optimistic assurances won't sell your house, effort will. A sign in your yard won't sell your house. When placing your house "on the market", be certain it is on the market. If you want your house "listed-for-sale", OVER PRICE IT. If you want it SOLD, price it right!

1. **Sellers and real estate agents are not appraisers...Buyers are, and they buy ONLY by comparison** - as you will when you purchase your next home. Condition, price and location are the three main criteria buyers consider when deciding on a new home.

2. **Take emotion and pride completely out of your mind.** Sellers speak of value, amount invested, and "what they can afford to take." Buyers consider ONLY price, condition and other properties offered. Your house will sell only because it is better than its competition...not because it is yours.

3. **Over-pricing causes your house to get stale on the market.** Buyers and agents begin to wonder what is wrong with the house, which naturally leads to a lower price.

4. **Your present total investment has no effect on what a buyer is being offered elsewhere.** Any house unsold after a reasonable time on the market is obviously overpriced...for its

condition...in today's market...not yesterday's...not tomorrow's, but today's. Our present market may be strong or weak, but it is the only market we have.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Advertising**

The success of your marketing campaign depends largely upon the success of your advertising campaign. Your "For Sale" sign should look professional. Check sign companies as well as home improvement stores for the best sign at a reasonable price. It is helpful to place directional signs in high traffic areas. Before placing signs in the right of way or on common grounds check to make sure they are allowed. If you wish to place a sign on a neighbor's property, ask permission first. Media advertising is necessary, but it can be costly. We recommend placing weekly ads in the real estate section of the local paper, preferably on Sunday. Most papers give discounts for placing the same ad multiple times. Sign up for the best rate and if your house sells before the ad runs out, you may still cancel. (They will adjust your per ad cost accordingly).

Avoid long, flashy ads. They cost money and do little to entice buyers to look at your house. Design a concise ad that gives enough pertinent information to let the buyer know whether your house may

meet their needs. Include price, address, and your phone number. Make it convenient for the buyer to inquire or view your house. Buyers study ads to find reasons NOT to call. Make it hard for potential buyers to cross your house off their list!

A second place to advertise is in publications that are dedicated to "For Sale by Owners". Be careful not to get lured into expensive advertising and prepaid services. Remember, the goal is to avoid unnecessary costs associated with selling your home. Besides, there is no assurance that your home will sell. Many homes, for sale by owner and those listed by real estate companies do not sell. Some of the prepaid services may end up not being used. For instance, buyers have the right to select their own title companies and may choose to have their own representative draw up the purchase contract. Look for services that are paid for at closing with no liability to you if the house does not close. Avoid services that charge by the hour or by the buyer. You should not be penalized if a buyer turns out to not be qualified or the sale falls through.

Internet advertising is helpful, as long as it is reasonably priced. Many of the fsbo web sites are too expensive and not well used by the public. Check to see how many listings in your area are on the site, how well the houses are displayed and the ease of use. I would recommend <http://realestate.yahoo.com> they have a vibrant site that is well used by Realtors and owners. The more inventories listed the greater use it is to buyers.

Your best advertising dollar will be spent by placing conspicuous signs and good ads in the local paper. Use your imagination and let people know you have a great house for sale!

## SECTION 5

### Showing Your Home

Before showing your home, make sure to set a pleasant mood by turning on all the lights. Cleanliness is essential in every area. The aroma of your home can be very important to its overall appeal. Potpourri or the smell of freshly baked bread or cookies can enhance the appeal. Find a neutral person to come in and give you an opinion on the true "Attractiveness Level" of your home and give you suggestions on what can be done to make it more inviting.

The best way to show a house is to let the house show itself. Buyers need to feel comfortable and free from sales pressure. Don't try to sell anything, just provide answers to any questions the buyers may have. If the buyers don't like something about your house, no amount of selling on your part is going to change it. To buyers your home may be just another house, so don't take negative remarks personally. Many times interested buyers highlight the negative, this is a common strategy to get a lower price and a normal part of the process.

Make sure the house is as clean and neat as possible. The less "stuff" you have in closets and rooms the better. Cluttering makes rooms and closets seem smaller. If possible, box up unneeded things and store them in the basement or a storage facility. Homes that look like they are well kept and neat tend to bring higher offers.

When people arrive tell them to make themselves "at home" and let them know you are available to answer questions, and then everyone in the family should relax in the family room. If the buyers want you to accompany them go ahead, but remember, no sales pitch! If a rapport begins to develop, just follow your instincts. Let the buyer set the pace. At the end of the showing, thank them for coming by. Sometimes the buyer will stay around to chat and ask questions. Never discuss price other than the asking price. Negotiations on price and terms should be done in the purchase agreement. State that you are open to offers. If you feel uncomfortable when showing your

home to complete strangers don't worry, it is natural and as you become more experienced you will feel more at ease.

Interested buyers often want to go through the house again. Savvy buyers will build rapport with you and try to learn as much about you to help them in the negotiation process. How motivated are you? What "tiny-bits" of information can they extract? How negotiable are you? These and other questions may be on their mind. We recommend being friendly, but don't give them any more than the pertinent facts.

Always think safety first. Make sure that all your valuables are put safely away and make sure to hide any extra keys to the home in a safe place. It is wise to take as many precautions as possible, because unsuspecting real estate agents and homeowners are often direct targets of criminals.

## **SECTION 6**

### **Open Houses**

1. Place an ad in the news press and on Craig's List for the day before and the day of your Open House.
2. Get the word out! Tell family, friends and neighbors. Post notices on community bulletin boards telling dates and times.
3. Place Open House signs where they will be seen! Make sure you get permission from any neighbors or houses whose yards you may need to use to post signs.
4. Prepare your house to show it's very best!
5. Have home information sheets available at the front door, along with a picture of your home for any interested prospects. You may wish to have a sheet available for people to sign with their names and phone numbers. Tell them you would like to call them should you have any messages regarding the sale of your home.
6. Refreshments add to your home's atmosphere. Any baking you do will give the house an attractive aroma which adds to your home's overall appeal.
7. Fresh flowers add a lively touch to any home.
8. Have small children at a relative or friends house, so they are not around to take your attention away from your prospects.
9. You may believe that you will not budge on price, but never project that attitude. You never know, possibly you can negotiate on a price to where both of you feel comfortable. If someone asks you if you will come down on your price, you may consider saying, "I am willing to talk with you about it." A firm attitude about your price may scare off a potential bidder. Remember, you are selling your home on your own and saving lots of money in commissions. You should be a little more flexible in price.
10. Above all...RELAX. Do not rush through a tour. Be at ease and make your buyers feel at home.

## **SECTION 7**

## Negotiating the Purchase Contract

Conflicts between the buyer and seller are, many times, inevitable. The buyer wants the lowest price possible for your house and you, obviously, want the highest price. The first step to negotiating is communication. You must get the prospects talking to you or you may never sell. To avoid wasting time we recommend that you negotiate only with pre-qualified buyers. Most lenders can pre-qualify a buyer in a few hours and provide them with a "Pre-qualification Letter". If you need a buyer pre-qualified ask the buyer to contact us. We will expedite the pre-qualification from one of our recommended lenders. The following tips should help you resolve some problems that normally arise and make the selling of your house a pleasurable experience.

1. Once you find a prospect, experts suggest the aid of an experienced outside third-party negotiator to negotiate the contract and sale. An objective party such as an attorney or Realtor can save you thousands of dollars and many headaches.
2. If you choose to negotiate on your own, initiate negotiations by seeking out areas of your home that you both agree on. Do not, however, force compliments from your prospects. Try to remember some of the points of your house that your prospects seemed impressed with and build on those points. When working with a serious buyer, it is important to be patient, objective, and above all, remain calm. Do not become defensive about your home. Rather, have ready all the information the buyer needs. And if you do not see eye to eye on a certain point, try to move on.
3. Anything you agree on should be put in writing, even if you feel it is very trivial.
4. Do not jump at the first offer, but don't take it lightly either. **Often the first offer is the best offer.**
5. Take your time in deciding, but do not leave the potential buyer hanging. Remember, he is legally able to withdraw his offer until you, the seller, have accepted it in writing. Keep your buyer(s) informed on your progress.
6. The contract itself should be handled by an expert in real estate. Little mistakes often can be costly.
7. In addition, never turn away other potential buyers until you have completely closed on the sale of your home. Keep a list in case your buyers' financing would fall through.
8. When you find a buyer, call us. We will personally pre-qualify them for their loan before you take your home off the market and we will write all contracts and addendums in your best interest. We will oversee the entire closing process. You do not pay us a fee unless the transaction closes. All for one very small fee...Guaranteed!!!

# Why Take Chances?

Once you find a buyer... We will:

**Pre-Qualify** all potential buyers.

**Negotiate** and write all agreements in your best interest and estimate your net proceeds.

**Represent** your best interests if a purchase agreement is drafted by the Buyer's attorney.

**Provide** all disclosure statements and all closing forms.

**Arrange** for the appraisal and all inspections.

**Assist** all potential buyers who need to sell their home before buying.

**Guide** you through the closing process.

**Make** sure everything meets with your satisfaction!

For all the obvious reasons, the best time to negotiate the terms and conditions of a purchase agreement is while the buyers are emotionally attached or **hot** on the property. An experienced third-party can save you countless problems that may arise. When you find a hot buyer, call us. We'll do the rest!

**SHOULD I LIST OR NOT?**



There are many services available through a real estate company to increase your home's exposure on the market and to increase your chances of selling it more quickly.

If, at some point, you should consider listing your home for sale with a real estate company, make sure that they are a member of the Multiple Listing Service. You can take advantage of an extensive Realtor network by exposing your home to over

7,000 real estate agents and their buyers. Approximately 90% of all home buyers use an agent when buying a home. This could be your biggest asset in attracting the greatest number of buyers.

In today's market, you should expect to receive full service when listing your home.

### **And, when buying your next home...**

You can have a real estate agent working exclusively for you as well. Having expert representation is just as important to buyers as it is to sellers! We can represent

you and your best interests as your buyer's agent, at no cost to you.

Make sure to take advantage of these and other services offered through a real estate company when selling or buying another home. We hope this packet has been helpful to you in providing some guidelines on selling your own home. Be sure to call us if you would like additional information. You can find out more about my services at [www.ScottBruckerRealEstate.com](http://www.ScottBruckerRealEstate.com)

## **THINGS WE, AS REALTORS, CAN DO FOR YOU**

- 1) Assist you in setting a competitive sales price by providing current market "comparables."
- 2) Obtain a full description of your property and your neighborhood for distribution to the Multiple Listing Service.
- 3) Provide tips on how you can make your home more appealing to prospective buyers.
- 4) Provide all advertising through newspapers and real estate publications.
- 5) Utilize targeted marketing programs to maximize your home's exposure on the market.
- 6) Provide highlight sheets on your home to buyers and agents who tour or drive by your home.

- 7) Provide you with qualified buyers - someone with a genuine interest in buying and someone who has the resources to buy.
- 8) Show your property during regular business hours or evenings and weekends, as you prefer.
- 9) Conduct all house tours and open houses.
- 10) Maintain close communication with you on market activity and promptly present you with all offers to purchase.
- 11) Help you negotiate the sale and figure your net proceeds.
- 12) Consult with you on any special financing options you might offer a potential buyer.
- 13) Take the buyers to loan application and handle all the paperwork.
- 14) Arrange for the appraisal, survey, and all inspections.
- 15) Provide all disclosure statements and closing forms.
- 16) Assist in the closing of the transaction as your representative and provide you with the net proceeds.