

BUYER'S GUIDE

**Better
Homes**
and Gardens
REAL ESTATE

THE
GOOD LIFE
GROUP

The Carpers

HOSPITALITY & HOMES



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ABOUT US





Your Trusted Agents

Matt & Carrie Carper

hello

Thank you for connecting with us! We look forward to getting to work for you. Throughout the process, we will be working diligently to find your dream home.





Welcome to the exciting journey of buying a home!

We understand that embarking on this adventure can stir up a whirlwind of emotions: the thrill of starting a new chapter in your life, the anticipation of finding the perfect place to call home, the hope of creating lifelong memories, and perhaps a dash of nervousness about the complexity of the process.

As real estate professionals in the Omaha Metro and Southwest Iowa area, we work with 35-40 clients per year to sell and buy real estate.

That's exactly why we've compiled this comprehensive Home Buyer's Guide just for you!

Our mission is to navigate you through this intricate process with as much ease and clarity as possible. Our goal is to ensure that your home-buying journey is not only successful but also enjoyable and stress-free.

For us, this is more than just a transaction; it's about helping you realize your dream of homeownership.



Our history

We're experienced and well versed in real estate. Our processes and systems evolve as the real estate market changes throughout the year.

Our mission

To exceed our clients expectations with the work that we perform from day 1.

The goal

When our work is done, we expect our clients to tell us that they do not remember selling and buying real estate ever being that easy.

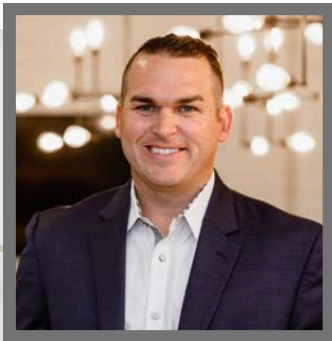
Let's Find

YOUR DREAM
HOME



meet our team

Selling a home can be daunting, but not with our expert team. We're here to provide a smooth, stress-free experience, backed by our deep knowledge and dedication. Let's introduce you to our remarkable team!



MATT CARPER

Matt is a realtor, specializing in residential real estate. He also works with investors on commercial properties and multi family. He will break down the property analysis to show you your homes fair market value.



CARRIE CARPER

Carrie is a realtor, she focuses on the house preparation with staging and design. Her simplified approach is always "less is more" when it comes to prepare the house to go on the market. Staging comes easy when you have an eye for it like Carrie.



STEPHANIE SCHROEDER

Stephanie is your personal transaction coordinator. She makes sure that we are crossing our t's and dotting our i's. Stephanie connects with the lenders, title companies and the other agents to hit every deadline. Her background includes real estate transactions and all property title work.

Our Services

We are full service real estate professionals. We believe in putting our best foot forward, which is why we provide the best resources available.

01

Putting the Pieces Together

Once we meet to discuss the plan, we will put the pieces together for you. Providing a timeline with reverse planning on the dates you provide for ideal closing date on your dream home.

02

Social Media Strategy

Our strategy is to not just search all homes on the MLS, but to also use our network on all social media platforms to find your dream home.

03

Analyzing Comparable Properties

Our team collaborates to look at an overview of similar homes within the area to compare homes (size, bedrooms, bathrooms, lot, garages, etc). That data is used to come up with the offer price. The sale metrics of days on the market, what day and time of the year other homes went on the market are used to provide insight to the market conditions.

Home Buyer's Road Map



MAKE SURE YOU ARE READY

Make sure you are ready emotionally
Review Income and expense status over the last few years
Decide is it a good time for buying a house



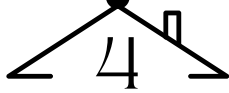
GET YOUR FINANCES IN ORDER

Check your debts and income
Calculate how much house you can afford on your own
Don't forget to take homeowners association (HOA) fees



SAVE FOR A DOWN PAYMENT

Be ready for down payment
20% down payment generally better
Don't forget closing, moving and other costs



FIND THE RIGHT MORTGAGE FOR YOU

Decide what the best type of loan is for you
The majority of mortgages in the U.S. are conventional loans
FHA loans are less of a risk for lenders



PREAPPROVED FOR MORTGAGE

Working with a local lender that will meet you and discuss the process of buying a home is recommended.



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Real Estate

terms

Appraisal

An evaluation of a property's value conducted by a licensed appraiser, typically commissioned for the benefit of the lender to ensure the property's market value meets or exceeds the loan amount.

Broker

An individual who has completed additional education beyond the agent level as mandated by state laws and has passed a broker's licensing examination.

Buyer's Agent

A real estate agent who represents the interests of the buyer in a real estate transaction.

Closing

The final step in completing a real estate transaction. The closing date, set during the negotiation phase, occurs several weeks after the offer is formally accepted.

Closing Costs

Fees incurred at the closing of a real estate transaction. At the closing, the title to the property is officially transferred to the buyer.

Real Estate Fees

The fee paid to real estate professionals for their services, usually calculated as a percentage of the property's selling price.

Market Analysis

A report comparing sales of similar homes in the area to help establish a reasonable asking price for a property.

Contingency

A provision in a real estate contract that must be met for the contract to become legally binding.

Counteroffer

A new offer made in response to a previous offer, containing modified terms based on negotiations.

Deed

A legal document that represents proof of ownership and grants the holder specific rights to real estate property.



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Real Estate terms

Disclosure

A statement by a seller or a broker regarding the property's known defects.

Earnest Deposit

A deposit made by the buyer towards the down payment as a sign of good faith when the purchase agreement is signed.

Equity

The portion of the home's value that the homeowner "owns" outright. It's calculated as the current market value of the home minus the outstanding mortgage balance.

Escrow

A third-party service, often required in the home-selling process, that holds and disburses funds to facilitate the closing of a home.

Fair Market Value

The estimated price at which a property would likely sell where both buyer and seller are knowledgeable and willing parties in a transaction.

Home Inspection

An examination of a property's condition, typically conducted by a professional home inspector.

Home Warranty

A policy that covers the cost of repairing or maintaining household systems or appliances.

Listing

A property that is on the market for sale. The term "listing" also refers to the agreement between the home seller and the real estate agent tasked with marketing the property.

Listing Agent

The real estate agent representing the seller.

Mortgage

A loan used to finance the purchase of a home, with the property itself serving as collateral for the loan.

For Sale By Owner (FSBO)

A property that is being sold directly by the owner without the representation of a real estate agent.



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Hospitality & Homes

Real Estate

terms

Multiple Listing Service

A tool that real estate brokers use to establish contractual offers of compensation and to compile and share property data with other brokers.

Offer

The price that a buyer proposes they are willing to pay for a property.

Open House

An event where potential buyers can tour a house that is for sale.

Pre-approval letter

A document from a lender stating that a buyer qualifies for a mortgage of a specified amount.

Real Estate Agent

A professional licensed to negotiate and facilitate real estate transactions.

Short Sale

The sale of real estate in which the proceeds from the sale are less than the balance of debts secured by liens against the property, requiring the lender's approval.

Staging

The act of preparing and showcasing a residential or commercial property for sale.

Title Insurance

An insurance policy that protects the holder from financial loss resulting from defects in the title to a property.

Under Contract

A term used to indicate that a home has an accepted offer but the sale has not yet been completed.

Transaction Coordinator

A professional licensed realtor that assists with real estate transactions. Communicating with all parties (sellers, buyers, loan officers, title company, buyers agent and listing agent).



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Let's turn your
dreams

Into Reality!

Deciding to *Buy*

Ah, the allure of homeownership: the white picket fence, the garden gnome gracing the lawn, the Sunday barbecues in the backyard. It's the American dream, isn't it? But deciding to take the leap from renting to buying is a huge step. Let's dive into the intricacies of making that decision.

Why Do You Want to Buy?

Every journey begins with the "why." Is it because you're tired of paying rent to a landlord every month? Perhaps you're seeking a more permanent place to hang your hat, or maybe it's the freedom to paint your bedroom any shade of blue (or pink!) you desire. For many, it's the prospect of viewing a home as an investment, a place that, with time, grows in value.

Financial Fitness is Key

Budgeting: How much can you really afford without straining your monthly finances?

Credit Check: That three-digit score will significantly impact the mortgage rates you're offered. A healthier score equates to more favorable terms.

The Saving Game: Remember, the costs don't end with the down payment. Closing costs, inspection fees, and any immediate renovations can all tally up.

The Market Pulse

Get a feel for the market. In simpler terms: Are homes selling rapidly, or is it more of a slow dance? Knowing the market dynamics you're stepping into can inform your negotiation strategies and set expectations for pricing.

Your Future Plans

Look ahead: Do you envision yourself in this city for the next decade or so? If you're in a transient phase of life, discerning the right time to buy is crucial. Moreover, consider what you need from a home now and what you might need in the future.



How to find the right *Team?*

Determine Your Needs

Before you start searching for a real estate agent, take the time to understand what you're looking for in a home, or if you're selling, what you expect from the sale of your current home. Are you aiming for a quick sale? Do you have a specific location in mind for your next home? Knowing your objectives will help you clearly convey your needs to a potential agent.

Ask for Recommendations

Start by asking friends, family, and colleagues for recommendations for agents. People you trust may have worked with an agent they were impressed with. Be sure to ask them what specifically they liked about their agent.

Do Your Research

Read reviews, and check out their professional profiles and websites. Look for agents who are active in your target neighborhood and within your price range.

Review Their Track Record

You want an agent with a proven track record of success. They should be able to provide details about recent sales, including how long their listings typically stay on the market and how close the sale price was to the listing price.



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Ask your

Agent.....

How many properties do you sell a year?

What's your average number of clients at a time?

Are you familiar with the area where I want to buy?

How often will we communicate, and what method?

Can you provide references from past clients?

How do you handle offers?

What separates you from other real estate agents?

What's your strategy to get me the best price?

How long have you been working in real estate?

Understanding Your Housing Needs

Your Needs

Before you start the home buying process, it's essential to have a clear understanding of what you're seeking in a home. Consider the following factors:

Type of Home: Are you interested in a single-family home, a townhouse, a condominium, or a multi-family building with two to four units?

New or Existing Home: Would you prefer the charm of an existing home with mature landscaping and established neighborhoods, or are you drawn to the modern features of a new home that might allow for customization?

Location: Think about the type of neighborhood that suits your lifestyle. Evaluate commute times to work, the quality of local school districts, proximity to amenities, and available community services.

Features: Compile a list of essential and desired features. How many bedrooms and bathrooms are necessary? Are you looking for an open-concept design, or do you prefer separate rooms? Consider the importance of outdoor space, a garage, or a home office.



Establish Your Budget *Your Budget*

Once you have a clear picture of your housing needs, it's time to assess your budget to determine how much house you can afford:



Income: Your income is a crucial factor in determining your housing budget. Generally, your monthly housing expenses—including your mortgage, property taxes, and insurance—should not exceed 28-30% of your gross monthly income.

Down Payment: A larger down payment can reduce the amount of your mortgage and potentially eliminate the need for mortgage insurance, saving you money over time. Typically, homebuyers are expected to have a down payment saved before purchasing a home.

Credit Score: Your credit score plays a significant role in obtaining a favorable mortgage rate. A higher credit score can lead to better interest rates, thereby lowering your long-term financial commitment. If your credit score needs improvement, it may be wise to work on enhancing it before applying for a mortgage.

Debt: Your current debt levels will influence the amount lenders are willing to offer you. Lenders usually prefer that your total monthly debts, including your anticipated new mortgage payment, do not exceed 36% of your gross monthly income.

Credit

core

Understanding

Credit Score

Your credit score is a numerical representation of your creditworthiness, calculated based on your credit history. It's essentially a snapshot that lenders use to assess the risk of lending you money. In the U.S., credit scores typically range from 300 (the lowest) to 850 (the highest).



Mortgage Approval:

Lenders consider your credit score when determining whether to approve your mortgage application—a lower score can make it more challenging to get approved.

Interest Rates

This score also influences the interest rate on your mortgage; a higher credit score can help you secure a lower interest rate, potentially saving you thousands of dollars over the life of your loan.

Loan Options

Furthermore, certain types of loans, such as conventional loans, may require a higher credit score than others, meaning your score can significantly impact the loan options available to you.



Understanding Credit

Score

Don't Open New Credit

Lines: Each time you apply for new credit, it can cause a small, temporary dip in your credit score. Therefore, avoid opening new credit lines shortly before applying for a mortgage.

Check Your Credit Report:

Errors on your credit report can negatively impact your score. Request a free credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus—Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax—and promptly dispute any inaccuracies you discover.



Generally, a credit score of 740 or higher will help you secure the best interest rates. However, it's possible to get a conventional loan with a credit score as low as 620. An FHA loan may require a minimum credit score of only 580.

If your credit score is less than ideal, there are steps you can take to improve it:

Pay Bills on Time: Your payment history is the most significant factor affecting your credit score. Make sure to pay all your bills on time, without exception.

Lower Your Credit Utilization: Aim to use less than 30% of your available credit. For example, if you have a credit card with a \$10,000 limit, try to maintain a balance below \$3,000.



Let's get *pre-approved*



Getting Pre-approved for a mortgage

A mortgage pre-approval is a statement from a lender indicating that you qualify for a certain mortgage amount, based on an evaluation of your creditworthiness and financial situation. It gives you a solid idea of what you can afford and shows sellers that you're a serious buyer.

Pre-approval can put you in a stronger position when you're ready to negotiate with sellers. It demonstrates that you've already begun the mortgage process and that a lender is willing to finance your purchase. This can give sellers confidence that the sale is more likely to go through if they accept your offer.

It's recommended to get pre-approved by several lenders to compare mortgage rates and terms. Remember, a pre-approval doesn't commit you to a particular lender, but it does enable you to understand and establish your budget.

Use your pre-approval to narrow your home search to properties within your price range. Having a clear budget can save you time and prevent the heartache of falling in love with a house you can't afford.

Pre-approvals often expire after 120 days. If you haven't found a home within this timeframe, you'll need to submit updated documentation to renew your pre-approval.

Searching for the *right property*



Determine Your Must-Haves and Deal-Breakers

Before you start looking at houses, make a list of your non-negotiable features. These could range from the number of bedrooms and bathrooms to the type of neighborhood, or even proximity to specific amenities like schools or public transportation.

Research Neighborhoods

Consider factors such as school district quality, crime rates, and the availability of local amenities. The commute to work or accessibility to family and friends should also play a significant role in your decision. Try visiting the neighborhood at various times of the day and different days of the week to get a genuine feel for the community.

Utilize Online Tools

Take advantage of the numerous online platforms that offer listings and virtual tours. These resources can help you save time by filtering out properties that don't match your criteria, allowing you to focus on scheduling in-person viewings only for homes that meet your requirements.

Searching for the *Right Property*



Take Notes During Viewings

During house viewings, be sure to take notes about each property. It's easy to mix up details after seeing multiple homes, and these notes will be invaluable when it comes time to compare features and make decisions.

Keep an Open Mind

Remember, a house might not check off every item on your wishlist but could still be a great fit for your needs. Keep an open mind and consider the potential each property holds.

Be Patient

Finding the right home often takes time. Avoid the temptation to rush into purchasing a property that doesn't feel quite right. The market is dynamic, with new listings appearing regularly, so remain patient if your ideal home doesn't materialize immediately.

Local Real Estate Market

Navigating the home-buying journey is both exhilarating and complex, akin to learning the rhythms of the ocean. Understanding the local real estate market is crucial, as its dynamics shape the value, demand, and opportunities within any given area. With a firm grasp of these intricacies, you transcend from merely being a buyer to becoming an informed strategist, equipped to make savvy decisions.



Understanding *Market*

Market Trends:

To strategize effectively, it's important to understand the current local market trends. Are the prices of homes in the area on an upward or downward trend? Determine whether it's a buyer's market, characterized by a surplus of homes compared to buyers, or a seller's market, with more buyers than available homes.

Inventory

Examine the number of homes available for sale in the vicinity. A scant inventory could lead to increased competition among buyers, whereas a more abundant inventory may grant you greater leverage in negotiations.



Days on Market

This metric indicates how long homes typically remain on the market before being sold in the area. A lower figure may suggest a hot market where homes are selling swiftly, whereas a higher number could point to a slower market.

Sales Prices vs Listing Prices

Investigate whether homes are generally selling above or below the asking price. This information can provide a gauge on the potential scope for price negotiation.

Local Economy

Lastly, consider economic indicators such as the job market, average income, and signs of economic progression or recession. These elements can impact the real estate market, affecting property values, housing demand, and your future resale prospects.



Choosing a *neighborhood*

One of the most critical decisions you'll face is choosing the right neighborhood. This choice extends beyond seeking areas with attractive houses; it's about discovering a community that aligns with your lifestyle, values, and long-term goals.

LOCATION

Consider the proximity to work, schools, shopping, dining, medical facilities, and any other places you frequently visit.



SCHOOL DISTRICT

The quality of local schools can impact home values, even for those without children, making it a significant factor to consider.

SAFETY AND CRIME RATES

Investigate local crime rates and safety records. This data is usually accessible online or through local law enforcement agencies.

AMENITIES

Explore the local amenities available, including parks, community centers, libraries, and fitness centers.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Contact the local city planning office to inquire about any upcoming developments that could influence future property values.

NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURE

Immerse yourself in the neighborhood at various times and days to truly gauge the community's atmosphere. Engaging in conversations with local residents can offer valuable insights.

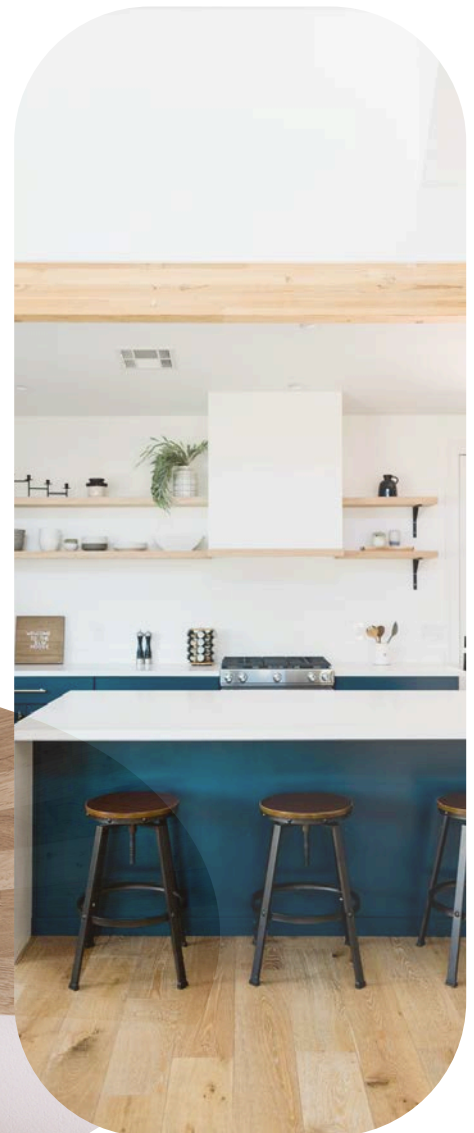
OPEN

House

Stepping into an open house can feel akin to entering the stage lights. The property is spotlighted, with every nook and cranny harmoniously inviting a closer examination. But as a prospective buyer, how do you transition from a passive observer to an active participant in this real estate showcase? Here's a guide to spotlighting key details and maximizing your open house experience.

Set the Stage with Planning: Before embarking, develop a strategy. If your itinerary includes several open houses, a meticulously planned route is invaluable. Tip: Utilize a map application for seamless navigation between locations.

Early Bird Gets the Worm: Though there's no ovation for punctuality, being first has its advantages. An early arrival allows for a leisurely walkthrough and potentially exclusive access to the real estate agent for any pressing inquiries.



OPEN

House

Stepping into an open house can feel a bit like stepping onto a stage. There's a spotlight on the property, and every corner seems to be singing its own tune, inviting you to take a closer look. But as a buyer, how do you ensure that you're not just a passive audience member, but rather an active participant in this real estate theater? Here's a breakdown of how to shine a light on the most crucial details and truly make the most of an open house:

Set the Stage with Planning: *Before you even head out, draft a game plan. If you're aiming to hit multiple venues, a well-organized route can be your best friend. Tip: Use a map app to help you glide from one place to another without a hitch.*

Early Bird Gets the Worm: *While there's no standing ovation for arriving early, being punctual does have its perks. You can tour the property at a relaxed pace and might even get some exclusive time with the real estate agent to answer any pressing questions.*

Costume Matters: *Okay, you don't need to dress for a Broadway debut, but wearing comfortable attire is key. You might be walking a lot, so opt for comfort over style.*

The Power of Documentation:

Remember, details matter! Snap some photos or jot down notes about what stands out. When reviewing properties later, these insights will be invaluable.

OPEN

House

Curiosity Didn't Just Kill the Cat:

Harness your inner detective and ask questions. Explore the history of the home, inquire about the neighborhood, or address any concerns. This is your opportunity.

A Closer Look Beyond the Glam:

It's easy to be swayed by freshly baked cookies and a beautifully staged living room. However, don't forget to test faucets, peek into closets, and even check out the view from each window.

Eavesdrop (Just a Little):

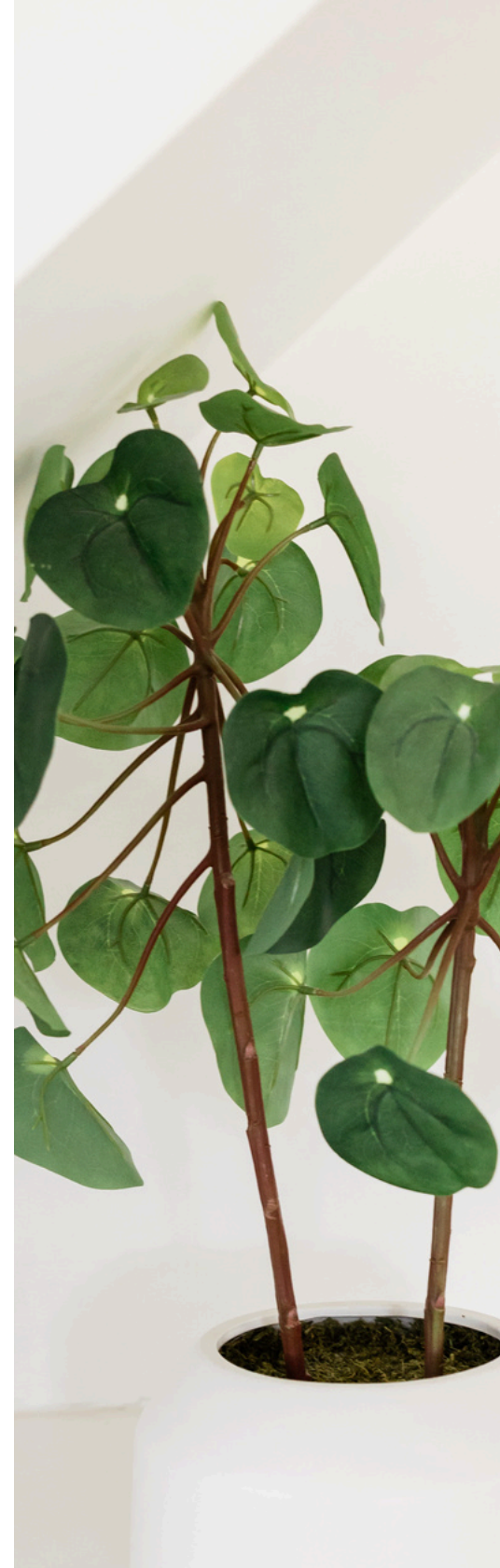
While it's not advisable to snoop, overhearing other visitors can provide valuable insights. They might notice something you missed or raise a pertinent question.

Neighborhood Recon:

After touring the inside, why not explore the neighborhood? Your potential future haunts, from parks to cafes, could play a significant role in your everyday life.

Poker Face On:

Even if you think you've found your dream home, maintain a neutral expression. Keeping your excitement in check will benefit you during negotiations.



The background image shows a bright, airy interior of a dining room. The room features white walls, a large crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling, and a large window with a view of a garden. The window has a decorative stained glass design. To the left, there is a white cabinet with glassware and a white sofa with a striped pillow. To the right, there is a white round table with a white chair. The floor is made of light-colored wood.

Art of Pricing

Offering a Price for a Home

Deciding on an offer price can be one of the most nerve-wracking stages of the home-buying process. It's a delicate balance between securing a good deal for yourself and presenting an attractive proposition to the seller. Let's break down the strategies to make your offer stand out:

Market Research is Your Compass: *Before making an offer, it's essential to study recent sales of comparable homes in the area (often termed "comps"). This research will give you a clear understanding of the current market value, which should guide your offer.*

Know Your Budget: *It's easy to get carried away, especially for a property you love, but it's critical to know your financial ceiling. Remember, homeownership entails additional expenses such as property taxes, utilities, and maintenance.*

Consider the Home's Condition: *The state of the home can significantly influence your offer. Has it been recently updated, or does it require substantial renovations? These factors should affect your initial bid.*

Understand the Seller's Position: *The duration a property has been on the market can indicate the seller's willingness to negotiate. If the home has been listed for several months with little interest, the seller may be more receptive to lower offers.*



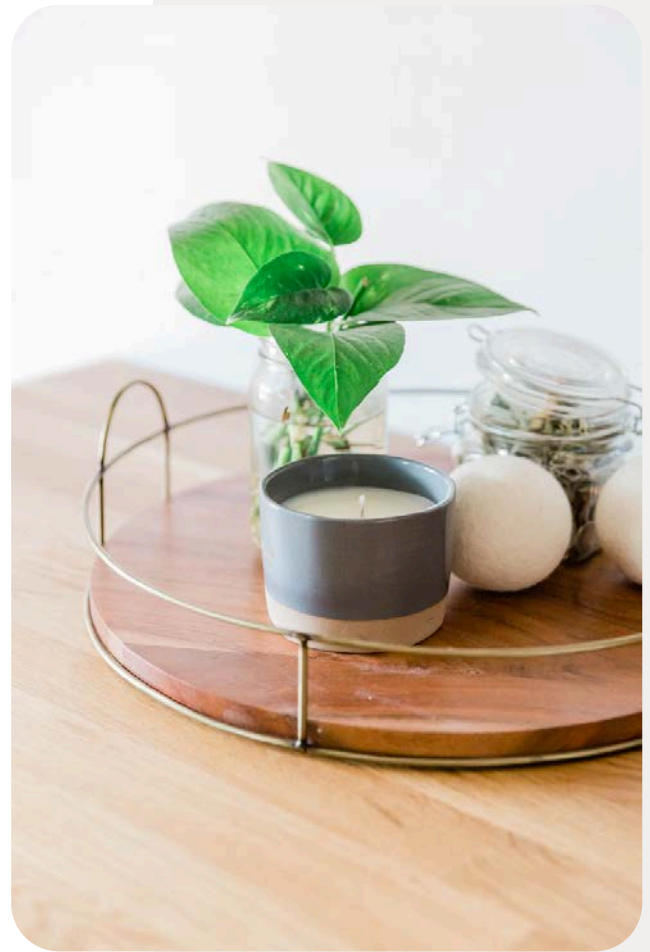
Navigating the Art of the Deal

BE COMPETITIVE, BUT REALISTIC:

In a seller's market, low-ball offers might be immediately dismissed. While everyone appreciates a great deal, it's crucial to ensure your offer is competitive, considering the current market dynamics.

Seek Guidance from Your Real Estate

Agent: Leverage your agent's expertise. With their keen understanding of market trends, they can provide essential advice on crafting an effective offer.



CONSIDER INCREMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS:

It's uncommon for a seller to accept an initial offer outright, so brace yourself for some negotiation. Determine your strategy for counteroffers beforehand and decide at what point you're ready to walk away.

As a prospective homeowner, your offer is a significant initial step in securing your claim to a property. A well-researched, thoughtful, and respectful offer sets the stage for a smoother negotiation. It's not solely about the numbers; it's the strategy that counts.



Property Surveys:

Why and What?

Navigating the realm of real estate involves sifting through extensive paperwork, inspections, and legalities. Amid this complex landscape, the 'property survey' stands out. But what makes it so crucial? Let's delve into the importance of property surveys in ensuring seamless real estate transactions.

Mapping the Landscape:

A property survey, at its core, is akin to a detailed map. It delineates the boundaries, structures, and significant features of a property. Consider it a comprehensive blueprint that delineates every essential element of your land.

Clarifying Boundaries:

Ever heard stories of feuding neighbors over a misplaced fence? A property survey puts an end to such disputes by clearly defining property lines. This clarity ensures that you know precisely what you're purchasing and protects against potential boundary disagreements.

Highlighting Easements:

Easements, or rights of use granted to entities other than the property owner (like utility companies), are marked on a property survey. Understanding these can prevent future clashes and ensure you're aware of who might need access to parts of your property.



Property Surveys:

Why and What?

Unearthing Hidden Issues:

Whether it's an obscured old structure or a neighbor's shed encroaching on the land, a property survey brings to light any discrepancies between the property's current state and its official records.

A Necessity for Development:

Dreaming of adding a pool or expanding your home? A property survey is indispensable. It can delineate where you're permitted to build or modify, ensuring your renovations comply with local ordinances and zoning regulations.

Influencing Value:

The characteristics, anomalies, and restrictions highlighted in a survey can influence a property's market value. Being aware of these details can equip you with leverage during price negotiations.

Protecting Your Investment:

Buying a property is a monumental investment. The survey acts as an insurance policy, ensuring you're well-acquainted with every facet of your purchase, eliminating unforeseen surprises down the road.



Home Appraisal Process

An appraisal is a professional and unbiased estimate of a home's value. It is conducted by a licensed appraiser who assesses the property based on a combination of factors, including its physical features, the value of comparable homes in the vicinity, and current market trends.

Lender Requirement

Most mortgage lenders require a property appraisal to ensure that the loan amount they're offering aligns with the property's actual value. This safeguards them from lending more money than the property is worth.

Buyer Protection

The appraisal also acts as a protection mechanism for buyers. It ensures that you aren't overpaying for a property.

Selection of an Appraiser

Once a property is under contract, the lender typically selects a state-licensed or certified appraiser to conduct the evaluation.

Physical Inspection

The appraiser visits the property to check its condition, size, features, and any improvements or defects.



Home Appraisal Process

An appraisal is a professional and unbiased estimate of a home's value. It is conducted by a licensed appraiser who assesses the property based on a combination of factors, including its physical features, the value of comparable homes in the vicinity, and current market trends.



Comparative Market Analysis

By analyzing recent sales of similar properties in the area (known as "comps"), the appraiser gauges the home's value in the context of the local real estate market.

Report Compilation

After the assessment, the appraiser compiles an appraisal report, detailing the property's value and the factors influencing that assessment.

WHAT IF ???

THE APPRAISAL COMES IN LOW?

If the appraisal value is lower than the offer, it can pose challenges. Options include renegotiating the price with the seller, challenging the appraisal, or, in some cases, the buyer might opt to cover the difference in cost.

THE APPRAISAL COMES IN HIGHER

If the appraised value comes in higher than the offer price, it's a bonus for the buyer, indicating they might be getting a deal. However, the seller is under no obligation to adjust the price based on a higher appraisal.

How to Understand Review Purchase Agreements

Ah, the Purchase Agreement – that critical document nestled within the heart of every real estate transaction. It might look daunting with its legal jargon and intricate clauses, but understanding it is imperative for every home buyer. Let's simplify the essence of a Purchase Agreement and help you navigate its contents with confidence.

What is a Purchase Agreement?

In the simplest terms, a Purchase Agreement is a binding contract between the buyer and seller, outlining the terms and conditions of the property sale. It ensures both parties understand their rights and obligations, setting the stage for a smooth transaction.



Key Components to Look For

Property Details

The agreement should clearly identify the property in question, usually by its address and any other relevant descriptors.

Purchase Price

This is the agreed-upon price you'll pay for the property and is typically one of the most prominent details.

Deposit or Earnest Money

This is the good faith money that is held in an escrow account and applied towards closing cost. This can be release in certain scenarios.

Closing Details

The agreement will indicate the target date for closing the sale, as well as the location where the closing will take place.

Inclusions and Exclusions

This section lists items that are included with the property (like appliances or fixtures) and items that are excluded.

Contingencies

These are specific conditions or actions that must be satisfied for the contract to be binding. Common examples include home inspections and financing contingencies.



Role of Escrow

Think of escrow as a neutral third-party guardian that holds onto something of value (usually money) during the transaction process. In real estate, it ensures that all parties play fair, holding funds securely until all conditions are met.



Security

With significant sums involved, you don't want to risk any foul play. Escrow ensures funds are released only when all the terms of the agreement are satisfied.

Peace of Mind

Knowing your money is in safe hands provides an added layer of comfort throughout what can often be a nerve-wracking process.

Opening Escrow

Once you and the seller agree on the terms, an escrow account is opened with a neutral third party.

Deposits

The buyer places the agreed-upon earnest money into the escrow account, signaling their commitment.

Document Verification

The escrow agent verifies that all necessary paperwork, such as loan documents and inspections, is in order.

Closing the Deal

Once all conditions are met, funds are released to the seller, and the title of the property is transferred to the buyer.



Understanding Closing Costs and Fees

As the climax of your home-buying journey approaches, you'll likely hear the term "closing costs." While your primary focus might be on the price of the home, these additional expenses deserve your attention too. Let's unwrap the mystery behind closing costs and those elusive hidden fees.




What Are Closing Costs?

Simply put, closing costs encompass a variety of expenses that are over and above the price of your property. These are incurred during the final stages, or "closing," of your real estate transaction. Typically, closing costs range from 2% to 5% of the purchase price.



Closing Costs

1. **Loan Origination Fees:** *These fees are charged by your lender for processing your mortgage application.*
2. **Appraisal and Survey Fees:** *These fees cover the costs of verifying the home's value and determining the precise property boundaries..*
3. **Title Insurance:** *This one-time fee ensures the property is free from any potential ownership disputes.*
4. **Home Inspection Fees:** *This fee covers the cost of a professional inspection of the property's condition.*
5. **Property Taxes:** *Buyers often need to reimburse sellers for property taxes that have been prepaid.*

- 
1. **Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI):** If your down payment is less than 20% of the home's purchase price, you may be required to obtain PMI. It protects lenders in case a borrower defaults on their mortgage.
 2. **Homeowners Association (HOA) Fees:** If your new home is within a community governed by an HOA, you may have to pay initial fees or dues.
 3. **Credit Report Fee:** Your lender may charge you for the cost of accessing your credit report.
 4. **Notary Fees:** There is often a small fee for the notarization of documents.

The Closing Process: What to Expect?

After months of searching, negotiating, and waiting, you're finally at the finish line: the closing process. It's the last hurdle before the keys to your dream home are in your hands. But what does this final stage entail? Let's demystify the closing process for you, step by step.



What is 'Closing'?

Closing, sometimes referred to as "settlement," marks the formal conclusion of the real estate transaction. This is when property ownership is transferred from the seller to the buyer, and both parties fulfill the terms of their contract.

What Happens on Closing Day?

A lot! Here's a simplified breakdown:

- **Final Walkthrough:** *This is your last chance to inspect the property and ensure any agreed-upon repairs have been made and that the property's condition hasn't changed.*
- **Sign Documents:** *Expect a sea of paperwork. You'll need to sign loan documents, the deed, and multiple disclosures. An attorney or a representative from the title company will be present to guide you.*

Closing DOCUMENTS

The necessary documents for closing on a home may vary depending on your specific situation and location, but here's a general list of documents you can expect during the closing process.



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PROPERTY DEED

- ☐ A legal document that proves ownership of the property. Make sure you have the original or a certified copy

PROPERTY SURVEY

- ☐ A document showing the legal boundaries of the property, including any improvements or encroachments

TITLE INSURANCE POLICY

- ☐ This document protects the buyer and lender against any claims or disputes over the property's title

MORTGAGE PAYOFF STATEMENT

- ☐ A document from your mortgage lender that shows the outstanding balance of your mortgage and any fees associated with paying it off

TRANSFER TAX DECLARATIONS

- ☐ Documents required by local or state authorities for tax purposes when transferring ownership of the property

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION (HOA) DOCUMENTS

- ☐ If applicable, provide the buyer with copies of HOA bylaws, rules, financial statements, and any other relevant documents

PROPERTY TAX STATEMENT

- ☐ A document showing the current property taxes and any unpaid amounts or liens



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UTILITY BILLS

- ☐ Provide copies of recent utility bills to help the buyer understand the costs associated with maintaining the property

HOME WARRANTY

- ☐ If offering a home warranty, provide the buyer with the warranty documentation and contact information for the warranty company

SELLER'S DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

- ☐ A legally required document in which you disclose any known issues or defects with the property

PEST INSPECTION REPORT

- ☐ If required by the buyer or their lender, provide a copy of the pest inspection report

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY OR COMPLIANCE

- ☐ If required by local laws, provide the buyer with the certificate that confirms the property meets local building codes

RECEIPTS FOR REPAIRS OR IMPROVEMENTS

- ☐ Provide the buyer with receipts for any repairs or improvements made to the property, especially those requested during the inspection process

FINAL WALKTHROUGH

- ☐ A list of items the buyer should review during the final walkthrough to ensure the property's condition has not changed since the initial inspection

Closing DOCUMENTS

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CLOSING STATEMENT OR SETTLEMENT STATEMENT

- ☐ A detailed accounting of all the financial transactions between the buyer, seller, and lender, including credits, debits, and the final amount due at closing

BILL OF SALE

- ☐ A document that transfers ownership of any personal property included in the sale, such as appliances, window treatments, or outdoor furniture

KEYS, GARAGE DOOR OPENERS, AND SECURITY CODES

- ☐ Ensure you have all keys, garage door openers, and security codes ready to hand over to the buyer at closing

CONTACT INFORMATION

- ☐ Provide the buyer with a list of important contact information, such as utility companies, local schools, and emergency services

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Testimonials



Matt has sold us a few properties and has been the most professional and kind realtor we've ever dealt with. He helped with our last property and has continued to help after the sale. He has become a friend of ours and we trust him 100%. Matt will give you all of the info you need and do any research you're looking for. He has a massive network and an incredible reputation. We look forward to working with Matt in the future for buying or selling!

—LINDY MARCHESE

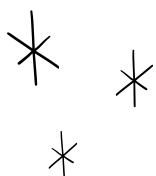
Matt & Carrie went above and beyond to help me get the house listed. I took ALL of their advice, they had no problem helping me prep the house. They were there every step of the way. They aren't just realtors they are friends. They genuinely care about their clients and do what it takes to get the job done. I can't thank you both enough from the bottom of my heart. I would highly recommended them they are super knowledgeable on what's going on in the market. Any questions I had they would get back to me immediately.

—ALBA LIZARRAGA



I had the pleasure of working with The Carpers to sell my old home and purchase my new home, and I highly recommend them to anyone looking to buy or sell a home. They were incredibly knowledgeable about the local market, and took the time to understand my needs and goals. They were always available to answer my questions and provide me with helpful advice. They were also great negotiators, and helped me get the best possible deal on my home. Matt is so helpful and involved that he was helping to do things I never even realized a realtor will help and do for people. I couldn't be happier with my experience working with them, and I would definitely using them again in the future.

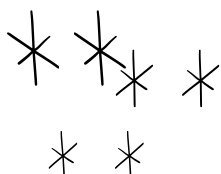
—JULIAN IVEY



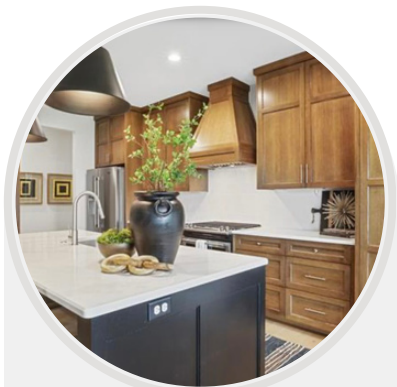
NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines spanning the width of the page, intended for writing notes.





THE
GOOD LIFE
GROUP



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