



HOW I SELL HOMES OTHERS FAILED TO SELL



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Foreword

Ever wonder why one house sells quickly while a similar house doesn't?

If you're reading this, chances are you've experienced the frustration of trying to sell your home—only to have it sit on the market with no offers, lowball bids, or buyers who just aren't interested. I get it. Selling a home is supposed to be an exciting, forward-moving process, but when the "For Sale" sign lingers too long in the yard, it starts to feel like an anchor.

Or maybe you're thinking of selling your home but are worried about the above scenario playing out for you.

You're not alone. Every year, thousands of homeowners find themselves in the same situation...wondering why their home didn't sell. Was it the price? The condition? The marketing? Or was it just bad luck? The truth is that homes don't fail to sell by accident. There's always a reason, and the good news is that there's always a solution.

That's where I come in. I specialize in selling homes that others couldn't. Over the years, I've developed a proven system that transforms "unsellable" homes into properties that buyers can't resist. It's not magic. It's a combination of strategy, smart home improvements, and the right marketing approach. In this book, I'm going to share those exact strategies with you.

You'll learn:

- The most common reasons homes don't sell (and how to fix them).
- The marketing strategy that gets homes noticed and sold for top dollar.
- The FixNList strategy—how small improvements can lead to big profits.
- Real-life case studies of homes that went from stale listings to sold successes.

By the time you finish this book, you'll understand exactly what went wrong with your previous listing...and more importantly, what needs to happen next to get your home sold.

Sellers can command higher prices for their homes when they use the right techniques. A few simple strategies—known only to the best sellers and top agents—can make a huge impact on the success of your sale. Homes brought to the market with the right techniques can sell quickly and for more money—even if they failed to sell the first time around.

Thanks for taking the time to look through this book. I truly hope it will help you make more money on the sale of your home. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. I'm here to help. Let's get started!

CHAPTER 1

The Price Problem

One of the biggest reasons homes fail to sell is price. Many homeowners believe their home is worth more than the market will bear, and while your home may hold sentimental value, buyers aren't making offers based on your memories. They're making offers based on data.

Overpricing: The Silent Deal Killer

Are you sick of being told your home didn't sell, because it was overpriced? Most people assume a home didn't sell simply because the price was too high...but that couldn't be further from the truth.

The biggest reason homes don't sell is that they are priced too high for their condition. Buyers today have more information at their fingertips than ever before. They are educated and aware of what's on the market. They're not just looking at your home in isolation; they're comparing it to every other home in their price range. If your home doesn't stand out as the best value in their search, they'll move on to the next listing without a second thought.

Buyers aren't just comparing prices; they're comparing value. If a home doesn't look and feel like it matches its price, it gets overlooked. When a home is priced too high, it scares off buyers before they even walk through the door. Even if a buyer loves your home, they're unlikely to make an offer if they feel it's overpriced—fearing a difficult negotiation.

Many people believe a house sells for exactly what it's "worth." That simply isn't true. The price of a house is merely the final amount agreed upon by the buyer and seller during negotiation. Numerous factors affect the final sale price.

Houses do not always sell for what they are determined to be "worth." Sometimes they sell for more; sometimes they sell for less. The right price isn't just about attracting buyers—it's about generating excitement. A well-priced home can create multiple offers, which often leads to a higher final sale price.

Take Cheryl and Richard, for example. They owned townhouses only five doors apart, and both put their homes on the market at the same time.

The builder had used the same floor plan for all the townhouses in their neighborhood. At first glance, each townhome seemed to hold the same basic appeal for a buyer. You might think they were "worth" the same amount. Nope—Cheryl and Richard sold their homes within 1 month of each other.

Although these townhouses appeared identical, when seen in person, they held a different appeal and sentiment. In fact, there was a \$14,000 difference in sale price!

- Cheryl sold her home for \$402,000.
- While Richard sold his for only \$388,000.

Why the large gap in price? In a later chapter, you'll see exactly what Cheryl did to make more money on her home. For now, just know that you simply can't afford to guess the true value of a home!

The Right Price

- **Comparative Market Analysis (CMA).** Look at recent sales of similar homes in your area.
- **Condition.** Compare the "as-is" condition vs. the after-repair condition.
- **Buyer psychology.** Understand how pricing brackets impact buyer searches.
- **Market trends.** Adjust based on whether it's a buyer's or seller's market.

Getting the right price based on your home's condition from the beginning is the first step in ensuring your home sells quickly and for the best possible price. Once you've nailed the pricing strategy, the next step is to make sure your home looks its absolute best, which brings us to staging.

Chapter 2

The Power of Staging

The Luxury Home-Selling Strategy: Sell Homes for 15% More Money

The rich and famous use this strategy to sell their homes. In one instance, a real estate agent reported that using this strategy caused one condo to sell for \$110,000 more than a similar condo in the very same building!

The seller using this strategy sold their condo for \$549,000; while another, who did not use the strategy, sold for \$439,000.

Why did one condo sell for more than the other? According to the real estate agent—who had intimate knowledge of both condos—neither listing was bank owned, a short sale, or a distress sale. The only explanation for the price difference was the seller's use of this home-selling strategy.

This strategy is effective in any market. No matter what type of property is being listed, this approach works across the board. It applies equally to homes, apartments, townhouses, or condos. Agents and sellers using these tactics have a greater chance of closing a sale...and for more money.

Here's how one particular agent discovered the secret strategy—almost by accident. He met a wealthy executive who was interested in selling his condo, but the man had one special request: the agent had to use his secret method to sell the condo. It sounded crazy, and the agent was naturally skeptical.

While selling the condo would bring a handsome commission, if it didn't work out, their agreement would expire, and the agent would walk away.

The real estate agent decided to give it a shot. He helped prepare the listing as requested, and they priced the condo at a record high of \$554,900 (for reference, two similar condos in the same complex were listed at \$479,000 and \$439,000).

Although the agent was skeptical that the condo would sell for the asking price, the owner's secret strategy was intriguing, and he wanted to see how it would work out. The condo went on the market, and he waited to see what would happen.

This is a true story. Even though the condo had no special attraction that set it apart from the others—it wasn't a penthouse, just a unit on the sixth floor of a ten-story complex—something was different about it. The first buyer who walked through the door loved the condo—making an offer before finishing the tour.

The agent could not believe what had happened. He rushed to call the owner, who accepted the offer. Still skeptical, the agent began to worry that the deal might fall apart, given that the unit was priced \$100,000 higher than other units in the complex. He also worried that the buyer might later feel they were overpaying. But no, everything worked out. The condo successfully sold for \$549,000—a record high for the area!

The seller's strategy was a huge success! Naturally, the real estate agent was thrilled, and so was the owner, who made a substantial profit.

The price was \$110,000 higher than the previous condo that had sold for \$439,000, and this increase was not due to rapidly rising prices. The next unit that sold (28 days later) went for \$435,000—it was a less desirable second-floor unit. Five months later, another similar condo sold for \$450,000.

Would you like to know this secret strategy to sell your home for more money? It does take some extra time and effort, but as you can see, the payoff is well worth it!

What's the secret strategy? What was the special request the wealthy home seller had for his agent? It was simple: he wanted to stage the condo.

Staging is the act of sprucing up a home to make it as visually appealing as possible. It might sound crazy, but staging can cause homes to sell for more money and more quickly—in fact, by a significant margin.

Many agents encourage sellers to stage their homes. However, very few can provide case studies that prove staging will actually help your home sell for more money.

Fortunately, this real estate agent knew he was onto something. He began researching everything he could on staging and its impact on sale prices. He then put his findings together in a substantial report—sharing the tactics the wealthy seller had taught him and including all the examples he had found as case studies.

Case Study

Dear Reader:

I want to provide the most convincing proof possible. Many people find it hard to believe that the simple act of staging can help one home sell for a higher price than another similar home.

In my research, I looked for examples of similar houses being sold for different amounts of money where only one of the two houses was staged. The clearest example I could find was in the following two listings.

This development consists of 200 identical townhomes. Every townhome in the neighborhood is three stories, with three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Each unit has the exact same floor plan.

I identified two sales:

- **Townhome A.** Sold on August 26.
- **Townhome B.** Five doors down—sold on July 26 for \$40,000 less.

I personally visited this neighborhood and am familiar with these properties. You could not find a better example of two identical properties selling for different prices.

The details show that these two homes are identical in every substantial way:

- The lots on which the units sit are identical in terms of location desirability.
- Both units have the same kitchen layout—featuring identical cabinets and tile flooring.
- Both units boast nice hardwood floors in the living room and carpeted bedrooms.

After studying every aspect of these sales, I found two reasons why one home sold for \$40,000 more than the other:

1. Townhome A was professionally staged—giving it a more appealing appearance.
2. The agent selling Townhome A took higher-quality, more attractive photos of the home.

These two seemingly small actions made the \$40,000 difference. The buyers of Townhome A made a higher offer, because the home was presented in a more appealing and attractive way.

Even simple improvements can have a big impact on the final sale price of a home. When staging is done well, it truly makes a difference.

You have two options for staging your home:

- **Option 1.** Do it yourself. (Learn how in the following chapter.)

- **Option 2.** Hire a professional home stager. If you're considering hiring someone to handle your staging, contact me for a list of references. I'd be happy to provide recommendations and information on stagers who can do a great job for you.

Conclusion

- This case study clearly illustrates that staging is far more than just a cosmetic upgrade. It's a strategic investment that can significantly influence a home's final sale price. Even when two properties are nearly identical in every aspect, the way a home is presented can make all the difference. Townhome A's professional staging and high-quality photos not only elevated its appeal but also resulted in a \$40,000 higher sale price compared to its unstaged counterpart.
- The takeaway is simple—when potential buyers are inundated with choices, a well-staged home stands out. By creating an inviting atmosphere and highlighting the home's best features, staging transforms a space from a mere structure into a place where buyers can envision their future. In today's competitive market, investing in staging isn't just an option—it's a necessity for those who want to maximize their returns.
- Whether you choose to stage your home yourself or hire a professional, remember that the details matter. A little extra effort in presentation can lead to a substantial payoff at closing. Let this case study serve as a compelling reminder—effective staging can be the key to unlocking your home's full potential and achieving a faster, more profitable sale.

Chapter 3

Marketing Mistakes That Cost You Buyers

Even if a home is priced correctly and staged beautifully, it still won't sell if no one knows about it—or worse, if it's marketed poorly. Many sellers (and even some agents) underestimate just how important strategic marketing is in today's real estate market. Simply listing a home on the MLS and waiting for buyers to show up isn't enough.

In this chapter, we'll break down the most common marketing mistakes that cause homes to linger on the market and how to correct them to ensure maximum exposure and buyer interest.

Mistake 1. Low-Quality Listing Photos

Over 90% of buyers start their home search online, and the first thing they see is your home's listing photos. If those images are dark, blurry, or taken at unflattering angles, buyers will scroll right past your home without a second thought.

Fix it. Invest in a professional real estate photographer to highlight your home's best features. Good lighting, angles, and staging all make a huge difference in attracting buyers.

Mistake 2. A Weak Listing Description

Buyers don't just rely on photos. They read listing descriptions to determine if your home fits their needs. Yet, too many listings contain boring, vague, or poorly written descriptions that fail to capture the home's value.

Fix it. Craft a compelling listing description that makes buyers want to schedule a showing. Highlight unique selling points, upgrades, and lifestyle benefits.

Mistake 3. Not Using Social Media and Digital Marketing

Gone are the days when real estate marketing was limited to yard signs and MLS listings. Today's buyers browse Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and real estate websites to find their dream home.

Fix it. Your home should have a strong online presence beyond just an MLS listing. Ensure your agent is leveraging targeted social media ads, video walkthroughs, and email marketing.

Mistake 4. Limited or Poorly Timed Showings

Some homeowners make the mistake of limiting showing times or failing to keep their home ready for last-minute visits. The more flexible you are, the more buyers will get a chance to view your home.

Fix it. Keep your home show-ready at all times and accommodate as many showings as possible.

Chapter 4

Agent Expertise

Don't Hire the Wrong Agent

Not all agents are created equal. If your home has already failed to sell, you need an agent who understands why and has a proven strategy to fix it.

Fix it. Work with an agent who specializes in expired listings and has a track record of marketing homes effectively.

Story 1

Here's a story of a stupid mistake that caused a seller to lose about \$50,000—yes, that's \$50,000—on their home sale.

An alert buyer was able to snatch up a \$480,000 property for only \$430,000. It was being sold by an out-of-town owner. The agent the seller hired was not familiar with the area and suggested the low price. The agent did not bother to put a sign on the property, and hardly anyone knew it was for sale.

Two buyers both wanted to buy this property. One buyer really wanted it, because it was right next to his house. He would have a bigger yard with more room for his kids to play.

The other buyer lived in the area and wanted a larger yard. He wanted to buy this property and build a house on it.

The first buyer bought the property before the second buyer even knew it was for sale. As soon as the first buyer found out it was for sale, he made an offer immediately.

The seller accepted the offer, and the property sold soon thereafter. This buyer would have gladly paid full market value for the property. However, he didn't need to, because the seller accepted the offer he made.

The second buyer never found out the property was for sale until it had been sold. Even worse, the seller never realized the mistake.

Bottom line. The seller lost \$50,000 because of his agent's incompetence.

While stories like this don't happen every day, they happen more often than you'd think. It's a very real risk you take when you hire an agent who doesn't have a proven marketing plan.

Had a sign simply been on the property, it definitely would have attracted more interest and possibly even started a bidding war—driving up the price.

At \$50,000 below market price, the listing would have been bid and counterbid several times—possibly even up to fair market value.

Story 2

Here's another similar story. In this case, a seller hired an agent whose incompetence cost her \$25,000. Her agent completely flubbed a "perfect offer." The buyer submitted an offer at full price for her home—no strings attached.

Her agent dropped the ball and let a little problem—one that would've been easy to resolve—ruin a perfectly good sale!

The house sat on the market for another year and ended up selling for \$15,000 less than the original full-price offer.

Even worse, the seller wound up having to make another 15 house payments while her home sat on the market, and she wasn't living in it. Ongoing house (mortgage) payments are a frequently overlooked cost of not finding a buyer quickly.

Please don't become another one of these stories! Take time to hire a professional. Do your homework and prepare for the sale before putting your home on the market. The good news is that by reading this book, you're ahead of the game!

Chapter 5

What Stops Homes from Selling

Have you ever wondered why no one bought your house? I'll explain the likely reasons in further detail as this book goes on.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door?" Even though the saying might appear to be correct—at least on the surface—it's false.

More than 4,400 people have invented what they thought was a "better" mousetrap. At least, that's how many patents have been filed with the U.S. Patent Office. However, despite all the new mousetrap inventions, the classic mousetrap—first patented in 1894—is still the best-selling design.

I'm sure each of those inventors is frustrated. They say to themselves, "Why won't anyone buy my mousetrap? It's genius!" I'm sure you can relate to their frustration.

Have you ever thought the following? "Why won't anyone buy my house? It's a great house!" Fortunately, there's an answer to this question.

"One cannot throw any product out on the street and expect people to gobble it up." This rule applies to inventions and homes.

Get ready to discover how a few strategic tweaks towards a better product can transform your unsellable home into a buyer's dream—setting the stage for faster, more lucrative sales. No one else is doing it like this, and it works!

Chapter 6

Home Selling Solution • The FixNList Strategy

Small Improvements, Big Profits

Here is the solution! If you've ever felt stuck with a home that just wouldn't sell, the FixNList strategy is your secret weapon. This strategy isn't about expensive, full-scale renovations. It's about identifying the small, targeted improvements that can transform your home's appeal and boost its market value dramatically.

What Is the FixNList Strategy?

The FixNList strategy is built on a simple philosophy: Even minor, cost-effective changes can make a huge difference. It's about knowing where to invest your time and money, so every dollar spent translates into a higher selling price. By focusing on the details that matter most to buyers, you can reposition your home as the best value in the neighborhood.

Guess what? No upfront cost, no stress. FixNList makes it easy! FixNList is at no upfront cost to you! That's right—we cover the cost of the home improvements for you.

Key Elements of FixNList

- **Assessment and prioritization.** Before making any changes, take an honest look at your home. Identify areas that need immediate attention—whether it's outdated fixtures, a lackluster curb appeal, or worn-out paint. The goal is to pinpoint improvements that will create the greatest impact with the least expense.
- **Cost-effective enhancements.** FixNList focuses on smart, budget-friendly updates. This might mean a fresh coat of paint in modern, neutral tones; upgrading light fixtures to create a brighter, more inviting atmosphere; or simple landscaping enhancements that boost curb appeal. It's about making your home look well-maintained and move-in ready without breaking the bank.
- **Professional presentation.** Once improvements are made, presentation is everything. High-quality photos and a well-crafted listing description are essential to showcase the transformation. A staged, well-photographed home not only attracts more buyers but also creates a sense of urgency and desirability.
- **Maximizing ROI.** FixNList is designed to generate significant returns on a relatively small investment. By focusing on improvements that directly affect buyer perception, you can command a higher price and reduce the time your home sits on the market.

Real-Life Transformation

Consider the story of a homeowner who had struggled with a stagnant listing for months. Instead of letting the market decide the home's fate, they implemented a series of targeted improvements based on FixNList. A quick deep clean, minor repair, updated lighting, and a revamped front entrance not only refreshed the property but completely changed how buyers perceived it. The result? The home—once considered “unsellable”—was transformed into a hot property that attracted multiple offers—ultimately selling for 15% more than the original asking price.

Step-by-Step to Success

- **Evaluate.** Begin with a comprehensive walkthrough of your home. Look for outdated elements, minor damages, and areas where the home's potential isn't fully realized.
- **Plan.** List the most impactful, low-cost improvements. Prioritize projects that address the first impression—exterior curb appeal, the entryway, and living spaces that buyers notice right away.

- **Execute.** Roll up your sleeves or hire trusted professionals for tasks like painting, minor repairs, and simple landscaping. The goal is to create an environment where buyers can easily imagine themselves living.
- **Market.** Update your listing with new, high-quality photos that highlight your home's fresh look. A well-presented home not only draws more interest but can justify a higher price point.

The Thompson Family's Transformation with FixNList

When the Thompsons first listed their charming 1950s bungalow, they were optimistic. Nestled in a quiet neighborhood, the home had all the potential in the world. However, as months passed with no serious offers, frustration set in. Despite their best efforts, the listing received minimal interest. The Thompsons were stuck with a property that wasn't selling, and the longer it sat on the market, the more its perceived value began to decline.

Recognizing that something had to change, they decided to explore FixNList. Unlike a full-scale renovation, FixNList focuses on smart, targeted improvements—small tweaks that make a big difference in presentation and value. With guidance from a trusted real estate consultant experienced in FixNList, the Thompsons embarked on a transformation journey.

Step 1. Detailed Assessment and Prioritization

The consultant conducted a thorough walk-through of the property—pinpointing areas that needed attention. While the home had great bones, certain details were holding it back. The outdated kitchen, dull lighting in the living areas, and overgrown landscaping were all minor issues that, if addressed, could dramatically enhance the home's appeal.

Step 2. Targeted Improvements

FixNList was simple yet strategic:

- **Kitchen refresh.** The Thompsons replaced dated cabinet hardware and updated the countertops with modern, cost-effective alternatives. A fresh coat of paint in a neutral tone revitalized the space.
- **Lighting upgrades.** New, energy-efficient light fixtures were installed throughout the house—creating brighter, more inviting rooms.
- **Curb appeal boost.** The overgrown garden was trimmed, and new, low-maintenance plants were added to create a welcoming front yard. A new mailbox and a freshly painted front door completed the exterior makeover.
- **Staging and photography.** Professional staging was implemented to showcase each room's potential. Coupled with high-quality photography and a virtual tour, the listing was transformed into a visual story that resonated with buyers online.

Step 3. The Remarkable Outcome

Once these improvements were complete, the home was relisted. The effect was immediate. The updated listing, with its vibrant photos and engaging virtual tour, captured the attention of potential buyers who had previously overlooked the property. Within weeks, the Thompsons received multiple offers. In the end, the home sold for 15% more than the initial market value projected before the FixNList improvements. More importantly, after accounting for the minimal investment in updates, the Thompsons enjoyed a net profit increase of 5% over what they would have earned had the home sold in its original condition.

The Impact

FixNList not only revitalized the property but also restored the Thompsons' confidence. Their home—once struggling to attract interest—became a sought-after gem in the market. The strategic, cost-effective changes made all the difference—demonstrating that sometimes small improvements can lead to substantial financial rewards. The Thompsons' story is a testament to the power of FixNList. By investing a modest amount in targeted updates, they transformed a stagnant listing into a competitive, high-value property. This success story sets the stage for

understanding how every component—from pricing and staging to photography and strategic improvements—plays a vital role in achieving a faster, more profitable sale.

Conclusion

- FixNList proves that you don't need a complete overhaul to make your home shine in a competitive market.
- By focusing on strategic, small improvements, you can transform a property that once sat unsold into one that stands out and sells quickly.
- Remember, every detail matters.
- In today's fast-paced market, the smart seller is the one who leverages every advantage—even the smallest ones—to command top dollar for their home.

Chapter 7

Grabbing Buyers' Attention

Now that your home condition is top-notch and appeals to your target market, gather the information you need to advertise your property. However, once you have the information, you need to put it in your listing. Simply adding it in isn't enough. You need to make sure people see it, or it will not help you.

Begin with a Picture

When people visit a real estate website, it takes them just a split second to decide whether they're interested in a property. That's because they see a picture of it. Before they even know it, their brains tell them "yes" or "no." If their brains tell them "yes," they click on the listing. If their brains tell them "no," they move on to the next property.

It's your job to ensure people's brains say "yes" when they see your picture. You do that by photographing your home's unique feature and using it as the display picture. Make sure the photo is high-quality.

Of course, some people won't be interested even after they see your display picture. That's okay. You want to focus on appealing to those who will buy your property—not to the masses. You're just wasting your time if you appeal to people who are not interested in your unique features.

Be Descriptive

Focus on your description. Put one or two special features right at the beginning of the description, so people will see them immediately. You can also put them in your headline.

This will help attract the right people. If you do this, you'll notice that the quality of your leads improves. You will show your home to people who are ready to make a purchase.

You will also get more offers close to—or at—your asking price. While all of this is great news, you still have one more thing you can do to increase your sales.

Turn a Negative into a Positive

Nothing kills a sale like a big negative. Fortunately, you can often turn a negative into a positive. Consider the following example:

Let's imagine you own a house built 10 years ago. You want to sell your home, but there's a problem. A nice, new development recently opened in the area. Builders are selling brand-new houses.

The houses are roughly the same, but the current price for the new properties is about \$40,000 more than the asking price of your home. Nevertheless, you're certain buyers will choose the brand-new houses, just because they are new. They hold a greater perceived value.

Luckily, you've used FixNList, and it shows like a brand-new home! Make the buyers stop to consider that your home is now brand-new and priced less than the cost of a new construction home! You will now have the potential to fetch multiple offers and sell at or higher than your listed price!

Show them what they are missing. Fortunately, you can educate buyers and get them interested in your house. You just need a way to capture their attention and highlight the positive aspects of your property.

Create an ad with a headline that says, “Don’t buy a new house in (*Development Name*) until you see this house.” Then you could go over reasons people would benefit from buying your home that shows like a brand-new model home.

The cost is an obvious reason that you should certainly include in the ad. It’s far from the only reason, however. Jot down a list of every feature you can think of for both your house and the newer ones. Then compare different perspectives.

For example, compare yards. Newly built houses typically don’t have established trees or landscaping. They also might have freshly planted grass that requires more work and more money.

Here’s another idea. Think of the traffic and commotion in a new development—where homes are still under construction. Focus on the positive by talking about how your neighborhood is quiet. Mention a peaceful home. Some buyers will see this as a point of attraction.

These are just a few examples. You can turn any negative into a positive by reframing it. Remember, you control your story. It’s up to you to feature your home in a positive light. Do a good job of attracting buyers specifically interested in features your house offers, and you no longer need compete against those new homes!

Instead, you’ll be working with buyers already excited about something in your home. Taking this approach cuts out the competition, speeds up the sales process, and makes you more money.

Conclusion

- For your advertising, photograph your house in a way that emphasizes its best unique features.
- Then highlight desirable differences in your ad’s descriptive terms.
- Even a negative feature can help differentiate your home from others on the market.

Chapter 8

Make Your Home Perfect

Buyers decide in the first 8 or so seconds of seeing a home whether they're interested in it or not. That's why it's so important to stage it and make it shine—like we've talked about. You can hire someone to do the hard work for you (like FixNList), but some things you could handle yourself:

Cleaning

Spotless Is the Name of the Game

It's vital to do a thorough deep cleaning of your home. It works for people selling a car (they get more money), and it will work for you on a bigger scale when selling your home.

For a good deep cleaning, you should do the following:

Declutter. Begin with decluttering. This is the standard rule: Go through your home and get rid of 50% of your belongings.

Look for items, such as photographs, out-of-season clothes, random junk, and excessive furniture. These all need to go. To be clear, you don't have to throw the stuff out!

Donate it. Sell it at a yard sale. Give it away. Someone can use what you don't need. Put the precious items, such as family photos, into a safe, offsite storage location. After you declutter, you'll be amazed how much roomier and friendlier your home feels.

The goal is to depersonalize the home, so potential buyers can envision themselves living there.

Hardcore cleaning. Now that the clutter is gone, move on to hardcore cleaning. Be meticulous. Tidy each room from top to bottom. Your home can never be too clean when you are selling it.

Make sure you don't forget to:

- Get rid of cobwebs first. This keeps you from getting dust bunnies all over freshly cleaned floors and furniture.
- Dust ceiling fans and lighting fixtures while you clean out the cobwebs.
- Dust your blinds.
- Wash walls, unless you plan on painting.
- Clean all glass surfaces—mirrors, television screens, patio doors, and windows.
- Polish all wooden surfaces.
- Wipe down any leather furniture.
- Attack all appliances (especially in the kitchen) with cleaning fervor. Make them shine!
- Sinks, toilets, tubs, showers, faucets, and countertops need to be impeccable. Every room is important, but particularly the kitchen and bathrooms. They need to be spotless.
- Vacuum rugs, shampoo carpets, and mop as if your life depends on it.

Painting

Fresh Paint Provides a Clean Canvas

If you haven't painted your house in the last year, consider doing the entire interior right now. If you have painted it, you still might want to repaint. Painting your home is a great return on investment.

When planning to repaint, include everything. Paint the ceilings, the trim and window casings, the doors, and don't forget to paint inside the closets.

Just make sure you paint the right way. An artist creates a new painting on a plain, primed canvas. Through your efforts with painting, you're hand delivering your potential buyers a clean, primed canvas through which they can imagine their family in your home.

Keeping all of this in mind, proceed with your home's canvas using neutral colors. That doesn't mean everything must be lifeless or stark white. That can have a negative effect as well. Rather, you want your colors to be unobtrusive.

Stick with gray, beige, tan, off-white, and white. Even if you just painted the master bath turquoise and added cute polka dot trim, change it! Remember, a blank canvas opens the imagination to endless possibilities. (Polka dots do not.)

Kitchen and Bath

Focus on These High-Impact Areas

Buyers are most turned off by dirty, grungy bathrooms and kitchens. These two rooms are considered modern selling points of the home, and they are also the rooms buyers expect to be spotless.

That doesn't mean you can create stunning bathrooms and kitchens, while leaving the rest of the home a mess, and still expect to sell your house for top dollar. Just be sure to address your bathroom and kitchen first and give these areas the attention they require.

Keep this in mind: Potential buyers might forgive a less-than-stellar child's room, but a questionable bathroom or kitchen could cost you a possible sale and/or money.

Another thing to consider when you're selling your home is whether you should replace the appliances with brand-new ones. If you're not sure, consider this information to make an informed decision.

Area 1. Should you buy new appliances? It depends on your situation. No doubt, new appliances make an impact with buyers.

The National Association of REALTORS® does a survey of buyers in the market each year. In past years, they've found:

- Buyers were somewhat or very concerned with buying a home that featured new appliances.
- When considering buying a home, 37% of buyers consider energy-efficient appliances to be a very important factor.
- Roughly 17% of the respondents preferred stainless steel.
- The most important factor: Appliances were available and in the home.
- Most buyers who were unable to get their sought-after appliances said they would've been willing to pay, on average, nearly \$2,000 more for them.

Potential buyers want appliances included and will pay more for them, especially if they are new or at least in excellent condition. It's not worth the fight over a fridge; just leave it.

If you can afford it, new appliances might be the feature that sets your house apart from the home for sale across the street. If new appliances are out of your reach, offer buyers your immaculately clean, fully functioning existing ones.

Area 2. Updating hardware. Stop and take a long look at your bathroom and kitchen hardware. You'll likely notice they look well used.

It's not that big of a deal for you, until you put yourself in a buyer's shoes. They are looking at your old home as their potential new home. Old, worn-out fixtures aren't going to speak to them the way that shiny, new hardware will.

That doesn't mean you should run out to buy all new fixtures. Unless your knobs, pulls, handles, and hinges are broken, there's no real reason to replace them.

Get that "new" look by thoroughly washing and repainting them. There is spray paint made specifically for this reason. The project is incredibly inexpensive.

Here are some ideas of household hardware you can make look almost new with a paint overhaul:

- Towel bars
- Toilet paper holders
- Door handles
- Light fixtures

The goal is to patch your home up nicely with as little cash as possible. This is a great way to do it!

If you have broken or completely worn-out hardware, you should replace the whole set—unless you can find matching pieces. You could paint the old and new to match.

Make sure that if you end up replacing your knobs, you get matching, exposed hinges for cabinet doors. Consistency is important when selling a home.

Area 3. Other cheap upgrades for the bath and kitchen.

- Buy a new toilet seat.
- Refurbish worn-out cabinets with a faux paint project.
- Replace an old bathroom sink with a pedestal vanity.
- Repair grout in tile backsplashes, floors, and tub surrounds.

Conclusion

- To buyers, first impressions are everything
- Buyers form their opinions in just the first 8 seconds.
- Begin by decluttering and giving your space a deep, thorough cleaning.
- A fresh coat of neutral paint on walls, ceilings, and closets can transform the look.
- Special attention to kitchens and bathrooms elevates the overall appeal.
- Finally, replacing or rejuvenating worn hardware ties it all together—ensuring your property is both inviting and ready to impress.

Chapter 9

Details Win Home Sales

According to the National Association of REALTORS®, a majority of recent home buyers would have preferred improved and greater closet space, as well as other storage opportunities. People have lots of stuff, and they need somewhere to hide it all.

Make Room for Storage

You Can Never Have Enough Storage!

Give buyers great storage, and you've won their hearts. If you can easily add new closets to your home, it's a huge bonus for you on the selling front.

Building a simple closet isn't difficult if you are even moderately handy. If you're selling an older home—where closet space is typically at a minimum—this will help!

However, putting in new closets is not always possible. For instance, if your rooms are already small, you might not want to take any square footage away from them.

You might not have the skills or the funds to hire someone to build new space. This is when we turn to closet organizers for help. For instance:

- You can easily design your custom closet kit online with a storage solution company, such as Closet Maid.
- Your standard superstore or hardware store often has exactly what you need in an inexpensive, prefabricated form. Organizers might not enlarge your closets, but maximizing vertical and horizontal space is a good substitution.

Don't stop there. After all, storage isn't restricted to clothes closets. Storage improvement opportunities apply to all your cabinets, linen closets, and attic and basement spaces.

It's important to make sure you organize your cabinets. The same places that provide closet organizers can help you with this. Take a good look at your laundry room or linen closet. Adding extra shelving in these places makes a big impact.

Look for any places you can add attractive and inexpensive storage. Be sure your improvements are tasteful. Buyers really love this stuff.

Adding a Bedroom

Use the bedroom addition trick. Who doesn't want to add tons of extra value to a home? Here's an easy way: You can add another bedroom relatively inexpensively.

Okay, before you start laughing, take a minute to consider your options. Not every home will benefit from an extra bedroom, but in special cases, it can really set your home apart from others in the market.

This doesn't mean you need to add square footage to your home. Simply create space for another bedroom. For example, add a closet to an extra junk room. Voilà! You have a bedroom.

You can easily convert a den, office, or conditioned attic into a third or fourth bedroom by building a closet.

But before rushing off to build closets, take time to compare your home with other similar houses available in your area:

- If three-bedroom homes are the norm in your neighborhood, a fourth bedroom might give you a real advantage.
- However, if buyers in your area are looking for one- or two-bedroom homes, an additional bedroom would be a waste of money.

Do some homework. Find out configurations of rooms in nearby homes. Talk with a real estate agent about buyer preferences. They can help you determine whether you would benefit from a simple bedroom addition. FixNList goes over these types of improvements and helps you maximize on your home's floorplan and square footage for the highest price per square foot. Ask for help!

Bottom line. If you need a significant boost to your home's worth, adding another bedroom is one great way to do it.

Mechanical Maintenance Is a Must

It's very easy to get wrapped up in the more eye-pleasing aspects of getting a home ready to sell. However, never overlook the upkeep of all the mundane aspects of your home.

Take a Closer Look at These Mechanical Features

- Electrical boxes and wiring
- Natural gas lines
- Plumbing
- Central heating and air conditioning system

If these components of your home are old, outdated, or not working properly, you'll be lowering your home's price significantly.

According to the National Association of REALTORS®, 65% of home buyers surveyed were very concerned about whether their new home had a working central air system. Of the 31 mechanical features inquired about in the survey, this was the most important one.

It's true that people buying homes want to purchase something that reflects their aesthetic tastes and lifestyles. However, they also want a home that's safe and sound. Faulty electrical systems don't provide a feeling of safety. Leaky plumbing arouses concerns of mold infestation.

These areas are no fun to fix, but they are extremely important. Overlook these areas in the preparation stage, and you run the risk of trouble later with inspections and appraisals.

Buyers are attracted to a house with beautifully updated cosmetic details. They also want to know they are buying a safe, secure home for their family. Take care of the many mechanical features of your home, and you'll profit from it.

Obviously, professionals should do most of the mechanical work. Having a professional inspection is a big plus to most buyers as well.

- Have a certified plumber inspect your entire water system for leaks. Check the well and septic field, if applicable.
- Hire an electrician to check your wiring.
- Call your local HVAC company and have their technicians perform a thorough service checkup.
- Contact your natural gas supplier and have them double-check the mechanics of your tank and lines.

There's an alternative to calling and arranging all these different inspections. Certified home inspectors usually can cover all the different items related to mechanical issues and more. They can identify possible trouble spots you need to address. Many buyers hire an inspector, so you might even be saving them a step.

Replacing antiquated wiring and plumbing isn't cheap. If you have mechanical issues and decide to sell your home as is, you might have to lower your selling price.

Turning to a professional for an opinion can help. You can also choose to wait and negotiate with buyers.

Sometimes you'll get lucky and find a buyer who's already interested in remodeling. Sometimes you find a buyer who has certification in that area and will buy the house for a lower price and plan to do his or her own work. If you're unable to update and repair, be honest, upfront, and flexible. An interested buyer will work with you.

Remember, FixNList will cover the costs of these repairs for you up front. Do not stress if you're unable to handle these items on your own.

If you can update, figure out which fixes you can handle. Then note any fixes requiring professional work. Finally, note anything you wish you could fix. Start with the easiest items and work down the list.

I think next would be a great time to introduce the 80/20 rule, this rule will help you focus your efforts on the updates and repairs that bring the greatest returns. Let's keep going!

Conclusion

- Enhancing your home's appeal doesn't have to be expensive. A few strategic improvements can make a significant difference.
- Adding inexpensive storage is a great way to boost appeal, and often creating an extra bedroom is as simple as installing a closet in an unused area. However, before making any additions, it's important to research what comparable homes in your market offer—ensuring your upgrades add value that align with local trends.
- Additionally, consider enlisting professionals to maintain or upgrade essential systems, such as plumbing, electrical, HVAC, or other mechanical components—securing both functionality and long-term appeal.
- Remember to hire a professional if you need help. Don't stress...FixNList could be a perfect fit for you!

Chapter 10

Avoid This Rule at Your Own Risk

The key to the successful home-selling approach is based on a revolutionary concept discovered by an Italian economist. His name was Vilfredo Pareto. The most important thing we can learn from him is the Pareto Principle—better known as the 80/20 rule.

The 80/20 Rule Applies to All Aspects of Life

In 1906, Vilfredo found an intriguing correlation. He noticed that 20% of the pea pods in his garden held 80% of the seeds.

Studying the seeds prompted him to take a closer look at this ratio. In one of his initial discoveries, he discovered that 80% of the land in his area was owned by 20% of the people.

After detailed study, he observed this ratio held true in many aspects of life. The Pareto Principle—or the 80/20 rule—is a result of his findings.

The 20% is Vital, and the 80% Is Trivial

For example:

- 80% of your income is derived from 20% of your work.
- 80% of a business's income is derived from 20% of their customers.
- 80% of your value to an employer is derived from 20% of your work.

You might wonder what all of this means. In a nutshell, approximately 20% of what you do matters. The other 80% is insignificant.

It's important to understand that this isn't always split at exactly 80/20. It can be 70/30 or another percentage. The key is that the two numbers are not equal, and they are usually close to 80/20.

How can you apply the 80/20 principle to selling your home? Understanding this concept can save you time in selling your home. Unfortunately, many sellers buy into the false idea that more is more. They completely ignore the Pareto Principle.

Now that you know what the 80/20 rule is, you're probably wondering how it applies to selling your home.

When you use the 80/20 principle in selling, you stop trying to sell people on the entire home. Based on the rule, only 20% of your home's features are important. The remaining 80% are less important. That's because they are the same features many other homes in your neighborhood have. Instead of focusing on those trivial features, you need to focus on the vital features.

When you sell your home, focus on unique features to grab the attention of buyers. These features make your home different from other homes, and they will make it easier to sell your home for the full asking price.

In *Chapter 11*, we'll look at a few real-life examples of how the 80/20 rule can have an impact on selling your home.

Conclusion

- According to the 80/20 rule, approximately 80% of effects come from 20% of causes.

- In the context of home buying, this means that buyers will focus on a select 20% of your home's features that truly stand out, while the remaining 80% of features are likely similar to what they see in other properties.

Chapter 11

Why the 80/20 Rule Applies to Hard-to-Sell Homes

Let's paint a hypothetical situation. Say there's a buyer who's looking for a three-bedroom, two-bathroom home.

Let's now assume the agent found her five houses to preview. Each meets her general criteria and is located in her preferred area. She and her agent drive out to look at the five houses. All have very similar features, and the prices are comparable.

In theory, you might think the buyer will have a hard time deciding between houses. In real life, that's not the case. No matter how similar they might seem, no two houses are exactly alike.

The 80/20 rule comes into play. Imagine four of the houses don't have an updated gourmet-style kitchen with new appliances, but one does. The buyer isn't aware of this, though, because the agent didn't mention it.

The buyer sees the four houses that don't have an updated kitchen. She isn't particularly interested in any of them. Then she sees the fifth house and the beautiful gourmet kitchen! Suddenly she's ready to make an offer. She might even pay full asking price, even though this house is more expensive than the others.

The 80/20 Rule in Action: Buyers Focus on Unique Features

Her offer isn't based on the 80% of features this house shared with the rest. Instead, her bid is based on one unique attribute—an updated kitchen (the 20%). The 80/20 rule predicted the sale of this house.

Sadly, in this case, much time was wasted finding the perfect house. Had the agent known to look for the 20% difference, this could have been their first stop. As a seller, you can leverage the rule to work in your favor. Draw attention to defining characteristics in your home with your marketing plans.

Real-Life Examples

Example 1

An agent had a client visit from out of town. The client didn't have a list of criteria; he just liked the area.

She drove him from house to house. In each case, this buyer suggested offers 10 to 20% below the asking price. He would not budge. The agent began to worry. The whole day was turning into a big waste of time.

As the sun set, they stopped at one last house. It didn't have much curb appeal. It wasn't a good-looking home. She was out of options. Nevertheless, this house broke the tough negotiator down.

He was suddenly willing to offer the full asking price! You might wonder what set this house apart from the others. It was not because the buyer had a "thing" for ugly houses. Nope. The 80/20 rule kicked in again!

This agent and her client spent the whole day looking at houses that shared 80% of the same features. He didn't care about any of those details. A bedroom was a bedroom as far as he was concerned.

This plain-Jane house had something special, and he fell in love with this one remarkable feature of the house. As you walked into the great room, there was a large window. The house sat atop a hill with a gorgeous view. To top it off, the sun was setting below the distant tree line. That view sold the buyer. The other 80% could be improved.

He didn't buy the house, because he liked the number of bedrooms and bathrooms. His decision was completely based on the hill and view. That view caused him to stop negotiating and offer full price on the spot. Such is the power of the 80/20 rule.

Learn how to tap into this rule, and you'll not have to settle for less than your asking price. Leverage a unique selling point. Buyers who fall in love don't bother to haggle over pricing...they make good offers.

Example 2

In some cases, the 80/20 rule even helps people make a sale without conducting a showing. This is a huge time saver. The house in this example had languished on the market for months.

Unlike the previous house, this place was not ugly. On the contrary, it was a brand-new, custom-built home. However, nobody seemed to care. It sat on the market more than 7 months without a single offer.

The builder was baffled when his fancy new house would not sell. He ended up firing his agent and hiring a new one. Fortunately, the new agent knew the importance of finding that special feature. He drove out to give the house a thorough investigation.

What he found changed everything. The house had a gorgeous 5-acre yard. Other houses being sold in the area were all on 1- to 2-acre lots.

Not only was the yard bigger, but it was also more private than other lots available. The new real estate agent marketed the 5 acres. He mentioned details and a description of the house.

However, the house was not the main selling point, so he shifted attention to the 5-acre lot. In no time, his phone rang! A buyer was relocating. He had noticed the house was for sale, but it hadn't caught his eye. That changed when he learned it was built on a 5-acre lot.

Suddenly he was very interested. So interested, in fact, that he submitted an offer from 1,000 miles away. He had never even seen the property in person! He was afraid someone else would buy it before he could, and he would lose out on the perfect house. That sale happened in 45 days!

The builder was amazed! His house had been on the market close to 8 months without so much as a nibble. Suddenly it was sold—purchased, sight unseen, all because of the 80/20 rule.

By shifting focus to the 5 acres, the real estate agent captured the interest of buyers immediately. The house was no longer unsellable. On the contrary, for a short time, it became the hottest house on the market!

Don't create an advertisement similar to the ones for every other house in the area. Instead, turn a spotlight on something different about your home. You will attract interested buyers...buyers who are willing to pay full price.

Selling to Interested Buyers

Find something unique about your home. Build advertisements around that one item. It will catch people's attention. Buyers who are looking for that one item will ask to come see your home in person.

If you can't find something unique about your home, create one! Like the story with the updated gourmet kitchen—what a great return on investment idea!

As a result, you'll stop wasting time showing to people who just aren't interested. Instead, you'll show your home to buyers who are motivated to make a purchase. You won't have to show quite so often. You also won't have to sift through lowball offers from apathetic buyers. This means less stress for you.

With that in mind, it's essential that you take time to uncover your home's most attractive and unique features. Compare notes with other homes in the neighborhood to see what makes yours stand out.

Potential Unique Features

Each house will have its own unique features. You might already have some in mind. If not, these ideas should help to get you started:

- Updated, move-in-ready kitchens with all appliances included.
- Smart home features, like surround sound, ring doorbells, smart thermostats, etc.
- A finished basement with an exercise room or a home theater.
- Outdoor living spaces, like patios, is another great feature. Maybe the rest of your neighbors don't have patios, or their patios are smaller. That vital feature could help you sell your home.
- Your house might even have an unobstructed view of the sunset. That would interest potential buyers.
- Energy efficient homes with updated windows, HVAC systems, new roofs, and attic insulation. This wins them over by helping buyers save on utilities bills.
- Location is something else that can set your property apart from others—not your address location, but rather your location compared to the surrounding homes, such as on a cul-de-sac.

Here is what we mean by location. A buyer once paid extra for a townhouse simply because of its location within the complex. Most of the surrounding homes had no yards. However, a few shared a large half-acre “yard area.”

One of the owners whose townhouse backed up to this yard area was able to sell his townhouse for a higher price. It set his property apart from others on the market. His home had a characteristic—the yard—shared by fewer than 10% of the others. He had the only available listing that offered this unique feature. With this easy point of difference, the house sold for a higher price.

Another townhouse seller in the same complex created a different feature. He didn't have a yard, but he was still able to use the unique approach to his favor. He did have a small patio space in the back, where he created a small outdoor kitchenette and grilling area.

Buyers fell in love with this small outdoor space! That extra feature helped him sell his townhouse quickly and for a great price.

More Examples of Unique Features

- A shady backyard can also help you sell your property. Some people like the idea of lounging in the shade or enjoying the privacy. Add some trees.
- A fenced-in backyard is also a big selling point. People with children and pets flock to homes with fenced-in backyards.
- Fire pits, shrubs, gardening spots, and water features are all great extras. Utah is an outdoor enthusiast state, and people enjoy an outdoor living space.
- You can also look at other features. For instance, a finished basement can help you sell your home. You can also market a large attic, an extra-large garage, a swimming pool, or anything else that makes your home stand out.

Look for the 20% difference and find a way to market it. That's how you'll get results. You can't just throw the information into your listing though. You must take the right approach.

Chapter 12 looks at more ideas that can help make your home stand out from the competition.

Conclusion

- No matter how similar they might seem, no two homes are exactly alike.
- Buyers focus on—and pay more for—unique features.
- Unique features could be almost anything: An updated gourmet kitchen; a big lot; great view; finished basement; extra bedrooms; even a distinctive yard, patio, or small outdoor living space.
- Look for what makes your home unique and advertise it to potential buyers. If you don't have a unique feature, create one! The return on investment is worth the time invested.

Chapter 12

Important Features of a Home

Flooring

Floors can be an important selling point for your home. Buyers will be sure to notice how worn they are and whether they need to be replaced. However, replacement can be expensive and difficult.

Installing new floor coverings of any kind—including carpeting, hardwood, or tile—can get pricey. Costs vary widely based on the size of your rooms and the flooring material used. Fortunately, replacement isn't your only option. Use these cleaning tips to avoid expensive flooring work.

Carpeting

Carpets take a beating. General traffic, pets, children, muddy shoes, coffee, and wine all leave their calling cards on your carpeting. Unless you have been extremely fussy about your carpet, it will show signs of use. This job calls for more than a good vacuum.

Shampoo. Often you can rent or purchase a carpet shampooer inexpensively. If your carpet doesn't have stains, spruce it up with a good washing.

- Move the furniture out of the rooms you need to shampoo.
- Follow the shampooer's instructions.
- Go over the carpet thoroughly to remove all soap residue.
- Keep all traffic off the carpet until it's completely dry.

You should see a significant difference in both the smell and look of your carpet. Buyers will notice the fresh, clean feeling too.

Steam clean. Stained carpets need more in-depth treatment than a regular carpet shampooer can offer. If that's the case, go with a steam cleaning and spot treatment. Either rent a steam cleaning shampooer or hire a professional carpet cleaner.

If you're dealing with severe stains or damage, get a cleaning estimate first. Then compare the price to replacing the carpet. Cleaning can make a tremendous difference and save the cost of replacement.

Sometimes deep cleaning works but cannot remove an extra stubborn stain. You might be able to cover up isolated bad spots with rugs. Adding a tasteful area or throw rug makes the room a little more attractive for showings.

Don't be dishonest about a trouble spot though. If your carpet was in such bad shape that a steam cleaning didn't remove all the stains, it will be evident to buyers that the carpet will need to be replaced.

Even if your carpet is beyond the help of professional cleaning, you might not want to replace it. New carpeting is a big expense for most people to fit into their budgets.

Consider leaving it up to the pros to help. Luckily with FixNList, we have strategic partnerships with many local carpet vendors and can get you amazing wholesale pricing on carpet—keeping it affordable and an amazing ROI when selling your home! Remember, we cover the up-front cost as well!

Other Flooring Types

No matter the material, if you have a floor that's a little worse for wear, clean it thoroughly. Pay attention to special details that vary by the type of material.

Take tiny steps until you find the right fix. Your hardwood floor can probably get by with a good waxing. Vacuum the joints where dirt accumulates. Refinishing is a last resort.

Give tile floors a heavy scrubbing. Clean the grout joints in between the tiles. If that doesn't work, have it regouted.

In some instances, you might feel the only option is to replace flooring. When these non-carpet flooring types need more than cleaning, consider repairs. However, in some cases, it's cheaper to replace your floor than to have it repaired.

If your current flooring is damaged beyond repair, you might have to replace it. When you do, consider less-expensive flooring options. For example, luxury vinyl planks offer a cheap and durable option.

At FixNList, our preferred vendors have many affordable, high-quality luxury vinyl plank (LVP) flooring options and will pass the savings onto you. Don't stress...just ask for help from the pros.

Brightening Your Home

Lighting is an essential element to update when prepping your house for sale. As with flooring, tackle lighting improvements by repairing what you can and replacing the worst fixtures.

The most important key to lighting is to be moderate and practical with your updates. Why? The National Association of REALTORS® reveals many home buyers will replace lighting fixtures as one of the first changes to their new home.

There's no need to go overboard in spending on lighting fixture updates. Help existing fixtures look their best.

Cost-Saving Tips to Refurbish the Good Light Fixtures You Already Have

Follow these tips to save cash:

- New globes give an old fixture an updated look.
- If repairing an old fixture will cost more than replacing it, just replace it with something tasteful—but simple.
- Replace any light fixtures that are broken, damaged, or dangerous in any way.
- Put in new lightbulbs to brighten rooms. Make sure they are all uniform in color and brightness.
- Thoroughly clean fixtures you aren't updating.
- Don't forget the outside lights!

Great lighting is important when showing a home. When potential buyers walk into a well-lit home, they get a feeling of openness and trust. Plus, you put in a lot of hard work cleaning. Light everything up and let your home shine!

Bright lighting also makes an area look more open and attractive. This will make closets and rooms in your home feel larger.

One more tip. Change old, haggard ceiling fan blades. Look for inexpensive ones at any hardware superstore.

Revamp the Front Entrance

Step outside onto your front lawn. Don't feel bad if you've gotten so wrapped up in updating and improving the inside of your home that you have neglected the outside. It happens to all of us. You can rectify the situation quickly and effectively.

Front Entryway

First, address the front entryway. Starting with the lock and knob of your front door, what do you see?

- Is it a mousy little knob from decades past?
- Is it dented or rusted? Does the key stick? Is it hard to open?
- Could someone break in with a bobby pin and patience?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you need to replace your door handle with a heavy-duty deadbolt and knob combination. Why? The doorknob is the first point buyers touch on your home.

A flimsy lock and handle on your front door tell potential home buyers your home isn’t secure. It makes them feel uncomfortable, and they won’t even know why. Get a big, sturdy set, and they’ll feel your home is as safe as can be.

Front Door

Now take a good look at your door:

- Is it pleasing to look at?
- Or is it weathered and dinged up?
- Has your metal door never seen a coat of paint?
- Is the paint peeled and flaking?
- It’s time for a change.

Here are two simple ways to put a new face on your house:

- Add a dash of color to your door. Choose paint that complements the color of your home.
- Use faux painting techniques to transform your metal door into a wood grain look-alike.

If your door is severely damaged, have it fixed or replaced entirely. As always, go with whichever costs less.

Curb Appeal Is Important

You’ve addressed the living area inside of your home. Your front entrance is inviting. Now is the time to take a critical look at your front yard.

How your home looks from the road is the most important image of all. You want to make an amazing first impression. A well-prepared house can even catch the eyes of buyers who never even intended to visit your home.

Drive-by buyers who look at your home should immediately feel as though they want to go inside. This won’t happen if you have poor landscaping, a dingy exterior, or an unkempt yard.

Look around your yard and list everything that needs a little work:

- Are your shrubs, trees, flower gardens, and walkways tidy?
- Is there trash or just a general mess in your yard?
- Does everything (front light, garage door, porch rails, etc.) function properly and look its best?
- Could outdoor features, like patio furniture or the garage door, be updated with a quick coat of paint?

Chances are you’ll have some improvements to do. Take heart...just think of how many people are going to beg to view the inside of your home when they see how beautiful it is from your curb!

This might seem like an overwhelming list, but it truly takes hard work to get a home ready to sell. Anyone can put a house on the market, but not everyone sells quickly or with great profits.

Thankfully, you now have a big advantage over other sellers. You know what it takes. Follow these guidelines to gain the best advantage for your home to sell quickly this time around...and for the best price.

Remember, you do not have to stress about doing all these updates on your own. Hire a professional who can get it done efficiently, quickly, and who has partnerships with vendors to get the work done for a low affordable price.

Conclusion

- To make your home truly inviting, begin by assessing your flooring to decide whether it needs repair, replacement, or special cleaning and care.
- Brighten your space both inside and out with new lightbulbs—and upgrade worn fixtures, ensuring a modern and welcoming feel.
- Additionally, replacing outdated doors, knobs, and locks not only enhances functionality but also contributes to a refreshed look.
- Finally, optimizing your curb appeal is essential—as that crucial first impression can inspire visitors to explore the interior with genuine interest.

Chapter 13

What Else Can You Be Doing to Ensure Your Home Will Sell

Are you the victim of a common mistake that stops your home from selling?

Read on, and you'll discover the biggest mistake real estate agents make, a proven marketing secret, and how to "sweeten the deal" for buyers. These topics are crucial to selling your home, and quite honestly, most others are oblivious to these proven methods.

Biggest Mistake

A common mistake most agents make is not having professional pictures of the home. Most real estate agents don't invest the time or energy to get decent pictures. They'll show up with their point-and-shoot approach, take a few shots, and call it good.

Good photographers know what to do to make their subject look its absolute best. Whether it's a cute puppy, a newly married couple, or a home for sale, professional pictures are necessary.

You must view your house from a buyer's perspective.

Even if you don't hire a photographer, at least get someone to touch up the pictures and make them look their absolute best.

Pictures sell your home. It's the first thing buyers notice, and it's what will keep them interested. Get professional pictures taken!

Proven Marketing Secret

Everyone is looking for a deal. If people think they are getting a bargain, they are going to hear that little voice inside of their head saying, "Do it...don't pass it up!"

Marketers have been using this method for centuries, because it works. If you want to persuade someone to buy your home, offer them something no one else is offering. Even something that seems insignificant to you could close the deal for the buyer.

For example, an agent had been trying to sell a home for almost a year and was ready to give up. In fact, he had come very close to selling the house at one point, but the deal fell through.

Getting people interested in the home was not a problem. Buyers were looking at a lot of homes in the neighborhood. This listing was even one of the nicer ones in that area. That was a problem.

Yes, the house was nice, but so were a few other houses in the neighborhood, and this house was priced above the others. The agent just couldn't seem to close the deal on *this* house, because everyone would eventually turn their interest to one of those other homes.

Sweetening the Deal

What could the agent do to sweeten the deal for buyers? He needed something that would make the house stand out. Buyers needed an incentive to buy this house instead of the ones that were almost just as nice right down the street. Luckily, the agent talked the owner into "sweetening the deal," and finally, the owner agreed to give it a try.

The following week, a new buyer came to look at the house. As usual, they planned to visit other houses in the area after this one. However, before they moved on, the agent told them he had something special to share. The owner had agreed to prepay the entire first year of property taxes! That's a sweet deal in any sale!

The buyers came back later that day and wanted to buy the house! All it took was a little incentive to make one house stand out from other similar homes in the area.

Enticing Buyers

See the power of a good incentive? It doesn't have to be much, and it doesn't have to be a discount on property taxes. You could include free cleaning, lawn care, or pest control services.

The list is as endless as your creativity. Put yourself in your buyer's shoes and ask yourself what kind of deal you would like to get when buying a home. Be ready before the first buyer's visit. If they show interest, it might be the right time to sweeten the deal with one of your incentives.

Conclusion

- A common mistake is not using professional pictures of your home in marketing.
- In a competitive market, offer buyers an incentive, such as a discount on property taxes, free cleaning or lawn care, pest control services, or offer to pay the buyer's loan fees.

Chapter 14

The Three-Step Formula I Use to Sell Homes Others Couldn't

The three-step formula I use will sell homes that other agents have failed to sell. You might not realize it, but small details make a big difference.

Here's a small sample of homes other agents couldn't sell. After applying the three-step formula, they all sold successfully:

- Home was listed for more than 11 months with two other agents. Neither of them could sell it. Listed and sold in 45 days using the strategies outlined here.
- Home was up for sale for 6 months with another agent. Not much happened. A few showings had resulted in no offers. Listed and sold 3 months later.
- Home was for sale for more than 18 months with two other agents. Neither of them could sell it. Listed and sold 65 days later. The owners were thrilled!

There are countless more stories just like these.

Following are the three basic steps I use to sell homes that didn't previously sell:

Step 1. Improve the Marketing

Take better pictures and write better descriptions. Perform an in-depth "marketing analysis." This helps identify marketing opportunities other agents might have missed.

Step 2. Solve Any Problems Holding Back the Sale

Yes, sometimes a problem is holding the sale back.

Here's an example. Contrary to what most people think, price isn't always the reason a home doesn't sell. One sale was held back 12 months by a pending municipal lien. A little creative thinking and consultation with some experts solved the problem. That home sold a week after the problem was resolved without lowering the price.

Bottom line. Good agents are problem-solvers. Solve the problems, and the home sells. Unfortunately, not all agents are good problem-solvers.

Step 3. Improve the Condition of the Home for Its Price

An updated, clean, and staged home will sell for 15% more. A home in good showing condition (but not staged) can still sell for up to 10% more than an average listing.

Have you ever wondered why foreclosures are a "bargain?" Well, there's your answer. Some foreclosures are complete dumps. They are dirty, stinky, and don't show well at all. The foreclosure in perfect condition is a rarity. (They rarely sell for a discount.)

So why do so many people think that the only reason a home doesn't sell is because it's overpriced? Because it's just the accepted wisdom in the marketplace.

Simple Solutions

Everyone wants a magic formula to solve their problems. However, sometimes simple things can solve seemingly impossible problems.

Few people knew and taught the basics better than Vince Lombardi—considered one of the greatest football coaches of all time. He started coaching the Green Bay Packers when they were consistently losing—one game after another. He turned the team around and won five NFL championships.

Those unfamiliar with Lombardi's coaching tactics might assume he was successful, because he had complex strategies and completely unheard-of methods.

The opposite is true. Lombardi believed for the Green Bay Packers to become a great team, they would have to go back to the basics and relearn even the simplest aspects of the game.

In his first preseason speech, he shocked every single one of his new players. He stood in front of them, held up something in his hand, and announced, "Gentlemen, this is a football." He then proceeded to revisit all the basic rules of the game of football—what the different lines on the field were for, etc.

Some might have thought he was going overboard, but his results proved them wrong. Lombardi led the Packers to five NFL championships, as well as two Super Bowl wins. His back-to-the-basics approach paid off, and the team got to enjoy its rewards.

The same philosophy should be used to sell your home. You can bombard social media, list your home on every website imaginable, beg your friends to put up fliers on the notice board at work, and so on. However, if you don't start with the basics, everything else is just a waste of time.

Time is valuable, so most people looking to buy a house won't waste even a second on a listing that hasn't mastered the basics. If they must ask questions like, "Why are all the photos so dark?" or "Is it a house or a condo? I can't tell!" then they'll just move on to the next listing. The first impression must be perfect. You must list it perfect from Day 1.

Even a great home can't sell itself without proper conditions and marketing. A great agent is needed to make sure your home is showcased in the best way possible.

Just as Vince Lombardi knew that going back to the basics would help his team, a qualified real estate agent will know the basics of marketing are crucial to selling your home. Every home has a base, and without that base, the whole structure could fall flat. A selling strategy for your home works the same way.

A successful real estate agent knows that basic strategies are the foundation of a plan to sell your house. Give me a call, and I'll show you my strategies for updating your home to stand out and sell quickly with little effort on your part. Then make sure to perfectly market your home and find the perfect buyer.

Conclusion

- A skilled real estate agent can do three things to sell a home when others have failed: (1) Improve the marketing, (2) solve problems that pose barriers to a sale, and (3) improve the condition of the home for its price.
- It's important to ensure the basics are covered. For example, a dirty, dingy, cluttered space with subpar photos of your home can ruin even the most aggressive marketing efforts.

Chapter 15

Are You a Good Negotiator?

First, the bad news. There's a good chance the buyer of your home will be a great negotiator. If you don't know anything about negotiating, you risk having them take advantage of you.

Now for the good news. This book reveals how an average negotiator can avoid being taken advantage of by a better negotiator.

Two things determine who wins a negotiation:

- The motivation of the people negotiating.
- The skill they have or don't have negotiating.

Negotiator Case Study

Here's a story that plays out every day across America. There is a good chance this could happen to you.

A seller has a home on the market. He's an average negotiator—not great, not horrible.

Unfortunately, he is a motivated seller:

- He has had the home on the market for 8 months.
- He has already relocated to another city.
- The home and upkeep have been stressing him out.
- He is super busy at work and doesn't have the emotional energy to deal with another problem.

A buyer wants to buy his home. This is the perfect home for her. She has been looking for a home just like this for a long time. Therefore, the buyer is highly motivated to buy this home. In fact, her husband is scared that if they negotiate too hard, they will lose this house!

This buyer is an incredible negotiator. She's cool and collected. First, she gathers all the facts. She finds out the home hasn't been shown in 2 months. Then she discovers the seller has already moved.

She looks the seller up on Facebook and stumbles across a rather revealing Facebook post. The seller vented about real estate and how badly he wants to sell the house.

Now let's ask ourselves a question. Who do you think is going to win this negotiation? Yep...the buyer. Both parties are motivated, but one did a better job at researching. As a result, she wins! She buys the home for \$43,000 less than the fair market value.

Don't let this happen to you! Let's take a closer look at negotiation. Take time to prepare, and you'll be ready for whatever comes along!

Conclusion

- Negotiation outcomes are determined by the motivation and negotiating skills of the parties involved.

Chapter 16

Negotiation Mistakes

Let's start with some negotiation mistakes to avoid. After all, what you don't do is going to be more important than what you do! One slip of the tongue can result in a negotiation mistake—and hurt your pocketbook too!

Mistake 1. Not Learning the Other Party's Motivation

Price isn't the only reason people buy. They might really like a certain feature in your home. They might be willing to pay more because of that feature. Sometimes they might absolutely love that feature. They've been hunting for a while and finally found a home meeting their needs completely. That means they're willing to pay more for your home.

If you meet the buyers, you should ask them why they are buying a home. They might tell you they are being transferred and must find a home by a certain date. If you know that, you'll be able to negotiate a higher sales price. If the buyers have an agent, ask the agent for information.

Here are some questions you can ask:

- Why do the buyers like this home?
- Where are they moving from?
- How does this home compare to other homes?

You shouldn't be as blunt as that when chatting with the buyers, but often you can find answers to these questions in a roundabout way.

For example, you could say:

- You will love our town because of the *X* (*insert a unique feature of your town*).
- Do they have an *X* where you live now?"

That will start the conversation about where they are moving from. You can learn a lot from what they say, and it will be helpful during the negotiations. You would be amazed at what some people will tell you.

Mistake 2. Meeting in the Middle

This is the most common mistake novice home sellers make. It's the easiest way to sell your home for \$10,000 less than you should. Meeting in the middle is never a good strategy. The problem is that everyone thinks they have to do it. Compromise, right? But there's no rulebook that says you have to meet in the middle.

Here's a quick story that illustrates this:

A home was on the market for \$240,000. The buyers made an offer of \$220,000.

The seller's agent told him to reject the offer and told the buyer's agent that they should come back with a better offer. (The house had been on the market for only 2 days.)

The buyers came back and met in the middle with a \$230,000 offer. The seller's agent knew they were serious buyers and really wanted the house.

The seller thought the buyers were being good people by meeting in the middle. He was willing to accept their \$230,000 offer.

The seller's agent advised him to give a little—maybe counter with \$237,500 to see what would happen.

The buyers came back with \$235,000, and after more negotiations, the buyer and seller agreed on \$237,000.

What can you take from this? Don't meet in the middle! Instead, give 10% to 20% and let the other guy give 50%. You'll gain a little more in each round of negotiations.

Mistake 3. Talking Too Much

This is the worst sin of negotiating. Don't tell the buyers—or their agent—your life story.

What do you think would pop into a buyer's head if they heard this out of a seller's mouth? "We must sell the home, because it's in foreclosure. If we don't sell it by June 23, the bank will foreclose on it."

Immediately, the buyer would think the seller is desperate. "I wonder what they owe on the house, because if it doesn't sell, they will have a foreclosure. The sellers probably just want to get what they owe on the home, so they can avoid foreclosure."

This is an extreme example, but it shows you how a simple slip of the tongue could cause a seller to lose a large amount of their hard-earned equity. A seller facing foreclosure might be desperate enough to get out with none of their equity just to avoid foreclosure.

However, what if the buyer had been willing to pay the market value for the home? That seller just lost all their equity! When a buyer asks why you're selling, answer without giving away any extra information.

You could say, "Oh, we would like to move to Omaha" (or wherever you're moving to). You don't need to say much more than that. Don't divulge details, don't imply desperation, and don't tell them you have a job transfer!

Mistake 4. Making the First Move

Many buyers will ask what is your bottom line. They know they can usually negotiate a home seller down to an even lower price.

Don't fall for it! You've already made the first move by setting a price for your home. Tell the buyers you need to think it over and get back to them.

Then ask them what they like about your home. If they tell you, then you can determine their motivation to buy it. After that, ask them what they're thinking of offering on your home.

This rule is important, because in some negotiations, you may offer more at the beginning than the other party is willing to accept.

Here's an example:

A person I know was trying to buy video equipment. He thought the best price he could get was \$1,500, but he was willing to pay up to \$2,000.

He asked the seller what he wanted for the items. The seller responded that he didn't know what he wanted. My friend offered to pay \$1,500, and the seller accepted it.

Later, my friend learned that the seller had been desperate and had expected to be paid only \$800 to \$1,000. If the seller had mentioned an opening price first, my friend would've saved \$500! Instead, he lost \$500.

Mistake 5. Letting Your Ego Get Involved

What's your final goal? You want to sell your property quickly for top dollar, right? Keep that goal in mind during the entire negotiation.

I have seen people kill a potential top-dollar sale simply because they didn't like the buyer. Or because the buyer started negotiations with a lowball offer, and the seller got offended. Most lowball offers can be negotiated to a higher price.

Some buyers have a big ego and think they are great negotiators when they aren't. Their definition of a great negotiator? Someone who tells people off and walks around as though they own the world. They confuse rudeness for tough negotiating and throw around "take-it-or-leave-it" offers.

I can tell you from personal experience that most buyers are willing to pay more than their so-called take-it-or-leave-it offer. Keep the negotiations going—even when you're a little unhappy or angry with what they're doing.

I have seen home sellers tell off a buyer who said something rude. That buyer might have bought their house. Don't get distracted by petty things. Getting top dollar feels more satisfying than telling someone off!

Mistake 6. Failing to Take Time on the Counteroffer

Often, you'll be pressured to reply right away to an offer. Buyers are impatient, and if they really like your house, they'll want an immediate answer. But do you know what else that means? They are probably willing to pay more for your property.

Take the time to think—and consider consulting your agent. Have you been able to find out any information about the buyers? Use that to put yourself in the buyer's shoes. A little space and an objective third party will lead to more effective decision making.

Conclusion

- Try to discover the buyer's motivation—while not talking too much about your motivation to sell.
- Never automatically meet in the middle.
- Don't let your ego interfere with negotiating.
- Lowball and take-it-or-leave-it offers are rarely firm and often can be negotiated upward. Don't be pressured into hasty decisions and counters.

Chapter 17

Simple Negotiation Techniques

Now that you know what mistakes to avoid, here's how to negotiate for the highest price possible.

You've worked yourself senseless updating your home, cleaning it, and creating an appealing abode for home seekers.

Next, you get your first viewers. Yes! Now you're at another "first" with someone making an offer on the property. You suddenly realize you're in a precarious situation, and you have no idea how to proceed.

Don't sweat it! Realize this is one of the most important financial decisions of your life. (I know...I just told you not to sweat it, and then I throw that at you!)

I want to see you come away from this deal with fewer debts, a wonderful new home, and some extra cash.

While there are times when the offer/counteroffer approach works best, there are times when you could come away with thousands more through simple strategic planning.

Let's explore your options, and then you can choose which is best for you.

Technique 1. The Typical Negotiating Approach

You're probably familiar with the way most people approach the buying and selling process. The home is put on the market, and when an interested buyer comes by, they make an offer to the homeowner.

The homeowner usually will make a counteroffer, which can be accepted or rejected by the bidder. Sometimes this back-and-forth goes on awhile. There are both pros and cons to this situation.

Pros

One positive to the typical negotiating approach is the transaction is straightforward and easy to understand. It makes the seller seem flexible and willing to work with the buyer's needs.

This strategy can work well for folks who are willing to take lower offers to simply be rid of a home.

Cons

A serious negative to the typical negotiating approach is that once you accept and sign off on the low offer, your house is off the market.

Let me put that in perspective. Let's suppose Sally Sue, who checked out your home last week, calls with a much higher bidding price 5 minutes after you reluctantly signed off on a low offer. You are now legally bound to put Ms. Sue on hold until you see if your current accepted contract works out. You could make substantially less money, and there's not a thing in the world that you can do about it.

Another con to the standard approach is that you might feel pressured to take lowball offers from deal seekers out of fear that nothing better will come along.

If the cons outweigh the pros in your situation, let me ease your mind. You don't have to go through those negatives, because there are many negotiating approaches you can take.

Technique 2. Reject an Offer but Throw the Bidder a Bone

Let's just say a buyer comes around, loves your property, and makes an offer. You're happy they want the home, but you're less than thrilled with their bid.

You wonder whether you should get the deal over with and take what you can get or hold out for a better offer. Go ahead and reject their offer. That's right. Take a step most folks have a hard time taking and simply say that one dreaded word, "No."

Saying "no" can sometimes take you exactly where you want to go. Just don't stop there. Reject their offer but invite them to resubmit a higher bid. That takes some of the pressure off you. A deal like this can go several ways.

The potential buyers usually won't expect you to take their first bid, and they might be throwing out a lowball offer just to see how far down you're willing to go.

You can send your own little message by rejecting that less-than-desirable offer but keeping them in the loop. They'll realize they ventured far too low. If they sincerely want your property and not just a bargain, they will probably come back with a much higher bid.

In the event the bidders really do want your property out of all the properties available, this procedure can work well.

However, you're likely to lose the deal if this is just a person gobbling up cheap real estate the way some people gobble cookies. While that might seem bad at first, in retrospect, it leaves you completely open to better offers in the future. And let's be honest—you want someone who wants your home and proves it by being willing to pay your asking price (or more)!

Useful Tips

It's most desirable to use this approach when your home has just come on the market or if you have an open house scheduled soon.

Keep in mind the legalities of counteroffers too. The instant you accept and sign off on a low contract offer—which could be a real estate vulture on the prowl—you're tied to that contract. While you and your bidder are working on the accepted contract, you can't entertain any other offers. That wastes your valuable time and could cost you better bids.

Technique 3. Bring on the Bidding War

Did you know there is such a thing as a bidding war? This is usually a carefully crafted situation that can bring the bid on a home above the price the homeowner asked for in the first place. Allow me to explain.

The Process

- The first thing you do is put your desirable home on the market.
- You ideally schedule an open house for just a few days later.
- As you put your home on the market, you also put in a disclaimer that you're not going to entertain any bids made on said home until after the completion of the open house.

You're probably thinking, this is ludicrous! How is going through all this trouble going to help you sell your home quickly and for top dollar? You could be missing out on real bids!

However, there's more to this story. Human nature will take over. We've just created a prime situation for competition to abound.

Everyone who sees the home and loves it will want to make a bid. Some competitive players will bid just to see if they can win the prize! They'll know from the start that you're potentially getting offers from countless other people.

You have just been set up to take multiple bids at once, and this gives you the freedom to go with the best one. Potential homeowners who really want your house for their own are going to start bidding high, and they might keep overbidding each other.

In this type of situation—a bidding war—it isn't uncommon at all for the seller to come away with more than their asking price.

The reality is that you might only get one bid out of the whole shebang. However, the bidder isn't privy to that information. The fact that they know they could be competing against other offers works in your favor. They'll try to make an offer better than everyone else's, because they don't have a clue that no one else is bidding. Who does the winner turn out to be? You!

Technique 4. An Expiration Date for Extra Motivation

Remember, once you and the buyer agree to an offer and sign the contract, you are legally bound to see the process through until you and the buyer close the deal or agree to cancel the contract. This means you can't take a higher offer if one comes along.

However, there's a way you can counteract this problem. You can set yourself up for a higher sales price and a shorter wait time. To help sell your home quickly for the most money possible, put an expiration date on your counteroffer. This means you give your bidder a certain amount of time to either accept or reject your terms.

This benefits your outcome in a couple of ways. I encourage you to be reasonable though. The last thing you want to do is turn your buyer off by making the timeframe too short—particularly if their current offer isn't far from your ideal price. However, feel free to go below the standard time used in your state. If the typical deadline is 2 days, make yours 1 day.

The potential buyers will know you mean business, but you also recognize this is a life-changing decision for them as well as for yourself.

There's another reason to expedite these contracts besides quickly closing a deal or being free to negotiate with other buyers. The longer your home is on the market, the less desirable it appears to potential buyers. If the deal falls through, you've extended the number of days your home has been on the market. Valuable time has been wasted. By shortening that time, you shorten your overall number of marketed days if this deal doesn't go through.

Technique 5. Pay the Piper but Raise the Price

Buyers are more often asking sellers to pay their closing costs, which are normally around 3% of the actual price of the home. I know it makes you shudder to even think of handing out that kind of cash. However, this kind of deal could work to your benefit.

The Buyer's Perspective

Let's look at this from a buyer's perspective for a moment. Many home buyers just can't afford to come up with those kinds of additional costs. Often they are strapped for cash after coming up with the down payment for your home, money for new appliances, moving expenses, a higher mortgage payment than their current rent, and décor needs.

Your Perspective

On the other hand, it isn't fair for you to come up with that much cash just so they can buy a home. After all, they not only want you to pay the closing costs but also come down on your original price.

You should pay those closing costs. Wait! Before you decide I've lost my marbles and toss this book out the nearest window, allow me to show you how paying those costs will work for you in the long run.

You should pay the closing costs, but you should also increase the price the buyers pay for your home by the same amount.

If the only thing preventing you from selling your home is the out-of-pocket cost for closing fees, and you're able to pay it, it would be beneficial for you to do so. However, you should recoup that money by raising the price on your home by the same amount.

You see, buyers might not be able to come up with extra cash for closing costs, but they often can borrow more money with their loan.

Many buyers don't realize that if you pay their closing costs, you're giving up some substantial profit on your home's sale. You should help them realize that fact in your counteroffer.

Here's how you handle the situation. When the buyer submits an offer that includes you paying the closing costs, simply counter with an offer that says you'll do that. That is, you'll do it if they agree to the higher price you're proposing for your home.

Show Me Some Numbers, Please!

- Let's say, for instance, your asking price is \$250,000.
- Closing costs would be approximately \$7,500.
- Your bidder makes an offer for \$240,000 and additionally asks you to pay the closing costs.
- We understand this means you would be letting your home go for \$17,500 less than you asked for it. That's a nice chunk of change, and often more than anyone with a house worth the asking price is willing to sacrifice.
- So you make a more reasonable request. Simply counter by agreeing to pay the \$7,500 in closing costs...but only if the bidder is willing to pay the original price of \$250,000 for the property.
- You've reduced your loss to a more reasonable amount at \$7,500.
- The bidder is still getting a deal, and you're getting a fair price.

Keep in mind these numbers are only approximate. Actual numbers will vary. I think you can see the point though. Ideally, this approach allows you to get back the money you invested for closing costs as soon as the deal is done.

However, there's one major hurdle that could hinder you. In the event your home won't stand for the amount of money you're asking, you'll have to go back to the drawing board. A bank isn't going to lend more money than your home is worth.

On the other hand, paying closing costs in many situations can be a great way to close a deal. It can mean the difference in your possible buyer choosing to go into debt for your home rather than a home down the street.

It's just a matter of asking a fair price for an outstanding home from the very beginning.

A Final Tip: How to Immediately Gain the Upper Hand in Any Negotiation

If you ever feel you are getting "taken advantage of" in any negotiation, do this. Tell the buyer that you're changing your mind. Yes, that's right. You're taking your home off the market.

The dynamics of the negotiations will change right away. The buyer will now have to sell you on why you should sell the home to them. In addition, they will have to make a sweet offer to have any chance of you accepting it.

I'm not saying you should use this tactic in every negotiation. However, this can be a very effective strategy when you feel you are losing the negotiation. I only recommend using it in that type of situation.

If the buyer doesn't buy the house, you can always change your mind and continue to try and sell it. After all, lying, cheating, and stealing are wrong...but there's nothing wrong with changing your mind!

Conclusion

- Accepting a lowball offer locks you into a contract—preventing you from accepting further offers.
- By rejecting a lukewarm offer, you encourage competition and higher bidding.
- Consider rejecting a low offer if your house is newly listed, or you're planning an open house soon.
- Refusing to accept bids until after an open house could create a bidding war in your favor.
- Setting an expiration date for your counteroffer encourages a buyer to either complete a quick sale or release you to accept more lucrative offers.
- Paying closing costs for the buyer—usually 3% or so—can work in your favor if the buyer is willing to pay a higher price for your home.
- If you're being taken advantage of in a negotiation, you have the right to take your home off the market—at least temporarily.

Chapter 18

Why Your Dog Wants You to Hire Me to Sell Your Home Using FixNList

***NOTE:** This only applies if you have a dog, or it's just a cute story.*

Story 1. A Letter from Your Dog

I still get chills when I think about selling our home. I still remember the last time someone wanted to look at our house.

I got locked in my crate. I was trapped here all by myself for 4 hours. I was so scared that I cried. I whimpered and barked. After exhausting myself, I started thinking about what we could do to sell this house.

Then I had an idea! What if the home showed like a model home, and there was a way to only have showings to buyers who were actually interested in buying it? We could sell our house faster, and I wouldn't have to spend so much time in this horrible crate!

I have an idea that might do that! What if the home was updated to sell at the listed price, and buyers were presold on the home before they ever saw it? Would you be open to trying that?

This is how it would work. We would do strategic home improvements to the property. Then we would tell buyers everything about the house before they ever looked at it.

The people who did look at the home would fall in love online before they even pulled up to see the amazing curb appeal in person. This would mean they would more likely buy it.

I know I'm being selfish, but I think you would be happier as well. You wouldn't need to spend 3 hours cleaning the house whenever a buyer wants to see it.

Remember the buyer who told you they were going to come at noon and then didn't show up? That was so ridiculous!

It breaks my doggy heart to see you struggle to sell this house. I think it's time to try something different.

Story 2. Jane

I think your dog might be onto something. FixNList enables you to sell your home for more money, quickly, and with fewer showings.

Here's a quick story of another case where FixNList worked: Jane had her home on the market for 18 months. She hired two agents, and neither could sell it.

Then she hired a new agent who tried a new strategy—FixNList. They made strategic home improvements to the property before they listed it for sale, and they didn't even need to pay for the cost of the updates up front!

Then they "presold" the home to potential buyers before they even saw it in person.

The home sold 65 days after Jane hired the new agent. The buyers saw the ad and bought the home the same day. They were ready to buy as soon as they saw the ad for the home.

These buyers were tough negotiators. They had worked their way up from nothing and owned a thriving business with more than 30 employees. Even though they were tough negotiators, they really wanted Jane's house.

The home sold for a record high. The final sales price was \$57,500 more than a similar home located seven doors down on the same exact street.

Why did the buyers pay a record-high price for a home that had been available for 18 months with no offers? It sold, because Jane's real estate agent had recently implemented FixNList.

It wasn't because she lowered her price. Jane didn't drop the price one dime! In fact, she raised the price of the home from where it was before.

It wasn't because buyers didn't know about it. The home had been on the multiple listing service (MLS) for 18 months.

I've got good news! Would you like to use the same "FixNList" strategy to sell your home? You can! I've laid out the entire strategy right in this book, and I can implement the entire strategy for you. Simply jump to the last page to view my contact information.

Conclusion

- FixNList can help you sell your home for more money and quickly—avoiding the hassle of many showings.

Chapter 19

This Mistake Cost One Seller \$36,000

Case Study

Chuck wanted to sell his home. A real estate agent contacted him and told him that someone wanted to buy the home. The buyers were offering \$285,000 and were approved for a loan. “Will you sell your home to them?” the real estate agent asked.

On the surface, it seemed like a great deal. Chuck could sell his home quickly and avoid the inconvenience of the normal home-selling process. Chuck accepted the \$285,000 offer and moved on with his life.

A few weeks later, Chuck’s neighbor sold his house for \$321,000. The neighbor’s house was a little bit smaller, but otherwise very similar to Chuck’s. Yet, it wasn’t in better shape than Chuck’s house.

Why did Chuck sell his house for \$36,000 less than his neighbor? Why did he work so hard to pay down his mortgage? Why did he work so hard to keep his house in tip-top shape, only to sell it for less than it was worth?

Because he didn’t know what his house was worth! Unfortunately, Chuck never checked with anyone to find out the value of his home. He didn’t get an appraisal or a second opinion from another real estate agent.

Here’s how to avoid having this happen to you:

- Obtain a second opinion of the value of your home before you put it on the market. If you don’t price your home correctly, you take the risk of selling your home for less than it’s worth.
- Price your home, so it sells quickly and for the highest price possible. Stop wasting time while your home sits on the market, because it’s not priced correctly for its condition.

We probably all have skewed ideas of the worth of our homes. Either we think it’s far more marvelous than it really is, or we’re so tired of it that we think it’s a horrendous cross to bear.

Add to that your hopes and dreams of what to do with your money once you sell, and pricing your own home is a complete danger zone. This is one area where the aid of a real estate agent really comes in handy.

Danger Zone 1. Pricing Below Value

It’s possible that a home priced low could eventually aid a seller to start a bidding war, so the price is driven above what the sellers wanted to make in the first place. This is a great strategy. However, conditions must be ripe for this kind of arrangement to work. Well-laid-out and professional plans are also crucial to this maneuver’s success.

On the other hand, when a home is priced too far below market value, potential buyers are left feeling as though there’s some hidden, ominous fault with the property—even if there isn’t. That kind of mentality can leave a home hung out to dry, which wastes valuable time. The longer a property stays on the market, the less money sellers are likely to make.

Danger Zone 2. Pricing Above Value

Pricing too high obviously leaves your home sitting stagnant while all your neighbors’ homes are snatched off the market. Why would anyone purchase your home if one very similar is priced thousands lower nearby? Common sense says that your home isn’t going anywhere anytime soon. Now you’re playing the waiting game while your peak selling time is slowly dwindling away.

These dangers are the reasons why getting an accurate price on your home from the get-go is imperative to your selling for top dollar. There are several ways you can discover this elusive figure, but it isn't necessarily a simple or cost-free endeavor.

Avoid the most common mistake novice home sellers make. They don't check comparable sales and just put the home on the market. It sounds too simple to be true—yet it happens all the time.

At other times, they don't check the highest and best value of the property and sell a prime development property for pennies on the dollar. For example, one savvy investor bought a prime development property for \$275,000 and resold it for more than \$1 million! The sellers made the mistake of selling their property without checking out all their options.

How to Price Your Home in a Seller's Market

Sold homes don't matter that much. You should price your home to be competitive with the other homes currently on the market. However, you don't have to match the price of what homes have sold for.

For example, a home recently sold that was seemingly \$100,000 overpriced. Comparable homes were selling for about \$525,000 to \$550,000. However, home prices in the area were increasing rapidly. Nothing similar was available for less than \$650,000. The seller owed \$650,000, so they priced the property at \$699,900. Guess what? It sold 3 months later for \$674,000.

How to Price Your Home in a Buyer's Market

Is your local market a buyer's market—one where the supply of homes for sale exceeds demand or where prices are abnormally depressed? If so, then look at all the other homes for sale and make sure your home is priced competitively.

If your home isn't selling, you'll need to adjust the price until it sells.

How to Determine Your Home's Exact Value

There's more than one way to find out the value of your home. You can use the following method by itself. However, a combination of some or all these suggestions will probably give you the best pricing direction.

Hire an appraiser. One way you can get an accurate valuation is by consulting a professional. Many appraisers will charge hundreds of dollars to give you a reasonably accurate home price estimate.

Let me help you. Do you know there's a simple way that's 100% free? As an agent, I have access to the same information as an appraiser. I'd be happy to put together a comparative market analysis (CMA) for your home!

The CMA will provide you with the following:

- Detailed information on each house sold in your area during the last 6 months, along with the final sale prices. If you are thinking of selling, this will help you price your home realistically.
- Detailed information on all houses for sale in your area and their asking price. These homes are your competition.

Skip ahead to the end of the book if you would like more information on how to request a free home valuation.

Do your own homework. There's a free way of getting a decent valuation of your home, but it's risky and time-consuming. You can use the Internet to scout other homes that are for sale in your area and narrow them down to those that are similar to yours. The prices on these homes can give you a good benchmark for setting your own price.

How to Find Accurate Comparable Sales and Use Them to Determine Your Home's Exact Value

Search Internet sites, such as Zillow or Realtor.com, which can show you comparable sales. To search for homes similar to yours, enter criteria, such as square footage, the number of bedrooms, etc.

The key to finding accurate, comparable sales is to find the properties that are closest in location, condition, square footage, features, etc.

How to Determine Which Comparable Sales You Should Use and Which to Ignore

The following comparable sales should *not* be used. Very few of these properties sell for a fair value. The following is why each of these property types is not good for comparable sales:

Bank-Owned/REO Properties

- Banks always sell their homes for less than they are worth.
- The average bank-owned home in today's market is selling for 5% to 10% less than its fair value. This is true even for homes that are in good shape.

Short Sale

- Buyers and their agents hate short sales, because they are tricky and unreliable.
- A buyer will often fall in love with a short sale, only to find out the banks won't approve the short sale.
- Agents don't like to show them for the same reasons.
- As a result, the pool of buyers for a short sale is much smaller than for a regular listing.

Ugly Homes

- These are homes that are unappealing and aren't kept up.
- People buy homes because of emotion. Logic doesn't always apply.
- As a result, a well-kept-up home will sell for more money.
- Yes, the condition of a home counts. Don't use an ugly home as a comparable.
- We have seen well-maintained homes sell for 10% to 15% more than an unappealing home. We have seen professionally updated and staged homes sell for 20% more than an unstaged property.

Are You in a Buyer's or Seller's Market?

While you're scouting other homes for sale in your area, pay attention to how long they've been on the market. Online sources, such as Zillow and Realtor.com, often have a little section under each home that tells how long it has been up for sale in their systems, although not necessarily how long they've been on the market.

If homes in your neighborhood are getting snatched up right and left, you stand a good chance of the same happening for you, as long as your home is priced right. This is referred to as a seller's market, and you could get more profit from your home's sale.

On the other hand, if the "Home for Sale" signs in your area seem to be growing roots and taking up permanent residence, you might benefit from setting a little lower price than your competitors. You might not make as much profit as you would have liked, but some profit is better than none at all.

It's All in the Timing

Timing is a slippery slope for sure. If you take too much time going through with a sale or holding out for the perfect offer, you're probably doing yourself a disservice.

What's more likely to happen is that buyers will notice your home is just sitting there and only offer lower prices. Market statistics suggest that the first offer is most often the highest anyway.

Conversely, if you need to sell quickly, you don't have a lot of wiggle room when it comes to negotiating. You need to get out of the home, and you're limited to taking whatever bids are thrown at you.

“As Is” vs. “After Improvement” Price

This is the fun strategy. If you are using FixNList, I will provide you a report with your current “as is” price. I will also provide you a report with an “after improvement” price—with a home improvement proposal going over the price and suggested updates you should do to your home. I'll also break down the costs and benefits to the strategy, which usually comes down to how much more money you can make and a quicker sale.

Conclusion

- Not checking comparable home sales in your area can result in a costly mistake when setting the price.
- Check to see what opportunities are allowed under the “highest and best use” of your property.
- Incorrect pricing can result in wasted time and selling your home for less than it's worth.
- Market conditions affect price. Know whether you're in a buyer's or seller's market.
- Online sources, such as Zillow and Realtor.com, provide useful market and pricing information.
- An appraiser or real estate agent can help you determine an accurate price.
- Bank-owned/REO properties, short sales, and “ugly homes” aren't useful for price benchmarking.
- Try FixNList and request our no-obligation home improvement consultation for your home.

Chapter 20

Read This Before You Sign a Contract with a Buyer

Imagine taking your home off the market for 60 days while a prospective buyer tries to buy it. Then 60 days later, the buyer finds out they can't get a loan. You just wasted 60 days of marketing time!

Now imagine that during the 60 days, another buyer wanted to buy your home, but the buyer couldn't purchase it. Why? Because you signed a contract with the first buyer.

By the time you find out the first buyer could not obtain financing, the other buyer had already bought a house! Ouch! You just lost a sale! This is why it's so important to make sure a buyer is able to obtain financing before you sign a contract.

Fortunately, I can help prequalify any prospective buyers. I will tell you whether they'll be able to obtain financing.

It Costs You Nothing to Have Me Prequalify Them

I can help them get a loan with the most competitive interest rates available. You can rest easy knowing they will be able to obtain financing.

This is a free service. The buyer is under no obligation to use me to get a loan. I'll help them select the best loan for their financial needs, such as:

Conventional. Refinancing your conventional mortgage can lead to a low fixed rate—or adjustable rates used for your primary home, secondary home, or investment property.

FHA. If you currently have an FHA mortgage, the refinance process can be streamlined—with no appraisal and reduced loan documentation to qualified applicants.

VA. Refinance your current VA mortgage into a lower-rate VA loan with a streamlined process.

USDA. USDA mortgages provide a low-cost, insured home mortgage loan that allows you to refinance your current USDA loan into a new USDA loan with a lower rate.

Conclusion

- If you sign a contract with a potential buyer, you take your home off the market for a time.
- While you're under contract, you run the risk of the buyer's financing being rejected. You also risk losing other potential buyers.
- A better way is to prequalify your buyer before you sign a contract. I can help you with that for free and can even assist your buyer in finding the right source for a loan.

Chapter 21

Consider Hiring the Right Real Estate Agent

I'm sure you've wondered why people even bother hiring a real estate agent. Well, here are a few reasons:

Reason 1. The Right Agent Can Sell Homes for More Money

In fact, most sellers net more money in their pocket, even after they pay the agent's commission.

The typical home sold by an agent sells for \$230,000, while the typical For Sale by Owner (FSBO) home sells for \$184,000.

That doesn't mean every agent is going to sell your home for more. However, the numbers do show agents typically sell homes for more money. In fact, many sellers actually make money hiring a real estate agent to sell their home.

Here are a couple of real-life examples:

- Brandon had his home on the market for \$220,000. He wasn't getting much activity. The buyers who did look at it were not serious. They showed little interest in buying the home and made lowball offers. He then listed his home with an agent for \$240,000. Three weeks later, he received an offer from a buyer willing to pay full price. He ended up with more money in his pocket, even after paying the commission.
- Jimmy and Kaye had their home on the market for \$380,000. It wasn't selling. After a few months, they hired a real estate agent and increased the price to \$420,000. A few months later, the home sold for \$408,000. They made more money, even after paying the real estate commission.

Do these stories happen every day? No. However, they happen more often than not. In most cases, the agent can sell the home for more money than the seller could get on their own.

Reason 2. The Whole Process Is Easier When You Hire a Real Estate Agent

Let me give you a concrete example. I talked to a title company manager who handles both FSBO closings and real estate agent closings.

He told me when a FSBO sells their home, it takes about 30 to 45 days for the two parties to sign off on the sale contract. He said that sometimes they don't even sign it until they sit down for the closing.

When a property is sold by a real estate agent, the sales contract is usually signed in 45 hours—not days.

Why does this matter to you? Have you ever heard of “buyer's remorse?” It's what happens when a buyer decides to buy your home, only to immediately begin questioning their decision.

It doesn't matter whether the decision was good or bad. I've seen buyers get buyer's remorse when they were practically stealing homes, and sometimes they still freak out and change their mind.

If you have a signed contract, you can hold them to it. If not, they may walk away, and you'll have to sell your home all over again.

This isn't to say that you can't sell your home yourself. You probably can. However, unless you have sold a lot of homes yourself, you probably aren't set up as well as a professional real estate agent.

Doesn't that just make sense? You likely hire professionals for many areas of your day-to-day living or business, so why not with home selling? Selling your home is a big deal and potentially worth a lot.

Reason 3. A Good Real Estate Agent Can Save 80-100 Hours of Your Time

That's because we handle all the work for you. We are experts at financing, loan conditions, home inspections, surveys, title work, termite inspections, appraisals, negotiating, etc.

Some people have estimated there are 189–213 different things an agent does to sell a home. That list is shorter or longer, depending on the property. However, I do know from personal experience that selling a home does take a lot of time.

Reason 4. We Solve Problems

This is the most important thing an agent can do for you! After all, just because a buyer is interested in your house doesn't mean they will actually be able to complete the purchase.

Here's a story that illustrates this perfectly. A seller put her home on the market. The perfect buyer came along and made a full-price offer for the home. The seller and the buyer signed a contract, and the buyer started working on financing. However, the buyer ran into a problem with the financing and canceled the contract.

The seller told the story to an agent. It turns out that the problem the buyer had was completely solvable. However, the seller didn't know how to solve it. As a result, the buyer couldn't obtain financing to buy the home.

The agent is confident that if he had been involved in the sale, the buyer would have obtained financing and bought the home.

Unfortunately, the seller had to put the home back on the market. It took another 5 months to sell. The seller had to pay an additional 5 months' worth of mortgage payments, property tax payments, and homeowner's insurance premiums. In addition, she had to maintain the lawn, pay the electric bill, and take care of the property.

The "knowing where to tap" story. This reminds me of the old story of the importance of "knowing where to tap." Have you ever heard the story? Here's the short version: A huge steamship boiler system was not working properly. The steamship captain hired a top boiler expert to fix it.

The expert asked a few questions and inspected the boiler room. He looked at the pipes that twisted and turned every which-way and listened to the boiler and all the machinery.

He studied the problem, reached into his toolbox, and grabbed a small hammer. He gently tapped one valve, and—voilà!—the problem was fixed. He sent a bill for \$1,000 to the owner of the steamship.

When the owner saw the \$1,000 invoice, he was mad as a hornet! He called the expert and confronted him about the bill. "You were only there for 15 minutes! How dare you charge me \$1,000!" he demanded. The expert heard him out and told him he would send a new bill.

The owner received another bill the next day. The bill was itemized as follows:

- Tapping the valve: \$.50
- Knowing where to tap: \$999.50
- Total: \$1,000.00

Specialized knowledge is one of the most valuable resources in the world. Fortunately for you, I have specialized knowledge! I know how to sell homes for more money. I know precisely where to "tap the valve" and how to solve any potential problems that could come up.

In fact, you will usually make more money when you hire me to sell your house. I know that sounds crazy...but it's true. The fact I can sell your home for more money is usually enough to pay my commission.

This is how you make money hiring me. I save you countless hours chasing down surveys, handling inspections, etc.

What is your time worth? If it isn't worth anything, you should sell your home yourself. However, I know that isn't the case. Your time is valuable to you!

I know from personal experience that most homeowners are successful, hardworking individuals. You have probably spent many hours becoming skilled at your own profession. I'm sure you have specialized knowledge in your area of expertise. An outsider might look at what you do and think it's easy. It's not. You know it, and I know it.

Run the numbers. Consider the valuable insight I've shared with you. When you're ready to hire a highly skilled, professional real estate agent, give me a call. I'll be glad to help you!

When you're ready to have me do all the work required to sell your home, contact me. I'll help you take the first critical step: Determining your home's true value. With that number in hand, we'll be ready to talk about listing and selling your home, and you'll be able to make well-informed decisions.

The back of this book has all my contact information. I can't wait to help you get started!

Conclusion

- Statistics show that, on average, real estate agents sell homes for much more than FSBO.
- A highly skilled real estate agent can save the seller 80–100 hours during a sale.
- Real estate agents have the knowledge and expertise to solve problems that can disrupt home sales.

HOW I SELL HOMES OTHERS FAILED TO SELL

Tired of not being able to sell your home? Sick of trying so hard with no success? This book shows you how to sell any home, in any market, and get the most money in the shortest amount of time. These strategies have helped sell thousands of homes, and now, you have them all at your fingertips!

The strategies in this book have been thoroughly tested and proven effective time and time again. Don't miss out on this opportunity to learn tips and tricks that can help you sell any home — even hard-to-sell homes!



In this book, I've provided an effective guide for you to have the most successful real estate transaction possible.

If you don't have time to implement all of the strategies discussed in this book, I'd be more than happy to provide my expertise and services to help you buy or sell your home.

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