

*RE/MAX AUSTRALIA'S NO.1 'BEST-SELLING' AGENT*

# DAVE NEILSON

SECRET TO  
SELLING YOUR  
PROPERTY FOR  
TOP DOLLAR

# THE SELL

TACTICS AND STRATEGIES TO GET  
TOP DOLLAR FOR YOUR PROPERTY!



## Disclaimer

All the information, techniques, skills and concepts contained within this publication are of the nature of general comment only, and are not in any way recommended as individual advice. The intent is to offer a variety of information to provide a wider range of choices now and in the future, recognising that we all have widely diverse circumstances and viewpoints. Should any reader choose to make use of the information contained herein, this is their decision, and the contributors (and their companies), authors and publishers do not assume any responsibilities whatsoever under any conditions or circumstances. It is recommended that the reader obtain their own independent advice.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Preparing your home for sale</b>	<b>4</b>
➤ Importance	
➤ Home staging	
• So what exactly is 'Staging'?	
• What does home staging involve?	
• Home staging step-by-step	
• Home staging summarised	
<b>Building &amp; Pest Inspections</b>	<b>35</b>
➤ Why have a home inspection done?	
➤ What inspectors look for	
➤ Home Inspection to the buyer	
<b>Pricing it Right</b>	<b>42</b>
➤ Introduction	
➤ Research sales demand	
➤ Research market demand	
➤ Seek advice	
➤ Make a decision	
<b>Real Estate Sales Agents</b>	<b>51</b>
➤ Introduction	
➤ Role of the agent	
➤ Sourcing and evaluating agents	

<b>Plan for the sale</b>	<b>62</b>
➤ The story behind the sale	
➤ Agent briefing	
➤ Sale options	
➤ Agent listing	
➤ Marketing	
<b>Market feedback</b>	<b>88</b>
➤ Importance	
➤ Website hits	
➤ Marketing feedback	
➤ Offers	
<b>Price review</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Sold</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Section for buyers</b>	<b>98</b>
➤ Are Real Estate Agents necessary?	

# **INTRODUCTION**

Dave Neilson is the real deal, the full package - a passionate and professional business entrepreneur that has an extensive background in property, marketing and negotiations. Bringing a wealth of knowledge to your own home bookshelf, this book shares some of the key elements to ensure you a smooth selling process and an outstanding result!

After an intensive past history in various sales businesses, Dave found his passion in real estate and property development. This extensive experience which has formed the foundation to his diversified skillset from sourcing, public auctions, management and exceptional strategic negotiations. This young man has experience and wisdom well beyond his years. Driven would be an understatement, and has been proven by his continuous claim of accolades from 'Hall of Fame', 'Lifetime Achievement Award', the prestigious and highly reckoned 'Diamond Club, as well as 'No.1 Agent in Australia' for RE/MAX – the largest real estate company on the planet consisting of over 115,000 agents in their global network!

Subsequently, Dave is well travelled and brings to the arena skills and techniques from a broad background,

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relating to people on any level. He simply has a gift to connect with people and loves to make sure everybody is having a good time and is looked after - before himself. This shows especially in his client relations where he has become renowned for working for his clients to achieve the best outcome for them – in many cases where other agents hadn't been able to help or were only interested in making the sale.

It's no wonder sellers flock to him to gain insight and help in their selling processes. He is well connected so can assist in a front to back process, including a huge list of trades at his disposal that are readily available to assist Dave's clients prepare their property for sale, so Dave can focus on the job at hand in getting them the best price.

There is no doubts Dave has stood the test of time, having sold in a number of markets, and most notably in the recent GFC (Global Financial Crisis) of 2007-2008 where he continued to grow and exceed competition against all odds in a very tough market. He also has the know-how and track record in being able to produce results in all residential sales arena's, specializing in Canal/Waterfront, Acreage, and all suburban property sales.

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Take the time to read his book, and follow him on his website and social media accounts:

Website [www.teamneilson.com.au](http://www.teamneilson.com.au)

Instagram: Team Neilson Real Estate

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TeamNeilsonREMAX/](http://www.facebook.com/TeamNeilsonREMAX/)

...or even better, if you are in his area... Give him a call and see if he can help you with your real estate needs. You won't be disappointed!

~ ENJOY! ~

# **Chapter 1**

## **PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE**

### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

It is important that your home stands out from competition homes if you want the best price, in the shortest amount of time, and without too much hassle. The key is to ensure thorough preparation before sale and a professional agent to do the rest (ie: professional property positioning/marketing & skillful negotiation).

For this, you need to do several little things that will add the most value in the least amount of time, and with minimal outlay. It's the cumulative effect of many small things that will have a dramatic influence on your sale price.

It might surprise you how inexpensive and easy it can be to give your home a whole new look: new paint, different floor coverings, bench tops, lighting and a spruce up in the garden- just to mention a few.



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Firstly, imagine that you are a buyer who has come to look at your home with the intention of purchasing it. Make a list of things that would make you not want to buy the home. Note the wear and tear, any damage to the roof, ceilings, built-in cupboards etc. - anything that leaves a negative impression and would cause you not to invest in that home. This can be difficult to do, so it may be helpful getting your agent/a friend or somebody objective to help you with this.

Consider also additional fixtures that would enhance your home, such as additional storage, cupboards, benches etc. Are there features missing that you would expect to see?

Is your home looking tired and out of style? What does the interior décor look like? Does it have adequate lighting and air ventilation?

What about the front and back yard? Could the outdoor spaces be planned and organised differently? Is the fence acceptable for families with or without children? Is your home suitable for families with pets? Is your outdoor entertaining area attractive? These are but a few things that you need to be looking at as you consider selling your home. Once you have gone through your home room by

room, and your yard, note what needs to be changed, repaired, moved or removed, or any enhancements that could assist in making your home more presentable and saleable, you will be ready to complete the necessary repairs and dress your home for sale.

## **HOME STAGING**

Regardless of the type or size of your property – be it a stand-alone house, acreage estate or a unit, if you want to achieve a top price for your investment, it may be worth considering dressing your home for sale. This is called “staging”. Staging ensures your home will appeal to the widest and biggest pool of buyers. This is important in any economy, and particularly when there is a lot of competition on the market and you need to give your property that ‘edge’ and stand out from other comparable homes.

You can engage professionals to do this for a fee, but if you take the information outlined in this book seriously, you will save yourself a lot of money. It’s not rocket science, but it is very important.

Follow these tips to attract as many buyers as you can and make a quick and profitable sale on your home, with minimal effort and almost nominal

outlay. At first, inspections and open homes seem exciting, but let me tell you that if the sale process drags on for an extended period, these interruptions to everyday life become unbearable!

### **SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS 'STAGING'?**

Staging - also known as property-styling or property presentation - is the art of setting up your home to look its finest, by minimising flaws and emphasising your home's best attributes for a sale. Simply put, home staging is the process of presenting your home in its best light to appeal to the market.

Its main purpose is to get buyers to imagine themselves living in the house, become emotional, and feel a sense of urgency about making an offer before they miss out. A buyer with a strong, emotional connection to the idea of being in your home, will always attract an 'emotional price' and that's the result we are looking for. The stronger the emotional attachment, the more they will be willing to pay – period! Without emotion, it's all about dollars for buyers and you may only be attracting the bargain hunters! Even investors will generally pay more for better presented properties because of the

feel they get - and because they may see it as being easier to rent out at a better rental return.

It is a fact that staged homes bring in about 15% more revenue than those that aren't. For this reason, home staging is an excellent investment for those preparing to sell.

First impressions have a huge role in making large financial decisions. A buyer will have already made up their mind whether or not to buy your home within the *first eight seconds* of entering your home. The rest of the time spent inspecting your property will be based on those all-important first impressions.

Presentation is the keyword to keep in mind while putting your home up for sale. Always remember: "you'll never get a second chance at a good first impression".

To ensure that your home does make a good first impression, you need to address all those things that might just give a poor impression to buyers.

As someone living in the home, many dysfunctional things might seem normal to you, simply because you have become used to them. The trick is to see those

things as an outsider might – or as they say... ‘Put your Buyer Glasses on!’

Scrutinize each room, taking into account walls, floors, surfaces, fittings and furniture and if anything looks tired, is broken, damaged, chipped, faded or dirty - if noted by any potential buyer, might just work against you in shortlisting your property as an option to buy and your power to negotiate a higher price. Any crack in the ceiling, or an obviously broken piece of furniture, should be fixed before you start showing your home to outsiders.

The last thing you want is for prospective buyers to feel unwelcome or as though they are intruding in someone’s personal space – you want buyers to spend as long as possible in the home and feel, well at home!

Well-showcased homes *sell 84% faster* than those that aren’t.

So, I urge you to read on.

## **WHAT DOES HOME STAGING INVOLVE?**

Simply cleaning a home and doing routine maintenance is only a small part of staging.

Home staging involves:

**De-cluttering:** This is the removal of our personal belongings from the viewer's sight and creating space around main furniture pieces and creating clear walkways around the home, which makes it more inviting. This also assists in the quality of the photography that can be captured as the camera tends to be more critical of anything surplus (clutter) than the human eye is. Removing some of the personal belongings will allow buyers to visualise their own belongings in your home, and avoid judgement on personal items of a personal taste – directing their focus back to the home. De-personalising by removing family photos and holiday trinkets, replacing with carefully selected art and décor items, will make your home appear fresher and more spacious.

Clutter is off-putting and makes a place look unnecessarily busy, and the room's dimensions look and feel much smaller. The problem is that a lot of the competition will be de-cluttered and presented well for sale, which automatically puts you in the

back seat for potential buyers – especially if they are minimalists themselves and can't visualize past this.

Removing old ornaments, personal certificates, newspapers and magazines, vases, photo frames, bits and pieces that you have collected over the years – anything that will help to clear surfaces and make the house feel more open and spacious. Remove as much as you can- “when in doubt, take it out!” You can always add a fresh centre-piece at the end, but trust me, less is more when presenting your home for maximum effect and dollar. The good news is that anything you have boxed up and packed away has created less work for you when the time comes to move! Pack things away neatly in cupboards or in a storage area within the garage. It is entirely acceptable to have things neatly stored in this area for the duration of the sale – it's got to go somewhere and you'd rather have the livable spaces looking tip top!

### **Effective tips for de-cluttering**

1. I always suggest a room by room approach. Tackle each room and get it looking impacting before moving onto the next space. Identify the problem areas. Usually these are spaces you haven't used in a while and are covered in

dust; piles of items that you cannot even identify how old they are, like DVD's, newspaper or magazine piles, little bits all over the bench-tops and in book racks and cabinets.

2. Start with the area you feel like not doing at all. This way you free up energy for the rest of your cleaning efforts. The satisfaction and relief of de-cluttering an area that actively makes you feel annoyed, guilty or overwhelmed is very therapeutic and motivates you to keep going.
3. Once all is sorted out, you don't want to go back and have to de-clutter again in a few weeks. Take care of clutter as it comes in or starts to build up.

Basically, it is easier to deal with it immediately by either filing, sorting or throwing it away.

Set a due date or expiry date for all the stuff you keep and if after a period of time, you haven't used or needed any of the items, then get rid of it. Give it away, bin it, recycle or find someone who needs it and will make use of it. Otherwise, all this stuff will be occupying space and clutter your home for no good reason.



4. Ensure that everything has its rightful place in the home where it fits & looks best and has the most use.
5. Carrying a box or basket around with you will speed your cleaning process and make it easier to keep up momentum while you see exactly what you are achieving as you go along. The items can be sorted and restored to their rightful locations later, when everything is clean, neat and tidy.
6. Once the hard work is done, treat yourself to that cold beer, that glass of wine, or even a dinner/movie out for your efforts. You will be surprised how good it feels to have all in order- besides the fact that it's going to help you achieve a better sale outcome.
7. Now keep inspired and keep your home uncluttered for good- or at least until it's sold! Some people are naturals at this, so if you know anyone with a flair for décor and presentation, get them to run their eyes over it once you are done so see if you have done enough and ask them not to tell you what you want to hear.

**Cleaning:** Cleanliness is absolutely imperative. This is the first and most obvious necessity, especially just before inspections. Your home must be spotlessly clean, so buyers can look forward to moving into a sparkling and healthy home.

Dust, grime, stains, slime and spillages are some of the major turn offs. So are dirty carpets, scuffed and scummy-looking floors, cupboards with food spillages on the doors, dead insects, dirty windowsills and windows, grubby light switches and door handles- all of these are major subliminal turnoffs to any buyer.

Wash and put the dishes away, stow the washing basket, make the beds and arrange the shoes. Ensure all surfaces gleam and keep away anything a potential buyer might not want to see or touch. This goes for all the rooms and surfaces in the house.

**Re-arranging, removing and/or replacing furniture:** Usually, if your furniture is up to snuff, is stylish and fits well within the room, then you can go ahead and place it in their most suited locations to create room and give a welcoming feel.

If not, you have the option of renting furniture to ensure you show the best. The key is to choose the most appealing, quality pieces and arrange them to

give each room a stylish and welcoming feel. If it isn't going to help you sell your home, it may be worth taking it out!

**Optimise Space:** This is ensuring that every space in your home is put into good use. The efficient use of space ensures that even homes that are small in dimension can still offer areas with specialised purposes and functions. One can easily create extra living areas, a home office, a study room, an entertainment room, spare rooms for guests and children, all without knocking down any walls.

To achieve this, take out any unnecessary furniture and fixtures. If there's room under the staircase for a compact office, place a desk and chair there so that the buyer can clearly see the potential. For an unused patio or balcony, have some comfortable chairs or a hammock there so it looks inviting and suggests a space for relaxation. Try to ensure furniture is not pushed up against walls or other pieces of furniture so that there is a clear and definitive space around all furniture. This will improve the perception of space and also improve the photography potential.

**Accessorising:** Use of bright and fluffy cushions and contemporary bedding, or an elegant table setting, can add to the warmth and appeal of your home.

Complementary wall hangings will also add to the appeal. I recommend sticking with fairly neutral bedding décor and relying on accessories and art for colour. Theme rooms with one colour accent to keep things simple, yet stylish. For example, white duvet sets with feature cushions and grey throw over the corner; and fresh white towels in bathrooms with a feature colour splashed through the accessories (candles, rolled towels, and soaps) can bring these areas to life and create an attractive appeal for potential buyers.

**Light it up:** Natural light should be featured as much as possible in the staging of your home. Open your curtains, blinds or window coverings to let it in. It gives the room a fresh, airy and wholesome atmosphere – but make sure your windows are clean and don't draw unnecessary attention!

Although artificial lighting can be used to enhance the interiors of your home, it can sometimes leave a gloomy impression. Fluorescent lights can seem alienating. To create a warm impression, down lights, lamps and studio lighting can be used.

Ensure every bedroom has at least one, if not two, bedside lamps. These will frame the bed in photos

and send light upward on the main wall, creating ambience and brightening up the whole room.

**Fresh Air:** Airing of the entire home before an inspection is essential. Locked up, sealed or poorly ventilated homes smell stuffy and have an unwelcoming feel to them. Air the home daily, or at least several hours before an inspection. Light neutrally scented candles just prior to showing the home – these give additional mood lighting as well as fragrance. Absolutely no smoke and/or dog smells!

**Organising:** Have the contents of your walk-in wardrobe, drawers and pantry neatly arranged. Some buyers are nosy enough to want to look inside, partly to ensure a lack of wear or damage, but also to ensure there is enough room for their stuff. A well organised home gives an impression of order; hence, the buyer feels a sense of an orderly life that will help them settle in.

By organising, you will reassure the potential buyers that there is ample storage space for their needs and inspire confidence that your home is well taken care of.

**Landscaping:** Yard maintenance is essential if you are to achieve maximum price potential. Remove and

overgrown areas, trim back shrub, trees and hedges, mow and edge lawns, add fresh mulch to garden beds and aim to have this area pristine. An impressive yard is a big crowd pleaser and statistically, homes with manicured gardens will reap the reward of a premium price. The biggest investment here is usually a bit of elbow grease!

Small enhancements to the fence and the general outdoor look can also aid in attaining the maximum impact and help create a positive first impression.

**Leave Your Home for inspections:** Buyers want to feel comfortable when it comes to asking the agent questions and thoroughly inspecting the home. Not everyone will love your home and negative comments can be upsetting. At the same time, interested parties may not feel at ease discussing their interest and price feedback if the seller is within range. It is an emotional time for both sellers and buyers, so it is best for all if you are not present when inspections are being conducted and to let your professional agent do what they have been trained to.

**Repairs:** Before listing your home for sale, ensure all obvious and critical repair work is complete. The fact

is, the more faults buyers find with your home, the greater their bargaining position.

A poorly kept home gives the buyer a bad first impression, which is normally imprinted in their mind, and convincing them otherwise can be almost impossible.

The only exception would be if the home is sold as a “renovator’s delight”; where the location or land is the most attractive element of the property; but these are generally homes that require a lot of work!

### **‘What to Repair’ Checklist**

- Floors and ceiling- address any cracks, freshly paint ceilings in ceiling white, re-fix any hanging sheeting, hire a professional grout cleaner, replace any broken tiles, and make sure carpets have been cleaned or replaced if necessary.
- Bathroom and kitchen fittings- old/worn taps, handles, towel rails, toilet roll holders, dated door/drawer handles, grouting, and shower screens. (Kitchens and bathrooms are critical points where buyers have a high focus and will downgrade your home significantly if these areas are not presentable.

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- Lighting and ventilation- ensure all lights have workign bulbs, and fans and airconditioning units are cleaned. Replacing old school flush mount lights with white (natural) downlights can not only improve aesthetics, but also improve the quality of the lighting in your home, making it lighter and brighter.
- Doors and windows- ensure they open and close freely, replace old door handles with modern ones (very cost effective that give a massive improvement), and make sure they are clean and fresh.
- Paint inside and outside- one of the easiest, most cost effective improvements that can dramatically impact the overall presentation of your property and assist in driving price in the right direction.
- Drainage system around the – ensure home there is no pooling water and that water is getting away from the house.

If all the above checkboxes are ticked, and the home is well kept, then you can easily justify pricing at the top of its value range.



**Be Accessible:** Try to make sure that you are available to your agent to answer any questions prospective buyers might, and for inspections at reasonable notice. It gives an impression that you have confidence in it and it also ensures your home gets sold quickly and for the right amount. Owners who are slow to respond to queries lose many potential buyers purely by being inaccessible. Buyers move quickly in this day and age!

**Dogs and Pets:** Unusual or weird pets, such as snakes, spiders or rats, might not make the desired impression to most buyers- sned them on a holiday while you are selling. Dogs are also best kept off the premises during an inspection, just in case the buyer inspecting is allergic or has a fear for dogs or pets in general. Cat or dog fur on the furniture or around the house is also a big turn-off.

**The Stink Factor:** Nobody wants a smelly home. This can be the easiest and swiftest way to get rid of a potential buyer. Blocked drains, the smell of urine (or worse) in the bathroom, cigarette smoke permeating the furniture, rotten smells in the kitchen, burned food, mildew, staleness and dust, are just a few of the unwanted smells in the home Even spraying the whole home with a fancy deodorant won't cut it. If a

pet soils a rug or carpet and there is that astringent smell you can't seem to get rid of, put it in storage until you've sold the home.

**White Walls:** For any repainting being done on your home before selling, seriously consider sticking with white or another neutral color. This actually creates a sense of spaciousness and light - the two most desirable factors buyers seek in a home.

**Welcoming Touches:** Vases of fresh flowers and freshly baked biscuits tend to invite in the potential buyers inspecting the home. Such things make them want to linger and imagine themselves living there.

Fresh flowers, ventilation, light and good smells are simple details that matter quite a lot in home staging. It also helps in creating the good first impression that might very well influence the buyer to invest in your home. A lightly scented vanilla candle can often do the trick without adding a lot of surplus effort to the preparation before an inspection. But make sure these scents are mild/light and not overpowering.

**Check Regularly:** Continuous and regular inspections are vital to see everything is in place as long as the home is on the market. Although staging a home

might be tiresome, imagine the feeling when your home sells faster at, or above, your goal price.

## **HOME STAGING STEP-BY-STEP**

The best thing about staging a home is that it can be done professionally, or you can do it yourself. Engaging a home-staging professional has its own advantages. They know what the market is looking for and how to deliver it cost effectively. However, this is at an added cost as they will charge a fee.

This step by step home-staging guide will help you get the best possible result for a minor outlay. Since you do it yourself, you may even ask for a higher price or have a greater bargaining power.

Different buyers will have different tastes, wants and needs, but there are certain fundamental elements which are universal, and when applied, can only help.

We shall take you through each section step by step with a checklist to ensure all grounds are covered for the best possible results. This is also what any professional would do.

### **Outdoor staging**

#### **Garden**

If your home has a garden, it might be one of the key selling points that attracts a buyer to your home, so you need to present it at its absolute best. Ensure it enhances your property's presentation by having it well cared for. This also gives the impression that it's easy to maintain.

A garden maintenance company can help you do this at an extra fee, but with the right tools and equipment, the following checklist can help you. Investing in some plants to give your garden a lift might also go a long way in enhancing the entry and improving any unattractive areas.

### **Garden checklist**

- Spread a lawn lifter a month out to energise your lawn and keep the water on it consistently (timers are very cost effective and time effective too and you won't forget!)
- Keep the lawn mown and edges trimmed.
- Repair garden bed edging
- Shape and trim bushes and trees.
- Enhance key areas with healthy plants.
- Weed the garden and lay fresh mulch to garden beds. It's absolutely worth it!
- Clear any rubbish, loose items, palm fronds and blow away any leaves daily.

### Home Façade

Pressure clean the external surfaces of your home. A fresh coat of paint or varnish to doors, trims and stairs can have a big impact.

For timber homes, repainting the exterior certainly enhances its appearance, and at times a change in color is called for. If the budget doesn't allow for a total paint job, you can freshen up the exterior by simply touching up those spots that need the most attention.

Clear out the gutters. Fix any obvious damage to the façade, including the fence, wire or metal doors, etc. Once all the above is done, it gives the impression that your home is well cared for.

### **Façade Checklist (Remember this is the first thing buyers see on arrival!)**

- Make a list of the obvious things that need attention.
- Spot and budget for painting where and when necessary.

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- Wash down painted surfaces and remove cobwebs.
- Have a functioning letterbox that stands straight.
- Clear out gutters and fix any damage.
- Check that all doors open and close easily.
- Clean dirt and loose gravel off concrete, paved paths and steps.
  
- Paint and correct any imperfections required.

### **Entry**

This is the entry point to your home and it's what the prospective buyer sees as soon as they land at your doorstep. Your front door should be sparkling clean and with no squeaks. The entrance should also be well lit and ventilated. Welcoming fresh air or a sweet aroma should invite the buyer into the home and give them a sense of pride if they were to arrive home, or invite guests around.

### **Entry Checklist**

- Keep the pathway clean and stable.
- Get a new welcome mat.
- Check the doors to ensure they are in good condition, clean and open easily and with no squeaks.

- Refresh the paint on your front door if necessary.
- Clear all clutter from your entry. This gives the impression of ample space.
- Ensure any entrance lights have new bulbs and are in good working order.
- A bit of greenery and landscaping can also add a nice touch here.

### **Indoor staging**

#### **Living Areas**

This is the area where your buyers will imagine themselves and their belongings. It should be fresh and inviting, encouraging enjoyment and relaxation with loved ones. Any personal belongings such as family photos, magazines and newspapers, and your CDs and DVDs should be packed away.

Take time to repaint the walls with a neutral color to open up the space and brighten the room. Check that the furniture, cushions, throw rugs and paintings are appropriate and fit the current trend. Don't add too much of your own personal touch. Remember, if your furniture is worn out or not trending so much, you can always cover it with neutral fabric covers, or

rent new furniture for the sale period which will reduce your days on the market.

### **Living Areas Checklist**

- Clear away personal belongings like photos, family portraits, magazines and newspapers.
- Pack up your CD and DVD collection.
- Encourage interaction using the furniture placement to promote conversation.
- Paint the walls in neutral colors.
- 'Lift' the area with stylish throw rugs, cushions and artwork. You can add or remove floor rugs to either give color or open up the area.
- Clear unnecessary furniture that crowds the room.

### **Kitchen**

There is nothing worse than an unclean kitchen. Untidy kitchen drawers tend to show disorganisation and give the impression of a dysfunctional kitchen.

Before putting your home on the market, follow this checklist.

### **Kitchen Checklist**

- De-clutter the entire kitchen - if you haven't used it in the last 12 months, get rid of it!



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- Clear benchtops to allow for working space. Store away appliances like the toaster, blender, juicer, mixer etc. in cupboards to make your kitchen look bigger.
- Have well organised, clean, neat and tidy drawers and cupboards.
- Have your kitchen clean and healthy looking. This allows the buyers to imagine themselves preparing meals and enjoying family meals together. Use commercial quality cleaning products and detergents so that all surfaces shine and sinks and taps sparkle.
- Ensure the locks and handles are in current style, match and aren't tarnished/soiled.
- Ensure there is ample and attractive quality lighting to the room. Replace or repair existing light fittings if necessary.
- Have a simple dining table set up, or even bar stools to give buyers an easy casual dining option.
- Clean the inside and external surfaces of the fridge and freezer, the dishwasher plus any other equipment. Make the stovetop and oven sparkle and shine.

- Wipe down all cabinetry with vinegar and don't forget to clean the range hood! Place filters in the dishwasher and ensure the light works.

### **Bathroom and Toilet**

This is the most sensitive area and needs special attention. Some of the things to consider include:

#### **Bath and Toilet Checklist**

- Use commercial and quality cleaning products to remove scum stuck around the bathtub and any mould on the walls.
- If the grout is unable to be cleaned, there are companies who have chemicals that can help, or can grind out old grout and replace it with fresh grout.
- Ensure your shower is scrubbed clean, using a de-scaling solution on the door frame, hinges, and tapware if necessary.
- To preserve the life of your shower, refrain from using cakes of soap and go for gels or soap free liquids instead. Wipe id dry after every use and you will prevent build up on the screens and mould from forming in the grout.
- If there are cracks in any bathroom glass or mirrors, have them replaced.

- Ensure the toilet is clean, the seat and lid are down and a new white toilet roll is placed in the holder. Remove any toilet brushes or mats.
- Ensure all bathroom products are hidden away and place just a fresh white or chrome soap dispenser on the vanity in place.
- Remove the washing basket and store it out of sight.
- Lastly, display fresh, new white towels and if appropriate to the space, add some fresh flowers or scented candles.

### **Bedrooms**

The bedrooms should give a feel of peace and comfort when one enters. A neutral, spacious and airy effect is what you should aim for.

### **Bedroom Checklist**

- If repainting, soft neutral tones are your safest bet.
- Make the beds, and brighten the rooms with clean, fresh and crisp bedding, sticking to neutral or white bed linen and adding a pop of colour with throws, pillows and cushions.
- Don't be frightened to use lots of pillows of different sizes – European pillows, standard

pillows plus cushions will add style and make it more inviting!

- Keep your wardrobes and drawers tidy. De-clutter them and remove excess furniture – where possible bedrooms should have beds, bedside tables and not much else unless you have a very large space that could be furnished additionally.
- Wash and iron the curtains, fix the broken blinds and keep them open allowing light and fresh air to filter in.
- Keep windowsills dusted and clean
- Be confident enough to let the buyers inspect each and every inch of your bedroom and every other room.

### **Laundry Room**

It can be very easy to forget and neglect such a room. Don't leave dirty washing lying around or wet washing in the machine on a hot day.

### **Laundry room checklist**

- Have it well lit and bright.
- De-clutter. Only have essentials on show, such as an attractive peg bucket or neatly folded new towels in a neutral colour.

- Polish the tub.
- Clean the outside of the washing machine and dryer – ensure there is no build up of lint or dust on walls or in corners.
- Hide dirty clothes and make sure there is no washing left on the clothes line.
- Put ironing board away to amplify space.

## HOME STAGING SUMMARISED

Everybody wants a good looking and well-maintained home. Usually, a home that looks good sells faster and at a higher price than one that is not well maintained. Cleanliness will go a long way towards encouraging potential buyers to consider being in your home. Mowed grass, weeded gardens and neatly trimmed bushes are some of the things that can be seen straight away - even when buyers are driving by. They add to your home's overall appeal and are key to creating first impressions.

Repairs are vital and must be done before putting your home on the market. They make the home more appealing to buyers. Even minor repairs can do wonders for a home's desirability.

Arranging furniture in a way that makes a room look larger also works to your advantage. Furniture can be

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moved to better showcase your home's assets and create the best look, facilitating ease of movement and avoiding that claustrophobic feeling that will make buyers run for the hills. Ensure that everything is arranged in a way that enhances the natural architecture and lighting of the room and you have enough airflow to keep the home free of odours and smelling fresh.

I hope this helps you stage your home and put you on the right path to attracting a healthy price with minimal stress!

## Chapter 2

# BUILDING AND PEST INSPECTIONS

A standard clause in house and land contracts is provision for an independent qualified building and pest inspection to satisfy the buyer that there are no unknown significant faults, maintenance issues or pest problems.

This can also be requested by some mortgage companies before lending the money for the home's purchase. However, it's actually a good idea for sellers to have one done before selling their home. It helps in identifying any issues that may present during the inspection and allows to address anything that could scare a buyer off and cause them to terminate a accepted contract, or ask for hefty price reductions.

### **Why have a building inspection done?**

A building inspection helps to ensure that the sale of your home goes smoothly.

The inspector will thoroughly check out your home and notify you of any problem areas that need rectifying or touching-up. This goes a long way in helping you stage your home to its best advantage. All areas that need fixing will be pointed out, making it easier to have them upgraded or styled up for best value, before putting your property to the market.

A building inspection also minimizes issues that buyers might have about buying your home. This increases the number of potential buyers and puts you in a better bargaining position for a higher price.

With a building inspection report to hand, the seller portrays honesty and good will.

The assumption is always that a seller should know of any looming problems, as they live in the property, but that's often not the case. The seller might already be too used to the way things are and fail to recognize these problems or issues, which can cause much disappointment and frustration when you think you are at the finish line.

A building inspection will assist a home owner to pinpoint these problems and create a list of concerning items that can be addressed, bringing a



fresh, professional set of eyes to the exterior and interior of the property, providing objective advice.

This ensures that your home sells as quickly as possible, without higher risk of contracts crashing and taking additional time on market which will typically mean accepting a lower sale price eventually. If a buyer backs out, other potential buyers will wonder why the first deal fell through, and may be concerned enough that they won't want to take a risk themselves. You will have a lot of explaining to do, and consequently more stress.

If problems are discovered during a building inspection, it does not necessarily mean that you must fix them. However, if there is no intention of making the repairs, this should be communicated first hand to the buyers so that they are aware and not in for any surprises.

Correct disclosure reduces legal risks and any shock factor when a defect may be raised. Remember, you do have the control if you know about any issues and can address them before they become problematic, but you have no control, once an inspector raises them, or with how the issue is discussed with the inspector and the buyer. Building and Pest inspections are typically the biggest reason for

crashing contracts, so try to eliminate any risk of this happening to you by removing any concerns before going to the market!

## **What building inspectors look for**

Building inspectors primarily look for evidence of problems that could cause structural damage or safety concerns for the prospective buyers.

It's important to know the condition of the home you are preparing to sell to prevent any unpleasant surprises during a sale.

Home inspectors usually look for defects both on the outside and the inside of your property. This may include:

- Roof tiles/sheeting, gutters and downpipes
- General operation and condition of doors, windows, and decks
- Driveways and walkways
- All floor coverings, especially 'drummy' tiles
- Adequate drainage taking storm water away from the home
- Moisture readings around the home, and particular in wet areas like bathrooms

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- Ceilings and walls will be checked for defects and signs of structural damage or water leakage.
- The attic or roof cavity will also be inspected for similar problems including ventilation, insulation and termite damage to timber
- The basement and 'crawl space' are an equally important part of the inspection. The foundation walls are inspected to ensure there are no critical weaknesses, signs of water intrusion like 'rising damp' and other defects.
- The home's electrical system may also be inspected for shorts or other wiring problems.
- Plumbing will be thoroughly checked, including the type of pipes used, to ensure that they are functioning correctly, and can be tested for adequate water pressure and flow.
- They will inspect all fixtures, toilets, and drains for damage and proper function.
- Heating and air conditioning systems may be checked for functionality and safety. They determine whether heating and cooling are distributed to all areas that they should be.
- A pest inspector will check for evidence of termites or other wood-destroying insects and identify any risk areas for attracting termites. Generally, moisture and garden debris like

mulch and plants up against a home can could cause higher risk for termite invasion.

## **Building Inspection to the buyer**

Finding your dream home is one thing, but living in it comfortably is another. There could be underlying problems with the home that you are unaware of.

A building inspection can bring this to the light and either make buyers feel comfortable with their decision to purchase, or give them a bargaining power to either have the seller repair or fix the damage or negotiate a lower buying price – or in severe cases, the buyer may have the right to terminate the contract if they are not completely satisfied.

Having a building inspection done can help you avoid buying a home that needs a lot of work. If you agree with the home owner that you will do your own repairs, the inspection helps you know which repairs are crucial and which ones can be done on a progressive basis. A building inspection can save you money and problems later on after you sign the deal.

If you are not aware of what exactly to look for in the inspections, have a professional do it at a small fee

before going forward with your purchase. The steps discussed in the home staging section can guide you on what to look for when doing an inspection of your own, but professionals have a trained eye and reduce the risk of getting caught out. You must differentiate between a pest inspection and a building inspection as these are different. However, they are often conducted at the same time by separate inspectors, where one will conduct the building inspection and the other conduct the pest inspection.

Problems that are not readily apparent could turn into major nuisances, or even cause serious damage to your home, in a few months or years if a proper building inspection is not done. It is important as a buyer to have these things checked out since safety issues might not show themselves until someone has been injured or had a close call.

Knowing about these things gives you an opportunity to have either have them resolved, negotiate a more favourable price to cover the repairs, or even terminate your contract if you are not satisfied with these inspections, or if the seller is not willing to consider these issues and negotiate. .

# Chapter 3

## PRICING IT RIGHT

### **Introduction**

The price you list your home for is a great determinant of the time your property takes to sell and the price you achieve. To strike the perfect balance between the price and the timing you want for the sale is normally the greatest challenge for most property sellers. If you incorrectly price your home, then it might sit on the market for a long period of time, ultimately resulting in a lower sale price and a long frustrating process. It is therefore of paramount importance to price your property correctly, not too cheap and not too dear, from day 1. This will increase your odds of securing a sale and the top end of the sales range and in a reasonable timeframe before your property becomes stale on the market.

Properties frequently sit on the market for extended periods where:

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- i. The owner expectation is a reflection of what they owe or what they paid, rather than what current market value is.
- ii. They price their home incorrectly based on poor data comparison, using superior properties as a bench mark.
- iii. If the seller considers other similar homes but at other locations.
- iv. An inexperienced agent 'buys the listing' by giving the seller a false and unrealistic expectation of the property to secure the listing
- v. A property is priced higher than it was valued the previous year, rather that based on recent comparable sales

Ascertain your home's current market value as accurately as possible, since the fact of the matter is buyers are only prepared to pay *today's* market value for your home. There are many factors that influence property prices, but the two major ones are:

**Rental Demand:** This is where more people want to rent in your suburb than there are available properties for rent. This not only drives rental prices up, but also property sale prices because they can command more rent for their owners and a better return on investment.

**Supply and demand:** Sales demand occurs if there is high demand for your area and your type of property, and fewer properties available for sale. There are likely to be more buyers than sellers in this case; hence, a high sales demand which in turn drives prices up. Naturally, lower demand and more options for buyers means a lot of competition for buyers to choose from and a reverse situation with regards to pricing achieved.

You need to accurately determine both, and to do so you must thoroughly research the market conditions of your suburb. Real estate list prices might be misleading, since they do not offer you all the information you need to set a proper list price on your home for the best result. The properties might not be correctly priced themselves and you end up falling into the same hole of mispricing.

### **RESEARCH SALES DEMAND**

To do this, there are a number of data sources you can use to accurately determine the market conditions of your suburb. Some are free and readily available, while others are available for a fee, but can be an excellent investment. This may include specific sales records for your surrounding streets and suburb, including valuable information on how long



comparable properties took to sell, their initial list price, any price adjustments and so on. Building a relationship with an honest, reputable agent who is active in your area can assist in professional advice and they will often provide you with this data upon request.

In Australia, you can consider starting by consulting some of the following sources:

- ✓ **My RP Data** – [www.myrpdata.com.au](http://www.myrpdata.com.au): ‘My RP Data’ is part of the ‘RP Data’ company but tailored for the public. This site provides many similar reports to APM (Australian Property Monitors), but also integrates maps for a view of your area when pricing comparable properties.
- ✓ **A Reputable, local agent with a proven track record**
- ✓ **Local and Regional newspapers and Property Portals**: There is a real estate section now in most newspapers and most major listing sites feature sections detailing all the recent sales results for the area or suburb and generally include the marketing images and material

which can be very useful in determining property values.

- ✓ **Australian Property Monitors** ([www.apm.com.au](http://www.apm.com.au)): This site features a 'Home Price Guide' section for sellers. You can view price history by street, the post codes, current price estimates, a 10-year price trend, and even a price forecast for your property.

You might also consider researching a number of properties in the market that are quite similar to yours in terms of location, features and presentation.

Take interest in:

- ✓ Their pricing now.
- ✓ The price when they first listed.
- ✓ Their duration on the market.
- ✓ What interest levels the buyers have and what offers, if any, have been made.
- ✓ The marketing strategy used.

If you still need more information, you could call the real estate agents handling these property sales, or visit the inspection times to compare.

## RESEARCH RENTAL DEMAND

Rental vacancy rates for a suburb or area is what indicates how much demand there is in an area.

However, proper research should be done and accurate data analyzed before settling on your selling price.

This is how rental demand can impact on property prices within your area although there could be other factors at play:

**High demand:** When the rental demand is high, the properties rent within one week. The greater the competition for your kind of property, the higher the amount of money people are willing to spend on it. In high demand areas, you may be able to price your property higher and still achieve a result, or consider other methods like auction to allow buyers to compete and push the price higher.

**Medium demand:** When there is medium rental demand, the properties rent within four weeks. You can expect a timely sale if you list your property at market value. This means the price has to be just right for your kind of property – generally within 5-10% of the comparable recent sales.

**Low demand:** This is where properties take more than four weeks to rent. You risk your property sitting on the market for a long period of time if you price it even slightly above market value. It may be

worthwhile exploring marketing strategies with your agent to price your property more competitively, and sell up wards rather than downwards with a traditional list price (Eg: '\$599,000+' or 'offers over \$599,000').

To get more information, you can call three real estate offices in your area to enquire about the availability of rentals and demand for your type of property. The data you gather will give you a rough idea where your property stands with regard to pricing your home, and a starting point for talking marketing with your agent. It is ideal to price your home within 10% of its market value as indicated by the data, depending on the type of market you are selling in. In low demand areas, pricing a property more than 2-3% above market value can be negative, so pricing should be taken very seriously to avoid the number 1 mistake most sellers make!

### **SEEK ADVICE**

After doing your own research, and having a rough idea what your property might be worth, it is advisable to hear what other people who are experienced in real estate have to say, professional or otherwise. Get an independent valuation of your home to help you make your final decision on price.

Take in suggestions about what might enhance your property to increase its value.

Ask your agent to complete a comparative market analysis for your property and indicate the price range in which they believe the property falls. Encourage them to back up their data with evidence just to be on the safe side, and tell them you want a realistic price and not an inflated one.

### **MAKE A DECISION**

After all is said and done - and no matter what anyone tells you – a lot of weight rests on you with regard to your sale price. You alone decide the price you want to go to the market with. It is of utmost importance that you take into consideration the results of your research and the professional advice given.

If you choose to ignore these findings in favor of setting your ideal price and hoping for the best basing your price on luck, you risk losing money and time before you make a sale.

There are some factors that contribute to this. They include:

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- A freshly marketed property attracts peak interest. It is at this stage you can take advantage, and with the right pricing strategy, make a quick and lucrative sale.
- If your price is unreasonable from the outset, you scare buyers away and waste significant marketing dollars. Your property takes more time in the market, doing damage to your property image, and at the risk of losing value.
- If you miss out on a sale the first time, you will most likely need to reduce your price, and spend more time and money on marketing to make buyers aware of this.

There are buyers eagerly waiting to own a property just like yours right now and *for the right price*, if your price reflects today's fair market value, you can expect competition from buyers for your home and this should push the final sale price up to the top end of the market range. So, in summary, if your home is priced at the right market value, you have added as much value to it but presenting and positioning perfectly for sale, and you have selected a well accredited professional agent to execute the sale process, you are well on the right track to a successful sale price in a short amount of time!

# **Chapter 4**

## **REAL ESTATE SALES AGENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Real estate is a big business and the people who work in this industry are called real estate agents or realtors. Real estate agents make a living, and quite often a good one if they are skilled at what they do, by helping people like you buy and sell homes. Although it is usually optional to get an agent to assist you sell your home, it's a big gamble taking on the process if you don't have a significant amount of experience in this field. Even if you do, it is generally better to involve an agent in the process to act as the 'meat in the middle of the sandwich', and remove buyer and seller emotions from a very emotional task of buying or selling. It's no monkey business, and if mistakes are made, could put you at risk legally, as well as with no sale or a lower sale price. Remember, a professional is a professional because they are genuinely qualified by certification, and experience.

They will also typically hold a license and hold insurances in place to protect you should the worst happen, but will elaborate on that later in the chapter.

To reduce the risk and stress that comes with buying or selling a home, many people choose to go through a real estate agent, and the fee paid becomes easily justified – but choose your agent wisely! With a real estate agent, all you need to do is ensure your home is well staged and shows at its best, instead of spending your time putting up signs, writing and booking professional marketing ads, fielding calls and enquiry, running open homes and inspections, listening to criticism and negotiating which can be very tricky when you have buyer and seller with totally different expectations of what they will pay and accept! The real estate agent will do the rest.

### **The obvious pros and cons that come with using an agent**

Some of the Pros include:

- Real estate agents possess market knowledge that the general public have no idea about, and in many cases, have little or no access to. This is quite helpful in determining a proper, more



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accurate and workable asking price for your home, as well as justifying this list price to buyers effectively.

- They are skilled negotiators and they know the language and strategies to extract more dollars and improve a buyer's offered terms, more often helping you get a higher selling price than you would get by selling on your own.
- They are professional marketers and know where money can effectively be spent to reap a return on the investment.
- They do not have a particular emotional attachment to your property or circumstances, so are not clouded by emotional decisions. It's all about business decisions and what is best for their client. Remember that an agent's main goal is to ensure that your home sells, so will not panic if a sale flops or if a buyer has a list of negatives about your property. They will just move on to the next buyer. The agent is the buffer between buyer and seller- the 'meat in the sandwich'.
- Reputable, licensed agents generally hold an industry license and public liability and

professional liability insurances that could save you from a major law suit in many instances which an owner-seller may not have considered, nor have in place themselves. Misrepresentation, omissions from the contract, injury caused on your property whilst inspecting- are only some of the major potential risks that should be carefully considered.

Some of the cons include:

- You will need to part with a few extra dollars in terms of commission. It is usually a percentage of the home's selling price.
- You will need to research and interview 2-3 agents to see who you feel comfortable with and who gives you the most confidence to execute the job by the book.
- You will need to learn to trust your agent and the feedback and recommendations to help you get the outcome you desire. Some people understandably have difficulty in learning to trust others, and this is where your choice in agent is important and your instincts.

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Although it is becoming somewhat easier to place your own property on the market and attempt the sale process on your own, listing your home through a real estate agent can save you lots of time, effort and the hassles that come along with it, allowing you to carry on with your own life, family routine, and job- almost normally!

By selling your own home, you may have the advantage of not having to pay fees to a real estate agent and you get to keep the full amount of the final selling price. The questions however, will always remain long after you accept an offer on your own sale: what price would you have got if you had a professional negotiating for you? Would you have actually saved anything after all? Was it worth the stress and extra effort? It says a lot for itself that even experienced agents will often use another experienced agent to sell their own properties, even though they will have to pay a fee themselves for the transaction. This is because they can justify the fee payable, knowing the vital role a third party plays in the negotiation and removal of emotions in the process which can kill a sale.

It's almost impossible to know, but experience in any profession offers that security and peace of mind of a result backed by skill and conducting the process in a professional manner, ticking all of the boxes. These are not small-dollar items that are being sold after all. It's someone's biggest asset!

Consider this... Would you allow an unqualified or inexperienced surgeon to operate on your heart? Don't choose a med student to operate on your largest asset when there are exceptional professionals out there.

### **Role of the agent**

It is a fact in the real estate industry that 20% of real estate agents account for more than 80% of property sales. That top 20% also tend to achieve the best price results for their clients who are selling properties.

If you decide to use an agent to assist in the selling of your property, their primary role should be solely to protect your interests in the sale and these agents are generally also governed by a fiduciary duty to work in your best interest.

This includes giving you accurate information regarding what the market needs or is like, attaining the highest price that your property can sell for, marketing it and ensuring it's at the frontline to sell as fast as possible. It also includes ensuring that this process runs smoothly.

A good agent will always do everything in their power to powerfully and consistently promote the features and benefits of your property to the marketplace. They are aware that their reputation is also at stake.

You need to be very selective and careful while selecting an agent to assist you in the sale. The less skilled and committed your agent is, the lower the price your property will sell for and the longer it will stay on the market.

## **SOURCE AND EVALUATE AGENTS**

There are indeed many real estate agents out there to choose from. How do you select the right one who will put your best interests before their own needs? The following might just help.

### Sourcing an agent

1. Make a list of all the agents you perceive to be most active. They will be on most of the property listings. Come highly recommend by friends and family, and rank highly on rating websites and online sources. It's not hard to see who is active in your area.
2. Next, rank each of the agents on your list by checking their digital footprint and profile. How many listings they hold, how many sales over the past 12 months, suburbs they cover, average days on the market, client testimonials and their awards and accolades. This will give you a general understanding of their skill and professionalism in their field.
3. Analyse their marketing material, quality of brochures and mail drops, photos, videos and editorialising.
4. Check out their online presence. What online marketing strategies do they use? Do they grab attention and are they effective?
5. What is their success rate? This is easily measured by asking for a "list to sell ratio".

This is the number of properties they've listed, compared to the number they've actually sold and is now available on some online property sites.

6. What is their average discount rate? This is the difference between the advertised price and the price the property ends up selling for. Commonly this is expressed as a negative percent. The lower the figure – ie: the closer to zero it is - the better their accuracy in pricing properties and their negotiation ability.
7. Finally, try to negotiate with them. The best way is on their fee. If they are desperate at this point, I'd have serious hesitation and this is a display of desperation to get you to list with them. If you have beaten your negotiator this early on at their own skill set, it couldn't give you peace of mind that when they are negotiating with a buyer they won't weaken just as easily to get a quick sale!

**Evaluate your agent's marketing expertise and record of success**

Any agent you consider assisting in the sale of your property should be conversant with the evolving marketing trends of recent years, especially due to the incredible impact of digital communication technology.

Your agent must be able to access and utilise up-to-the-minute marketing tools and strategies to attract as many suitable buyers as possible for your property. The use of props like professional photography, virtual tour software, database marketing and social media marketing might be an indicator that an agent is keeping up with the trends in the current market and that they are at the forefront of their game and what you are looking for in an agent.

Once you have shortlisted an agent (or 2) you want to work with, be sure to enquire about their track record. How successful are they? Ask questions such as where they live, how long they have lived there and why? Ask about their working tenure within the industry, the sales they have made on similar properties and for price ranges they tend to sell in.

Find out how long it would take them to sell your kind of property and how many prospective buyers they have for your kind of property. Discover what



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their marketing methods are and whether they have a network of trusted trade and professional suppliers who can assist you in preparing your home for sale.

Don't forget to ask what their agent fee would be at the end of the sale. Remember, the cheapest agent can often be the most expensive in the long run – to secure business they have to offer the lowest fees, as they are not strong negotiators.

Be sure to engage with the best sales agent who displays professionalism and a passion for what they do, and deliver results for homes or properties in your category.

# Chapter 5

## PLAN FOR THE SALE

### **The Story behind the sale**

There are different reasons why homes are sold, some genuine and some for all the wrong reasons. Any prospective buyer will be curious as to why someone would want to sell or dispose of a home if it has all the great qualities marketed. One of the first questions they ask is, “Why is the owner selling?”

This is understandable, since they do not want to purchase a troublesome or risky home. But this question is also often asked to as a gauge of a seller’s motivation. Your answer to this is fundamental in their decision as to whether they will buy or not, and also may influence where they offer.

Without a good answer, buyers will imagine the worst and put you in a position of weakness. Some of their concerns might include:

- The condition of the place, whether it’s falling apart.

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- What kind of a neighbourhood it is and the type of neighbours present.
- Is there any rubbish dump or highway planned for next door?

Providing a genuine reason for leaving that inspires confidence in the buyer is essential to your marketing strategy. Your reasoning may be because:

- You are moving to be closer to family.
- You are moving to be closer to work.
- Your family has grown and you require a bigger home.
- You are downsizing

Your goal is to ensure your potential buyers' expectations are met and that they are comfortable with their decision to buy your home. Be transparent and open with the marketing of your home.

Give them all the background information they need to explain your genuine reasons for moving in a way that is reassuring and transparent to prospective buyers.

## **AGENT BRIEFING**

This is crucial to a smooth sale since it is the agent who will be at the front line of marketing your home. An exceptional agent should be as interested in you as they are in your home, in order to portray an accurate picture of the property in totality to prospective buyers. The agent should be interested in knowing all about your lifestyle and how you enjoy or don't enjoy your home. Things you love, and also things you don't love about your home so they are prepared to overcome any objections made by buyers.

All this information should be given to your agent before engaging them in marketing and putting your property up for sale. Once an agent has been identified and given the mandate/authority to act for you in selling your home, some of the things they should be made aware of include:

- Why you are selling your home.
- What attracted you to the property when you bought it.
- How you have improved the property to add value.

- The pros and cons of living there.
- Your timeframe for going to market and in achieving a result.
- Any work you intend to do to your home before going to market.

The information you give them at this stage is what forms the basis of their marketing campaign, the pricing recommendation and strategies they use to sell your home.

## SALE OPTIONS

### **Private Treaty or Auction**

These are the two most common ways to sell a property. Auction and Private Treaty.

For a private treaty sale, you set the price or price guide and wait for someone to buy. At an auction, potential buyers bid competitively for your property at a nominated time and the highest bidder wins.

Both methods can be effective and require similar investments with regards to marketing and agent fees. So, the question is how to choose which strategy best suits your property for it to sell for

maximum price and in a reasonable timeframe. The following should be considered:

- Your type of property.
- The demand for your property type and the market conditions in your area.
- Your price expectation.
- The timeframe you have to achieve a sale.

Just like everything else, each format has its pros and cons, so it's really down to what you feel comfortable with and the above points. The list below may assist you in deciding which format to go with.

### **PRIVATE TREATY**

#### **Pros**

- ✓ Most buyers opt for this type of format and feel more comfortable buying without auction terms (cash and unconditional).
- ✓ Only one interested buyer is needed to get the price you want.

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- ✓ It is typically a less stressful method to sell, particularly on the actual auction day where there is an element of pressure and hype to get the result. If you are an anxious/stressed individual, you may want to consider this.
- ✓ The negotiation process allows both sides more time to consider terms and conditions.
- ✓ Terms and conditions are flexible hence both can achieve a win-win situation.
- ✓ You can accept a higher offer if it comes in before signing the contract of sale.
- ✓ There is confidentiality on offers, so competing buyers will bid high for fear of missing out.
- ✓ Often, if your property is presented and priced well, you may achieve a sale within the first few days of a property going live.
- ✓ Your property is seen and considered by the whole market and it's then only up to them liking the property, and agreeing with the list price.

### **Cautionary Advice**

- ✓ The initial pricing might be wrong and require price adjustments to meet the market.
- ✓ Excellent negotiation skills are required from either the seller (if selling by private sale), or the agent hired.
- ✓ Marketing and negotiations are critical to ensure you have squeezed the most out of the buyer at hand.
- ✓ The property should be fully ready for sale before placing on the market.
- ✓ There is no definitive timeline for sale – it's more a “we will sell when we find the right buyer” approach.

### **AUCTION**

#### **Pros**

- ✓ Auction works well for unique homes that prove difficult to price, usually having very little recent comparable sales data available to set a narrow market price range.



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- ✓ Auctions can create urgency for buyers to act now and a carnival atmosphere which can excite buyers, pushing them to bid higher.
- ✓ The bidding process is transparent and buyers feel at ease with what they pay, due to seeing other buyers competing at the same level in an open arena.
- ✓ Competition drives the price up.
- ✓ You set the auction date, reserve price, settlement date, and other terms and conditions prior to the auction date.
- ✓ It is a short, intensive campaign, which is great for having a definitive deadline to achieve a result and often pulls the market forward.
- ✓ Your reserve is not disclosed and the market sets the price of what it's worth on the day.
- ✓ The sale is not subject to valuation, finance, or other buyer inspections if sold under the hammer, and the sold sign goes up on the fall of the hammer. This can be a great feeling of closure, where you can put your mind at rest and focus on your next move.

- ✓ You can sell the property before, during or after the auction process. You do not have to wait until auction day to accept an offer!

### **Cautionary Advice**

- ✓ You must aim your home to the correct market to make a sale.
- ✓ A skilled auctioneer is a must and comes at a fee.
- ✓ The sale price is determined by the market and this can go either way, high or low, depending on the demand.
- ✓ A sale is not guaranteed on auction day however properties often sell in the days following the auction.
- ✓ You do eliminate a percentage of buyers, on the day as a lot of buyers most buyers because the sale is unconditional and there is no cooling-off period.
- ✓ Time – an auction campaign lasts around 4 weeks on average.

- ✓ There is a risk of weakening your future negotiating position if your property is passed in at auction.
- ✓ Should you accept an offer prior to auction day, it is imperative that your agent still continues to market your property until the sale is unconditional, not disclosing that the property has sold anywhere or to anyone. Any conditions of the contract should also have due dates to be satisfied well prior to auction day, so if anything happens with the contract, you have not lost anything and you may proceed per normal with the auction.

If you are still unsure which format to use in selling your property, your agent is the ideal person to guide you in your decision making, particularly if they have a strong track record of selling homes just like yours. Have them provide evidence of their success using the sale format they recommend for your home.

## **AGENT LISTING**

### **EXCLUSIVE AGENT OR OPEN AGENT LISTING?**

This usually depends on which format of sale you decide on. For auctions, an exclusive agent is the one

who usually manages the sale. For a private treaty sale, there is also the option of listing with different real estate agencies, also known as open agent listing.

However, it is advisable to choose an exclusive agent to represent you, rather than list your home with multiple agents. The reasons for this are:

- ✓ You save money in your marketing, as you will not be using numerous agents.
- ✓ Your properties profile holds an exclusive perception to buyers and removes the risk of becoming bastardized with multiple online ads and signboards out the front of your property.
- ✓ Your agent will be more invested with 100% interest in selling your property if they have the exclusive right to do so, as opposed to having multiple agents competing for the sale—more often with the same buyer enquiry.
- ✓ Your marketing message remains consistent since there is only one agent to deal with and you can build a relationship of trust with your agent.

It is vital to get an exceptional real estate agent who will insist on exclusivity, so they can effectively manage the marketing of your home, protect your sale price and sell your property in good time. Typically, the top agents will only work under this arrangement as it is actually in a vendor's best interest to list exclusively. You can have an exclusive agency agreement that grants your agent up to 90 days to find you a buyer. If they fail to do so in this time, you can either renew the agreement - depending on their performance - or list your home elsewhere if you're not satisfied with their services.

## **MARKETING**

This is a crucial element of selling your home. You need to inform the market that your property is up for sale, casting the net wide so that you can increase the numbers through your door, and so your agent can get the opportunity to use their skills of closing a sale. If not done well, the property can sit on the market for a very long time and you may end up selling it for a lower price, as well as incurring a tally of marketing costs.

An exceptional agent will have a proven marketing strategy for selling homes in your area and category. Have them suggest specific marketing plans which

they have employed in recent sales, and explain the reasoning and what you get for the spend. If you can see value in it, then it's probably worth investing that little but extra to give yourself optimal opportunity of securing the best result. "You can't sell a secret" after all!

An agent doesn't necessarily have to invent new ways to market your property. This might only mean that your credit card will become the guinea pig for an agent's marketing wish list. You want to see real-time results from cost effective marketing strategies that are proven to work. You can then decide on which is best and of most value to you in getting your property seen by as many buyers as possible.

### **How exceptional agents market your home**

There are different techniques that marketers in real estate use to get their message across to the general public, attract prospective buyers and enhance the interest of anyone thinking of buying a property. The top agents will cover all angles, placing your property on a pedestal so to speak, in order to have it seen by a wider market audience, and in its best light. Take their professional advice – considering value of course - and avoid taking a shortcut to save a few hundred dollars, which could cost you tens of

thousands of dollars in return! Sometimes you need to spend a little to make a little...

Ticking the boxes:

### **Professional Photography**

The quality of the photos your agent uses to market your home is critical, since this is generally the first thing a buyer will see attracting them to your home and to make an enquiry. As previously mentioned, the first impression of your home is made in a buyer's mind within the first *eight seconds* of seeing your property, be it in real life or in marketing material. In today's day and age, buyers are inspecting homes online before they decide to pursue any further, so if your photography isn't presenting to a professional standard, you may not get those buyers through the door and they may inspect and end up buying another property that attracted them to the next stage of a physical inspection.

Exceptional agents will insist on professional images, knowing they contribute significantly to a successful sale, reducing days on the market and increasing the sale price. These photos can often make a property look better than what they are, but that's not necessarily a bad thing! Getting buyers through the

door will allow your agents skills to shine and close down a sale. A buyer will very often also send the marketing material/photos to a friend or family member that they confide in to reassure them that they are making the right decision. If the photos don't offer the "wow", do you think the response they may get from their trusted advisor will help cement your sale? If the response a buyer gets when sending a link of the ad and photos is along the lines of "OMG that is amazing!" You can almost guarantee to expect an offer, and a solid sale. Remember, emotions play a very significant role in any sales field and a highly skilled agent will use all of these tools and psychology to ensure the best outcome.

Some do's and don'ts while using professional photography include:

### **Do's**

- ✓ Insist on professional photography and ask to see examples before giving the go ahead on marketing.
- ✓ Have your home fully staged when photos are taken.
- ✓ Include a mix of indoor and outdoor shots ensuring lighting is optimal. Twilight shots can be a great advantage in positioning your home



in a premium light and works well for homes of any value.

- ✓ Carefully select only the best shots and angles to display your property to the market. Less is often more and you want just enough to tease and excite a buyer to want to inspect. Angles that make a room look smaller and don't showcase the property to a desired effect should be left out to avoid turning a buyer off before they even inspect. For many properties, 10-12 knockout photos are more than sufficient to make a great first impression.

### **Don'ts**

- ✓ Do not take your own photos unless you are a skilled/professional photographer with experience in shooting real estate photography.

### **Real Estate Websites**

The Internet is now known to generate the highest number of buyer enquires for most agents. An exceptional agent will list your property not only on their website, but also on all the major property websites. It's important that your property is marketed widely through as many property portals as

possible, but absolutely imperative to be on the main sites where a majority of the market are searching.

For maximum exposure, do some homework with regard to the various options on these main sites that are available and consider upgrading the standard ad to a 'premier' ad type from day one. This ensures maximum exposure to the widest audience and on these major sites, can produce up to 20x the online inspection numbers when compared to a standard ad on the same site! This is money well spent.

### **Virtual tour software**

This is a digital representation of your home in the form of a 3D video, which is usually posted online. Virtual tour software can play a role in buyers forming an attachment to the property being sold, and can be especially helpful in showcasing your property to interstate and international buyers who may not be able to physically inspect your property. Emotional attachment ensures that the seller has the upper hand in negotiations. The stronger the buyer's emotional attachment, the more likely they are to pursue ownership of your home at a higher price, meaning you dictate the price at which your property sells.

You can list the property with a floor plan, easily created from your house plans, should you have them. It gives buyers a bird's eye view of the design of your home, allowing them to make an initial assessment of how well it fits their needs.

Virtual tour software also makes it possible for that floor plan to be *interactive*. When prospective buyers view your floor plan online, they need only move their cursor to a key location on the plan for images of that location to pop up. This feature helps buyers visualise the layout of your home in a way that a traditional floor plan cannot.

A video tour gives potential buyers an even greater level of interaction with your home, smoothly guiding them through each room without them having to make an actual visit to the home. One can also include beautiful music or even commentary in the video. All of these tools help add value by giving the buyer a professional and impressive experience when considering parting with money to buy your home.

### **Database marketing**

An exceptional agent will already have a large database of prospective buyers who are looking for a property like yours and are ready to buy. The

advantage of choosing such an agent is that you will be exposing your property to an even larger pool of buyers and these agents are often able to produce a suitable buyer before going live to the open market and potentially save you money in marketing costs, as well as time!

Having a solid database is not enough, however. The database must be highly *active*, meaning your agent must be making frequent, consistent and relevant interaction with their database across a variety of marketing platforms. These include:

- ✓ Phone calls.
- ✓ Newsletters.
- ✓ Letter box drops including “Just Listed” flyers and "Sold" flyers.
- ✓ Social media.
- ✓ Emailing.

To get access to such information you need to ask your agent some of the following questions:

- ✓ Do you call ‘active buyers’ in your database immediately upon the listing of a property that meets their search parameters?

- ✓ Do you email prospective buyers in your database informing them of updates in your market place?
- ✓ Do you send a regular newsletter to your database with new properties and general real estate information? How often? How many people does it reach?
- ✓ Do you distribute “Just Listed” flyers, "Sold" flyers and other marketing material in letterboxes in the area? To how many people?
- ✓ Do you use social media marketing and what options are available to me on these platforms?

## **BROCHURES AND NEWSLETTERS**

Brochures and newsletters produced by your agent personalise the presentation of your home’s features better than a mass circulation magazine.

These publications can be distributed in hard copy or electronically, and the response they generate can be measured and reported back to you. Make sure all marketing print media is of professional quality and free from any errors. Remember it’s the whole

impression that helps attract buyers to a particular property and make a purchasing decision.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**

An agent who does not use social media to market your home is doing you a real disservice, since the majority of the people in the world, regardless of which market they are in, are using social media multiple times a day. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are perhaps the most relative here.

An exceptional agent will have a proven strategy for social media marketing, competently using Instagram, Linked-in and Facebook to keep in contact with buyers and entice them to buy your home. More buyers than ever are becoming ‘fans’ of real estate agents on Facebook and ‘followers’ of agents on Instagram to receive immediate notification of new property listings. Here’s how it works:

**Facebook** allows agents to post details of your property to their ‘fans’, with a link to the full listing on their website. Facebook and Instagram accounts can be linked, so if a listing appears on Instagram, it will appear on Facebook and vice versa.

The social media platforms have a “share” function, meaning the marketing of your home can reach far beyond the people on your agent’s database, and out to their contacts’ family, friends and business associates.

Used as part of an overall database marketing strategy, social media is an incredibly powerful tool to reach buyers who are in the market for a home just like yours. Best of all, it is not uncommon for buyers to form an emotional attachment to a property straight off an online video tour, and feel a real sense of urgency to take the next step.

Be sure to discuss this with your agent and ask about sponsored ads and social boosts to serve up your property directly onto relative buyer’s social media pages!

### **SIGNAGE**

A quality photo signboard outside your property is a powerful, cost effective way to attract interest from qualified buyers. Most buyers drive around the area that they wish to buy in, usually on weekends or evenings. Beautiful photos of the interior of your home on the signage will have so much more impact than a plain “for sale” sign. Regardless of the sign you choose, make sure it is a fresh, new sign, correctly

installed as you do not want anything tarnishing the image of your home!

### **OPEN HOMES**

This is where the home is open for inspection to prospective buyers. Holding an open home inspection involves nominating and promoting a day and time for people to come through your property.

It is an excellent marketing tactic for a number of reasons, including:

- ✓ It opens the property to a wide pool of buyers, many of which enjoy looking at properties at their leisure. People are very busy these days, so opening this as an avenue to inspect is a fantastic, pressure free environment for buyers to assess and determine suitability without putting anyone out.
- ✓ The pre-determined date and time makes it easier for buyers to schedule their attendance.
- ✓ If many buyers attend, it creates a sense of competition and urgency to secure a property new to the market.
- ✓ Buyers can appraise the home at their leisure.



- ✓ You have time and notice to prepare your home beautifully for the inspection.

In order to ensure that your home will be well displayed during an open home, it is crucial to find out how your selected agent manages an open home.

Attend 'undercover' as a prospective buyer, as this will give you excellent insight into the way an agent both treats prospective buyers and represents sellers. However, since agents may have several different open homes scheduled, keep in mind that a well-attended open home can be a hectic time for them. What's more important when this occurs is that all buyer's details are captured for security and follow-up.

What to look for during an open home:

- ✓ Does the agent make certain to register details from people who attend?
- ✓ How attentive are they to each person that enters and leaves?
- ✓ Are they 'present' during the inspection, engaging with people as opposed to reading and making phone calls?

- ✓ When you engage them, do they take an interest in you and what you are looking for?

An exceptional agent skillfully communicates with potential buyers, ascertains their interest levels, what exactly they are looking for and requests the buyer's contact details and determines their next point of contact.

## MARKETING BUDGET

There are several factors that determine your marketing budget and settlement on a marketing strategy in collaboration with your agent. These may include:

- ✓ The cost of recent marketing campaigns for properties in your category.
- ✓ Their results.
- ✓ The strong elements of those campaigns.
- ✓ Which elements could be excluded from your marketing plan to reduce the budget and have no negative impact?

In addition, you can also do your own research online to ensure that your budget is within its limits. Look closely at the marketing for no less than ten

properties in your category, especially those that have been on the market for some time. Find out what they are doing wrong and how it could be improved.

With the advent of online advertising and social media, print advertising has become both costlier and less effective. Whilst for extremely unique properties it can be effective as part of the broad marketing mix, the cost vs. gain must be considered to ascertain financial viability before spending money in this medium.

At the very least, you need to invest in professional photographs of your property, and the best possible online advertising available to ensure exposure to the greatest pool of qualified buyers.

# Chapter 6

## MARKET FEEDBACK

### Importance

**Monitoring market feedback** is vital to your marketing throughout the time your property is listed for sale. This assists you in making modifications to your marketing strategy or offer accordingly. This is particularly important in the first few weeks, when your home is fresh to your potential buyers' eyes and interest is at its peak. You can get this feedback from the online marketing on the various websites as well as on the ground inspections.

### WEBSITE HITS

The number of hits is an indicator of the interest in your home. The more hits there are according to online statistics, the higher the interest and vice versa. For a newly listed property the interest is usually quite high, and tends to drop as time progresses. To get a rough idea of what this might look like, you can ask your agent for the average number of hits a newly listed property in your category can expect.

The high number of hits in the first two or three weeks your property goes live on the market makes it crucial for hooking buyers. Using the conversion rate of hits into inspections, you can gauge whether your asking price or other factors are deterring buyers from moving towards making a purchase.

### **INSPECTION FEEDBACK**

This is entirely dependent on how your property is staged. The rate at which the inspections are turned into offers can be an indicator of the need to improve or stick to what you have in terms of staging and pricing. If you are getting inspections without offers, you need to understand why.

Use the feedback from inspections to understand the market's view of your property and how competitively it is priced. Here are a few things to look out for which may result in no offers after an inspection.

1. **Bad odours in the home:** This usually comes from cigarette and pets, both of which are very difficult to disguise.

You can get rid of these odours by:

- a) Smoking outside the home.
- b) Bathing and disinfecting your pets regularly.

- c) Vacuuming the floor and furniture every second day.
  - d) Keeping cat litter outside.
  - e) Use of recommended cleaning solutions for odorizing; for example, bicarbonate of soda in fridges and cupboards.
  - f) Professional cleaning for your beds and sofas.
  - g) Proper airing and ventilation of your home well in advance of an inspection.
2. **Pets roaming the yard:** To make the potential buyers feel comfortable, safe and at ease inspecting your home, take your pets elsewhere during inspections, or at the very least, put them in a secure enclosure outside. Not in a room or garage as buyers like to inspect all parts of the home before deciding whether to buy your home or not.
3. **Poorly-lit rooms:** Poor lighting creates a dreary, heavy feeling and does nothing to inspire people or enhance their interest. You can replace dull light bulbs with brighter ones, remove heavy, dark curtains and paint rooms that need to be brightened up.

4. **Dirty bathrooms and kitchens:** As mentioned in an earlier chapter, these are very important areas in your home and can be the sole determinant of whether or not your property sells. If, even after cleaning, your bathroom or kitchen still look dirty and grimy, you simply must invest in a professional cleaner, replace broken fittings and fixtures and ensure proper drainage.
5. **Loud paint or wallpaper:** This is a real first impression creator and if you exhibit bad taste or loud décor, you will turn off a lot of buyers. At best, they will negotiate your price down based on all the work your home needs. At worst, they won't be able to see past the bad décor, and will walk away.
6. **Everyday clutter:** Ensure that your dishes are cleaned and properly stacked in their respective cupboards, waste bins are emptied and clean, beds are neatly made, washing baskets are empty and all clothes clean and neatly arranged in their proper drawers, no paperwork is strewn over desks, and bookshelves are arranged. Not

doing this will create the impression that your home is cramped and untidy, hindering potential buyers from envisioning your home as their own.

7. **Pests:** Invest in a pest control inspection to ensure no embarrassing pests such as ants, cockroaches, spiders and mice, etc. come crawling during an inspection.
8. **No street appeal:** An unkempt exterior is a sign the home in general has not been cared for. It also makes the place look unattractive. Many buyers will immediately discount a home if the exterior and garden are poorly kept and might not even bother to look at the interior. The façade should be fresh and inviting to capture any buyers doing a drive-by.
9. **Gutters full of leaves and debris:** Overflowing gutters make buyers wonder what else has not been maintained and they may walk away.
10. **Seller's presence during inspections:** If your property is scheduled for an inspection, make a point of leaving so you can give the



buyers the comfort and space to thoroughly inspect and evaluate your home. Buyers will feel pressured to 'hurry up and get out' if they realise the seller is present during an inspection and avoid comment and feedback that the agent needs to hear and provide to you.

After an inspection, discuss the feedback with your agent. If you don't receive a request for a follow up inspection or an offer after the second open for inspection, you need to go back to the drawing board and find out what exactly is causing it, be it your price, your marketing approach, the staging, or all of the above.

Be aware of feedback that is comparative to other very similar properties in your area. A competing property may have something yours doesn't, such as a pool or double garage, yet be priced lower than yours. You may feel your home has redeeming features that outweigh any deficits, but if the market clearly doesn't agree, it is good reason to review your price.

Listen to both the positive and the negative feedback. The features of your property that receive the best response can be emphasised in your marketing to

generate more interest, while the ones that don't can be modified to avoid future turndowns to an offer.

### **OFFERS**

There is a saying in real estate – your first offer is usually your best offer. That's because in almost 95% of cases, it is. You will never see more traffic and buyer interest in your home than you will when it first hits the market.

It makes sense then that if presented well, and priced and marketed correctly, you will receive one, if not multiple offers very early on. In my experience, and in that of most other agents I've worked with, it's rare that offers move drastically upwards in price weeks into the campaign.

The longer a property takes to sell, the more the market perceives there is something wrong with it, and the price point of offers decline. Fast offers are not a sign that there will continue to be plenty more out there – don't make this terrible mistake, it will cost you in the long run.

# **Chapter 7**

## **PRICE REVIEW**

If you put your property on the market and it does not sell within the first two weeks, then you need to reconsider a few things. Typically, if you have selected a top agent, priced correctly and presented properly, you should receive offers within this timeframe. If all of these boxes have been ticked and no subsequent offers, then there may not be a high demand for your type of property, or you may be aiming your marketing to the wrong target audience. Market feedback can play a major role in helping you establish what the problem might be.

By ignoring market feedback and staying firm on your price, you run the risk of your property languishing on the market longer than you can afford to wait, in the face of increased competition and waning interest.

If results show your property has been exposed to the right market and that the right buyers are showing up, all to no avail, then you can assume the market has not accepted your value proposition.

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In this case, you have a tough decision to make. When is it necessary to lower your price according to market feedback? During its peak interest? Or do you maintain your price at the level you determined through your initial market research, and wait until the interest wanes away?

Enlist the expertise of an exceptional agent, and remain receptive to their advice by listening and remaining unemotional. Trust that they want your home to sell for the most amount of money in the least amount of time just as much as you do.

# Chapter 8

## SOLD

The sweetest sight after all is said and done is the SOLD sign. Selling your home is an emotional process, not least for all the memories and dreams it holds, which is perfectly understandable. The key is not to let emotion interfere with the practical decisions you need to make for your home to sell quickly and at the best possible price.

If you're serious about selling your home quickly and for top dollar, and carefully follow the steps outlined in this book - if you put into place the majority of the staging suggestions listed in this book in collaboration with an exceptional agent – then you are going to be leaps ahead in the real estate game. You will have the greatest chance of getting the sale result you wish for.

You will have given your home that critical extra advantage to attract a greater pool of potential buyers. You need to act decisively on what the market has to say, and trust that everything will turn out as it should. I am here to help you in every way I can, and wish you all the best.

# Chapter 9

## SECTION FOR BUYERS

### **Is a Real Estate Agent Necessary while Buying a Home?**

Buying a home and being a home owner is a big event, even more so if it is your first home or first experience. There will probably be many things you don't know if you haven't been through the home buying process before. One of the most common questions of first-time home buyers is whether they need to hire a buyer's agent.

A buyer's agent is not necessary when you are buying a home, but having someone with experience on your side can make your home buying experience more pleasant and potentially less expensive. There is nothing that requires anyone to hire a buyer's agent. You can find homes for sale on your own and work directly with the seller's agent.

Be mindful that is that a seller's agent is employed by the seller and has the seller's best interests in mind. He or she will naturally try to get the highest possible price for the seller and is, in fact, contractually bound

to do so. They are also obligated not to share any confidential information about their client with you.

Buyer's agents can give you the advantage of having a knowledgeable and experienced agent looking out for your best interests, but be mindful that they may also expect a fee for their assistance, so you need to weigh up the benefits of an additional cost if any. If they are skilled at negotiating, perhaps this cost could be justified by a helping you to buy the property at a better price, but may be tougher to do in markets which are hotter, with a high demand.

You can work with an agent without signing a buyer's agency contract. In fact, it's a good idea to do so for a while until you're sure that you want that agent to represent you. This gives you time to determine whether your needs are being listened to and if you get along.

An agent is not legally bound to keep information - such as the highest price you would pay for a property confidential until you sign a contract with them. If they are a dual agent that also represents sellers, and you want to buy a home that belongs to one of their clients, they have to share that information unless they are legally representing your

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interests. So, keeping such things to yourself until there is a written agreement is a good idea.

No agent should pressure you into signing an agreement right away. If, after a while, you're still unsure, you can talk to the agent about signing an agreement that only lasts for a short time. You can opt for a non-exclusive agreement, which allows the agent to represent you but also allows you to work with other agents.

In some cases, your buyer's agent and the seller's agent will split the commission. That means that you can have your own agent without having to spend more money.

**Good Luck!!!!**