



HOME BUYING

BLUEPRINT GUIDE

HEY, I'M STEPH

Fun fact: My husband and I rescue senior dogs. I want to give them the BEST REST of their lives in a home that makes them feel safe and loved.



HOME means everything.

That is why I've always been so dedicated about helping people to achieve their goals of owning their dream home.

Selling real estate isn't just about houses for me, it's about helping people like you turn dreams into reality and build their family's generational wealth.

Instead of trying to hard sell you on a home that doesn't meet your needs, my goal is to educate you and give you the confidence to make the best decision for you and your family.

I can't wait to make you the next happy home!



GET THE BEST DEAL

Buying a home is the most expensive purchase you'll probably ever make, so of course you want a good deal! With my market expertise, we can make sure we get you the best price for the home and negotiate the best terms possible.

IN THE TIME YOU WANT

The biggest complaint most buyers make about their agent is that they're not available when they want to see properties. By being strategic with our showings, we can get in to see the properties that are the absolute best match for you so you can be first to see it and be the one to buy your dream home rather than losing out to another buyer.

YOUR THREE GOALS

BUY STRESS FREE

Moving is stressful enough. The buying process shouldn't and doesn't have to be. I believe in a consultative approach to selling homes which means my goal is to educate you at every turn so that you can make the best decisions and I communicate at every step of the process so you're never left in the dark wondering what happens next.



BUYING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Here's a quick breakdown of the entire buying process...

PREPARATION: The homework we do *before* we start shopping will get us to the closing table faster and more efficiently than hopping in the car and driving all around the county and leaving you frustrated.

SHOPPING: It's not about seeing more homes, it's about seeing the right homes and being *first* in to see them.

OFFERING + CONTRACT PERIOD: After you've found "the one", we'll walk you through the entire offer and contract process to get you to closing stress free.

CLOSING: On the day of closing, we'll walk through the property to make sure it's in the same condition as the inspection and go to the signing to close and get your keys. The closing will be coordinated with your Attorney. We will verify with the Attorney regarding the funds for the closing costs. This could be a personal check, bank check or a wire.

PREPARATION

MARKET STATISTICS

You don't need to know every statistic and number about real estate to make an educated decision. Here are the key points to know:

LIST PRICE TO SALES PRICE RATIO

This is the percentage of list price that sellers are getting. The market's average is about 96%. For example, (using easy numbers) if a seller listed at \$100k, they would expect at least \$96k. When a property is priced right, it will sell at or above list price. If a property is overpriced by even 10%, it will sit and get stale on the market.

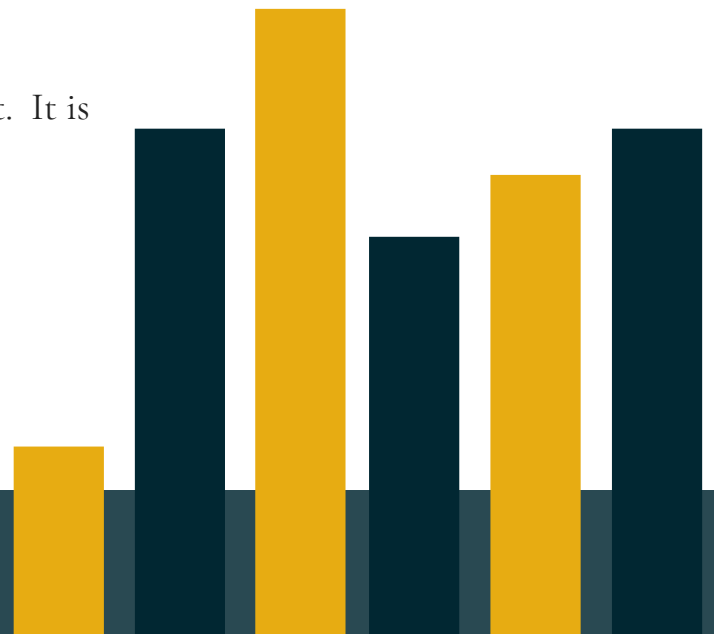
DAYS ON MARKET

Days on market (or sometimes seen as DOM) is how many days a property is listed before it goes under contract. The longer a property sits on the market, the more overpriced it is.

INTEREST RATES

For every 1% interest rates increase, it's equivalent to a 10% increase for your monthly payment. For example, a \$300k home with a 4% interest rate is about \$1575/month and a \$240k home with a 6% interest rate is about \$1675/month.

Cheaper prices don't always add up to a lower monthly payment. Interest rate is a key component. It is better to focus on overall monthly payment!



GET PREQUALIFIED

Waiting until you find the right home before getting prequalified is like going Black Friday shopping and forgetting your wallet... The best deals are already gone by the time you're ready to checkout!

BEFORE YOU CAN MAKE AN OFFER: Buying a house isn't like buying a car. When the seller is taking their home off the market and can't accept offers from other buyers, they want to know that we will actually get to the closing table so we need to be fully prequalified *before* we make an offer.

BIG BANK CAUTION: Big banks are notorious for not closing on time and listing agents know it! You'll want to work with a lender who can get a loan commitment on time.

GET FULLY PREQUALIFIED: Filling out an online application isn't enough to get your offer accepted. You'll want to go through the full prequalification process (credit check, bank statements and tax returns) to get your offer accepted.

BEFORE WE SEE HOMES...

Make sure that you're fully prequalified so we know what type of properties and price range that fits your needs. Never be House Rich and Cash Poor



BUYER CONSULTATION

If you went to the doctor's office with a headache and they threw you on the operating table for brain surgery, how would you feel? They're supposed to *ask questions* and do some research first!

With the biggest purchase of your life, we've got to treat it like surgery. In our 30 minute meeting together, we have three goals:

WANTS AND NEEDS: My goal is to ask you dozens of questions so that I can show you the BEST five homes on the market before they're gone, rather than asking a few questions and showing you dozens of the wrong homes. It's not just about what you're looking for but WHY you're looking for it.

ANALYZE THE MARKET: We will pull up properties together on the big screen so that I know *exactly* what you're looking for and adjust your criteria to find you the perfect fit.

QUESTIONS: In a market where homes are selling like \$5 water at a nightclub, being able to make confident decisions *quickly* means you will be able to get the best deal on the best house and I'm here to answer alllll of your questions!



BEFORE WE MEET...

Don't forget! Without your prequalification, we're just guessing and speculating.

SHOPPING

PREPARING TO SHOP

I'm going to let you in on a little secret... Finding the right home *doesn't* require you to look at every home on the market. In fact, most of my buyers end up purchasing within the first 4-6 homes. Here's how:

YOUR HOMEWORK: You'll go through the properties that I've sent you to choose your BEST five options and you will go drive by them to make sure you like the area. *Just a tip:* pictures can be deceiving. Some agents hire professional photographers while others use their flip phones from 1998. Don't overlook a potential good fit because of ugly pictures! You just might find a gem that way.

MY HOMEWORK: Once you've selected them, I'll go talk to the listing agent for each property to make sure that it fits your must haves and doesn't have any of your dealbreakers. I'll run the comparables *before* we go looking at properties so that you know exactly what it should sell for so that we can make an educated offer.

YOUR HOMEWORK

Once we've had our buyer consultation, your job will be to narrow down on your top five properties so that I can get to work for you!



CHOOSING THE RIGHT HOME

Your time is important to you, so I will always show you the best home first, the second best home second and so on.

THE BAD NEWS...

At the risk of ruining your day, I'm going to let you in on a little secret: *there's no such thing as a perfect home.* That's why being CRYSTAL clear on your must haves, deal breakers and wants are so important. Then, we can make educated decisions on the imperfections.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The most important questions to be asking are: *does the layout flow nicely? Are the rooms big enough? Does it feel like home? What upgrades need to be done right now? How do you feel about the neighborhood? Can you get to work, play and school comfortably?*

POPPING THE QUESTION

After each property, I'm going to ask you, "on a scale of 1-10 *for the price*, how do you feel about this property?"

After we've seen all of them, we'll go back to the clear winner so you can see it again and I'll ask you if you love it enough to make an offer.

Remember, an offer doesn't mean you're signing your life away!



NEGOTIATING THE SALE

MAKING AN OFFER

Massachusetts is a two-step State

Getting an offer accepted requires *strategy*, not luck. We don't just throw random numbers out. We pull comparable sales to see where the property should be selling and we make an educated offer based on the comparables. Price isn't the only important factor that a seller looks at when accepting offers. Here are the other factors:

DEPOSIT: If a seller is going to take the property off the market, they want to know that you have skin in the game too. In competitive markets the more skin in the game may make your offer more appealing. The deposit amount should also reflect your pre-approved loan conditions.

CONTINGENCY DATES: Since we submit an OFFER initially and then that is followed up by a Purchase Agreement, Inspection Contingencies need to be completed prior to the signing of the Purchase Agreement, usually a 7 day window. If a mortgage contingency is part of the offer, we need to make sure that we are adhering to all of the Lender deadlines so that the full loan commitment can be issued by the due date.

LENDER: A great lender can help you beat other buyers by having a full prequalification or even better, a loan commitment *before* making an offer.

ADDITIONAL TERMS: The seller will take into consideration any additional terms you are asking for like closing cost contributions and if you have to sell a home before you can buy theirs.

All of these are factors in determining whether your offer gets accepted.



ONCE YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED



The first and last weeks of the closing process are the most intense. Here's what happens within the first few days of your offer being accepted:

HAVE SOME FAITH

You'll get an email from my transaction coordinator, who will help us stay on top of dates and deadlines and get to closing on time.

SCHEDULE INSPECTION

We will coordinate your inspection with the seller's agent. Generally, the inspection is within 48 hours of getting the offer accepted and we'll have a report back within hours.

EXECUTED CONTRACT

Contract is drafted by the Seller's attorney and reviewed and negotiated by your attorney. Upon execution, we will make sure your lender has a copy.

This is needed to complete underwriting and order the appraisal.

ASSOCIATION

If there's an association, there will be additional information that needs to be collected throughout the process. My team will coordinate the requests and the dissemination of the information.

DUE
DILIGENCE

INSPECTION

A Home Inspection is not a “get-out-of-jail” card. Please do not let anyone tell you that. The inspection is for major issues such as structural, roof, plumbing and electrical. It is not for the sound of the doorbell chime. When submitting our offer we will discuss specific strategies regarding how the inspection is drafted so that you and your deposit are still protected.

The inspection is generally \$400-\$600 and is paid at the time of the inspection. The actual Home Inspector is critical, not every inspector is the same. We will provide you with several that we have a great track record with, so you have vetted options.

REMEMBER

The Home Inspection is not a chance to just get out of the offer. The offer is a legally binding document that then gets superseded by the Purchase Agreement.



FINANCING



The financing process is the unsexy part of real estate because no one actually *wants* to go through the whole process but it's so important for getting the home that you want. Here's what you need to know about underwriting:

EXECUTED CONTRACT

After we go under contract, we will send the executed contract over to the lender so they can finish their underwriting process.

UNDERWRITING

They're going to ask you for a million different documents and it's going to be frustrating and annoying... *Send them anyway!* All of those documents are how the lender will get you the lowest interest rate possible. Once they've committed to giving you the loan, we'll receive a loan commitment.

LOAN COMMITMENT

Who you choose as a lender will determine how long this takes. If you want to be really proactive and get your offer accepted over any other buyer, get a loan commitment before you start shopping for homes!

HOMework

Start the loan commitment process right away to put you in the best position to get your offer accepted and to have a smooth closing.

APPRAISAL

An appraisal is an unbiased, third party valuation of the home and is ordered by the lender.

The appraiser arrives at their price by comparing your new home to the recent sales in the neighborhood. They will look at homes

with similar square footage, upgrades, features and size in the neighborhood that have sold in the last six months and assign a value to your new home.



IF IT APPRAISES HIGH...

Congratulations! That means you have instant equity in the home. There is no re-negotiation and the seller NEVER knows what about it.

IF IT APPRAISES JUST RIGHT...

We proceed with the sale the way it is and nothing changes.

IF IT APPRAISES LOW...

Lenders will only finance up to the appraised value and anything beyond the appraised value has to be paid for *out of pocket*. This is most likely to happen in custom built homes in neighborhoods without similar floor plans or layouts. The seller can decide to cancel or come down to the appraised price, we can decide to cancel or come up to their price, or we can negotiate a price in the middle (which is what usually happens).

MOVING + CLOSING

MAKING YOUR MOVE

Throughout this process, it's totally normal to go through mixed emotions of excitement, panic, nerves and maybe even a little bit of regret.

Don't worry! You'll start to feel like normal again once you've gotten situated in your new home.

If you need a recommendation for movers, contractors or otherwise, I'm here to connect you with the people who will make your life easier and help you get settled into your new home quickly.



YOUR HOMEWORK

- Schedule Movers
- Turn On Utilities
- Change Address



CLOSING

Once we're at closing day, there are a few last things that you'll need to do:

WALK-THROUGH

We will do a walk-through of the property right before closing to make sure the house is in the same condition as it was during the inspection.

WIRE INSTRUCTIONS

The title company will contact you directly with instructions for where to wire the remainder of your cash to close. Ideally, you'll wire your money the day before closing instead of right before in order to remove some of the stress for yourself.

SIGNING

You better do those hand stretches because you'll be autographing a whole bunch! Ideally, we'll close before 3pm on a business day that's not Friday so you get your keys on the same day. Don't forget to bring a valid ID and an original copy of the association approval to the closing.

YOUR HOMEWORK

- Attend Walkthrough
- Provide Your Cash To Close
- Bring ID + Approval
- Sign Closing Documents
- Get Your Keys

RESOURCES

KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

One of the biggest complaints that most people make about their realtor is that their agent doesn't communicate enough. Here's how I'll communicate with you throughout the transaction:

'HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS NEXT' EMAILS

At every turn of the transaction, you're going to get an email from me that touch on what step in the process we've just crossed and they will break down what will happen next so you're never left wondering how things are going or where we are in the process.

TUESDAY PHONE CALL

You'll get a phone call from me every Tuesday to touch base with any updates, relevant market changes and other news regarding your home. You can always reach me at any other time and you also always know that the Tuesday phone call is coming.

HAVE SOME FAITH

Once we go under contract, Faith is our transaction coordinator who will make sure we're on track for dates and deadlines. You'll hear from her with regular status updates as well, so there's never any surprises. She doesn't replace me as your agent, she just doubles our efficiency!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Buying a home is a huge decision so it's totally normal to have questions. Here are the most common questions buyers ask when they're getting ready to buy their new home:

DO WE HAVE TO MEET FIRST? CAN'T WE JUST GO LOOK AT THE PROPERTY?

Sure, if you want to do it the hard way! Only about 2% of buyers buy the house they THINK they're going to buy. The 30 minutes it takes to sit down and chat will save you 10-15 hours during the home buying process.

WHY DO I HAVE TO GET PREQUALIFIED BEFORE SHOPPING?

In order to get your offer accepted, we have to submit it with a prequalification. If you wait until after you find the property to apply for a loan, the perfect property very well may be sold by the time you get your ducks in a row.

HOW DO YOU GET PAID?

How agents get paid is often a misunderstood process. We will be entering into an Exclusive Buyer Agency Agreement that outlines the my services and the associated cost. Currently, a Seller may elect to use a portion of the over all commission they are paying the Listing Agent to be used as cooperating commission to a Buyer Agent. In that scenario, the cost of my services will be reduced by the amount that the Seller is contributing. In many circumstance, this will equate to no additional cost to you. We will discuss this in-depth prior to the execution of the Agreement.

DO YOUR BUYERS REALLY BUY IN THE FIRST 4-6 HOMES THEY SEE?

Most of the time, yes... and that's not because I force them to buy, either! Instead of driving around town looking at a bunch of the wrong properties, we've done so much research up front that by the time you step in the door, you already know it's going to be a great match and you're always seeing the best homes first!

NEXT STEPS

WHEN WE MEET

Our meeting will only last about 30-45 minutes. During our time together, we'll dig deep into your wants and needs, start looking at properties together and I'll answer any questions you may have. We'll sign the VIP Buyer Agreement and schedule a date to start shopping for homes.

BEFORE WE START SHOPPING...

Make sure that you've been fully prequalified so we know what type of properties and price range to look at.

ONCE WE START SHOPPING

After we've narrowed down on your precise wants and needs, I'll send you properties to look over. You'll choose your top 5 and I will go do research to make sure they're perfect fits before we go look at them.



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Book an appointment:

