

ENGEL & VÖLKERS®



Follow Your Dream, Home.

Informed Seller's Guide





ENGEL & VÖLKERS®



The Overall Strategy

A home is often times the largest asset you have. You invested a large sum of your hard-earned money into it and the price you can fetch for your home can have a significant impact on your future, including your ability to purchase your next dream home.

It's more than that- our homes are filled with memories, they serve as the backdrop of the families we've built, the Thanksgivings we've hosted, and the parties we've thrown. All of this adds up to an emotional attachment that can get the best of you, giving you a distorted perception of your home's value. When these emotions surface in the process of selling your home, they can have a very real and negative impact on your bottom line and your real estate agent's ability to achieve the result you want. And of course, it can take its toll on you and make your selling experience downright miserable.

Despite what it sounds like, it is possible for selling your home to be enjoyable. Here are ten strategies we suggest that can help you not just "get through" the experience, but actually thrive and achieve your goals.

Getting Ready To List

As one of the largest assets you have, selling your property for the highest price possible can have a significant impact on your future, including your ability to purchase your next home. The process can be an enjoyable one with a little preparation.

1 Start The Process Early

Selling your home requires you to shift your perspective from that of a “homeowner” to a “home seller.” You’ll need to start thinking objectively and understand that you are selling a product.

2 Find A REALTOR® You Can Trust

Who you choose to partner with is one of the most important decisions you’ll make when selling your home, so finding the right person is essential. They are responsible for aggressively marketing your home, equipping you with the knowledge you need to make informed decisions, negotiating your deal, and guarding your interests.





3

Understand the real costs before you begin

There are costs associated with selling your house including commissions to the real estate agent involved, costs associated with negotiating the sale, and any costs you may incur to fix issues that could come up during a buyer's home inspection.

4

Complete Those Side Projects

First impressions matter – especially to prospective home buyers. The seemingly small issues with your home- like loose doorknobs, broken screen doors, and faulty drains will lead buyers to assume that disrepair carries over to larger items as well so get them squared away before going to market.

Curb appeal is crucial to a good first impression, so make sure your home's lawn is immaculate. Mow the lawn, prune the bushes, weed the garden and plant flowers. A sloppy exterior will make buyers think you've slacked off on interior maintenance as well. Be sure to clean the gutters and pressure wash your siding.

5

De-clutter And Neutralize

Your personal preferences need to take a back seat for a bit while you "stage" your home to win over buyers. This doesn't mean you need to give your home a total makeover or spend a fortune on new furniture, but you do need to create a space that is tasteful, clean, and neutral. You might like your lime green bedroom, but it may sour buyers. Paint your walls a neutral color that will appeal to a wide range of buyers.

Buyers want to envision their belongings in your home. Clean up by renting a storage unit for knick-knacks, photos, extra furniture and other personal items. When showing the home, fill it with inviting smells by putting out fresh flowers or baking cookies.

6

Price Your Home According To The Market

Selling your home for more than you bought it for is every homeowner's dream, but it's not a given. How much your home is worth and will actually sell for depends on the current market – not the price you paid for it or how big you'd like the return to be.

7 Invest In A Pre-List Home Inspection

Typically, a serious buyer will pay to have a home formally inspected with a goal to uncover any potential problems before signing on the dotted line while there's still time to negotiate. But sometimes, sellers will have their homes inspected before they even put them on the market.

A pre-inspection demonstrates a willingness to go beyond what's expected, and that sets you apart from other sellers. You're sending a signal that your house is an "open book," and that you're being upfront about the property. It can save you money in the long run, as a pre-inspection gives you (the seller) a heads-up if there are problems that a potential buyer will likely want repaired. Once you know what's wrong, you can have those issues fixed before you list.

8 Get Out of the House

Staying out of the house during showings and open houses is best for everyone. Prospective buyers are evaluating your home as a potential investment, and they'll feel more comfortable exploring, speaking openly, and visualizing their life in the home without the seller hanging over their shoulder.

9 Be Prepared for Lowball Offers

Any offer is a good offer because it shows interest versus other homes on the market and allows your real estate agent to have a meaningful discussion about the value of your home with other buyers' real estate agent. A few low-ball offers doesn't mean full or over-asking price offers won't come in. Generating offers early in the process is a good thing and pricing based on the market will effectively draw multiple prospects and bids at the right price.

10 Let Your Agent Do Their Job

You hired your REALTOR® for their expertise and knowledge. Share your goals with them, work together to build a game plan to achieve those goals, and then trust them to get the job done. If you can support their strategy, have realistic expectations, and focus your emotional energy on finding your next dream home, you'll experience much less stress and hopefully find joy in the entire process.



The Benefits of a Pre-List Inspection

A Worth-While Investment

Typically, a serious buyer will pay to have a home formally inspected, but it may be worthwhile as a seller to consider one prior to even listing your home. Here are three reasons why a pre-inspection may be a good idea.

It Shows Your Home Is An “Open Book”

A pre-inspection is a goodwill gesture. It demonstrates a willingness to go beyond what’s expected, and that sets you apart from other sellers. You’re sending a signal that your house is an “open book,” and that you’re being upfront about the property. All of this can give potential buyers peace of mind and confidence.

It Can Highlight Your Home’s Assets

Assuming you’re not trying to sell a fixer-upper, a pre-inspection can shine a spotlight on your home’s selling points, such as any electrical upgrades you might have had made.

When Not To Have A Pre-Inspection

If you’re trying to offload a fixer-upper that will undoubtedly require a significant amount of repair items, there’s no point in paying for a pre-inspection. As a seller, you also have the option to sell your property “AS IS.”

It can save you money in the long run.

A pre-inspection gives you (the seller) a heads-up if there are problems that a potential buyer will likely want repaired. Once you know what’s wrong, you can have those issues fixed before you list. The cleaner and more problem-free you can make your home, the faster it’s likely to sell. Because a pre-inspection lets buyers know what they’re getting from the beginning, they can factor any needed repairs into an offer.

On the other hand, let’s say you don’t have a pre-inspection. During escrow, if the buyer’s inspector discovers problems you didn’t know about, you can be sure the buyer will try to negotiate a lower price, which will cost you money and can delay the sale. The buyer might even cancel the contract.



Sellers Property Disclosure Statement

Keeping You Protected

Although Georgia law does not require a seller to fill out a specific disclosure form, the law does require a seller to inform a buyer about any known material (important) defects in the condition of the home, and the seller must honestly answer a buyer's questions about the home. Buyers might ask about anything from what repairs you've done in the past, to how your dealings with the neighbors have been. Attempting to confuse the buyer or purposefully be unclear can lead to lawsuits later, so it's best to be honest and open.

Georgia courts have generally held that a defect is "material" if the buyer would consider it material; that is, if known to a prospective buyer, it would cause that person to not buy the property, or to pay less for it- such as, for instance, the fact that it was built on unstable ground. As a general rule, in order to prevent later accusations of misrepresentation or fraud from a buyer, you should be up front, answer the buyer's questions, and tell the buyer about any problems you are aware of regarding the condition of the home by filling out the Seller's Property Disclosure Statement.

In addition to Georgia's requirement that a seller must disclose any known defects in the home to a buyer, federal law has additional disclosure requirements. If you are selling a home built prior to 1978 (before entering into a purchase and sale agreement), you must disclose to the buyer any known lead-based paint hazards in the home.

If a seller fails to disclose important known facts about the condition of the house, the buyer may have a cause of action against you for fraud, misrepresentation, or breach of contract. If successful, the buyer may be entitled to rescind the contract (with rescission, the court attempts to put the parties involved back in the positions they were in prior to entering into the contract. For example, you'd be required to reimburse the buyer the price of the home plus expenses and you'd get the home back). Or the buyer might elect to receive damages- in which case, the buyer keeps the home, but you'd be required to compensate the buyer for its reduced value because of the defect or pay the costs of repairing the defect.

Market Oriented Valuation

Assessing Your Home's Value

A Market-Oriented Valuation performed by your Engel & Völkers Advisor is an essential part of the services we provide. It is the most accurate assessment of your home's value based on data and information that includes current and historical real estate activity in your market.

Finding the best buyer for a home is to expose it to the largest number of potential buyers. The market dictates the amount of attention a home will receive based on its listed price. Pricing above market value will get the attention of fewer potential buyers; Pricing at or below market value will attract more buyers.

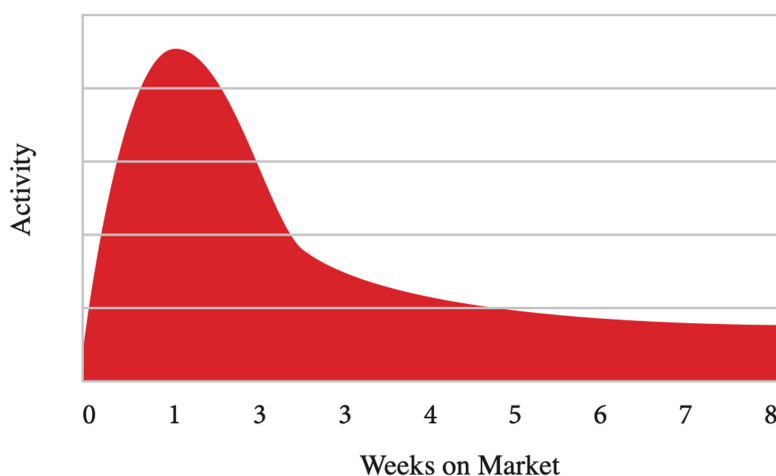


- Accurate pricing based on comparative market analysis is key to achieving the best possible value from the sale of your home.
- Homes priced slightly higher than its perceived value will reduce the number of interested potential buyers.
- Starting with an accurate price from the outset will yield the highest results.
- Interest in a home new to the market drops significantly the longer the home remains on the market.
- Detailed knowledge of the local market provides insight in the buyer's perception of the home's value.
- The longer a property remains on the market the less of a chance in finding an interested buyer.
- The portion of the price related to home improvements will typically be less than the actual cost.
- An offer will typically be lower than the listed price but can be negotiated higher since an offer also signifies that a connection to the home has already been made.



The Importance of Correct Pricing

Statistics show that interest and excitement are highest within the first four weeks on the market. With the higher level of interest comes the best opportunity to communicate the value of the property and to ultimately sell it. Preparation and, especially pricing, are crucial in capitalizing on this initial exposure. As weeks pass (and without the added recognition as a “new listing”) interest falls and reintroducing the home at an adjusted price typically does not receive the same attention as the first four weeks. When a property is first listed it generates a very high level of interest from prospective buyers which reduces dramatically over time. It is important to be priced correctly from the beginning, during the peak of the curve.



Pricing your property correctly the first time is the most important part of the listing process. Overpricing your house in the belief that you can reduce the price back later is a strategy that can backfire badly. For example, by the time you reduce your price, you may miss out on a surge of interest in properties like yours. Also, if prices are lowered, buyers may wonder if there’s something wrong with the property that kept other buyers away.



Establishing Market Value

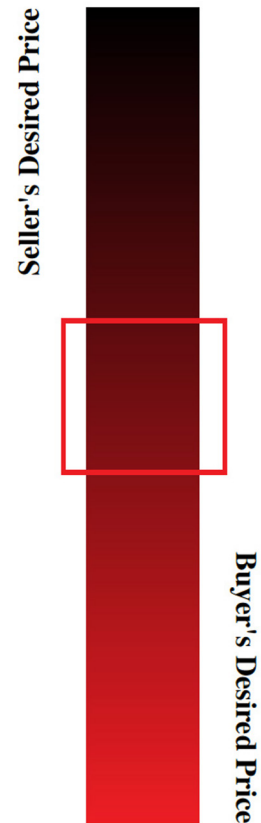
When setting a price for your property, the listing level must strike a balance between the seller's need to achieve the best possible return and the buyer's need to get good value. With many years of experience, we can help you set a price that will accomplish both objectives.

Your Market Value

The market value of your property is determined exactly the same way as any other commodity – what a buyer is willing to pay for it in today's market. Despite the price you paid originally, or the value of any improvements you may have made, the value is determined by market forces.

Look At The Competition

Buyers look at about a dozen properties on average before making an offer on a property. As a result, they have a good overview of the market and will compare your property against the competition. If it's not in line with similar properties that are available, buyers won't consider it good value for money.



Your Custom Marketing Plan

Strategy and Promotion

With a full understanding of your home's position in the market and a pricing strategy to meet your goal within an acceptable timeframe, our marketing team will go to work in developing and executing a custom strategy to promote your home to target audiences. Professional photographers will capture images of your home that will leap out of the pages of world-class publications where Engel & Völkers ads are placed, and our designers and copywriters work together to build your campaigns which may include direct mail, online advertising, social media posts and exposés appearing in shops throughout our international network.

Our full-service marketing and advertising includes professional and high-quality creative work, advertisements in local, national and international publications, preferred placements, branding on top real estate search sites, social media and public relations. Through our exclusive media partnerships, your listing has elite access in the worlds' most notable digital and print publications such as Wall Street Journal, Mansion Global, James Edition, New York Times, Juwaii, International Herald Tribune and more.

Public Relations

Our relationships with the world’s leading publications, local magazines, newspapers and our ongoing public relations activities ensure all around maximum exposure for our listings in print. Engel & Völkers has maintained special arrangements for years that allow our properties heightened exposure in local, national and international print publications.

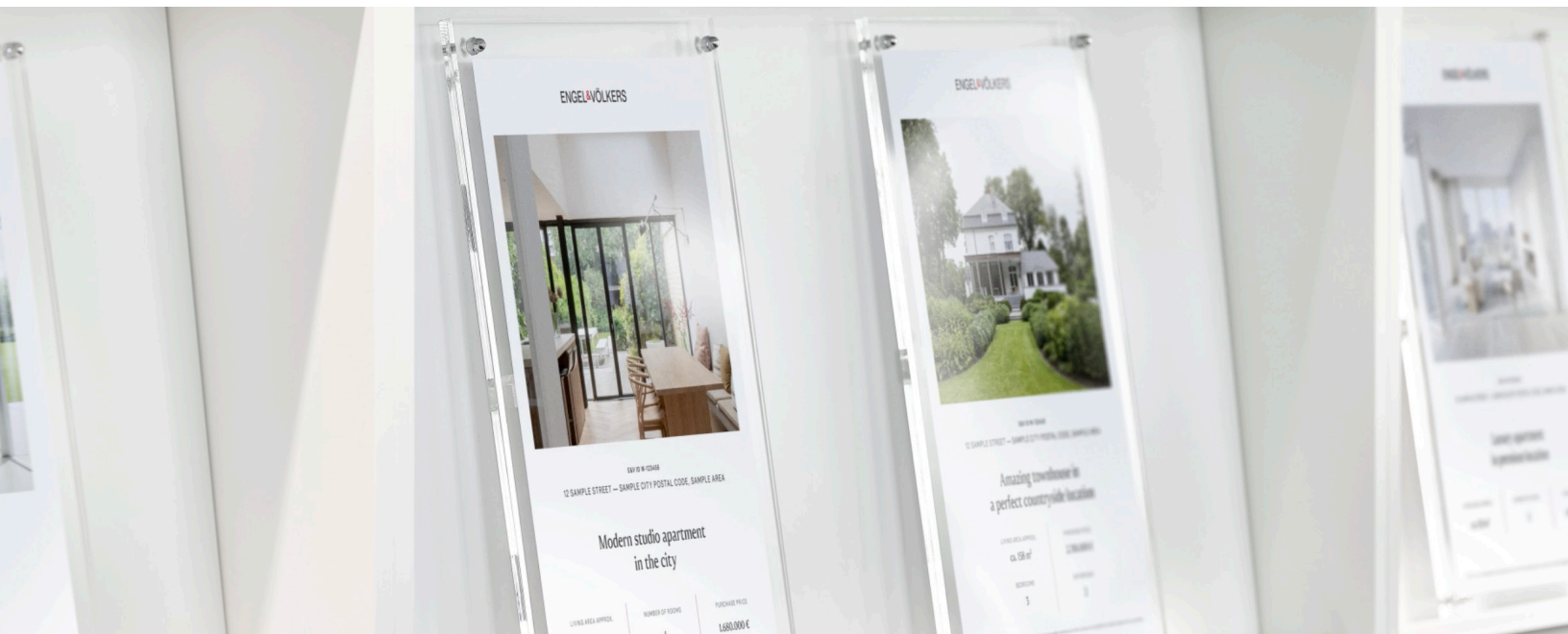


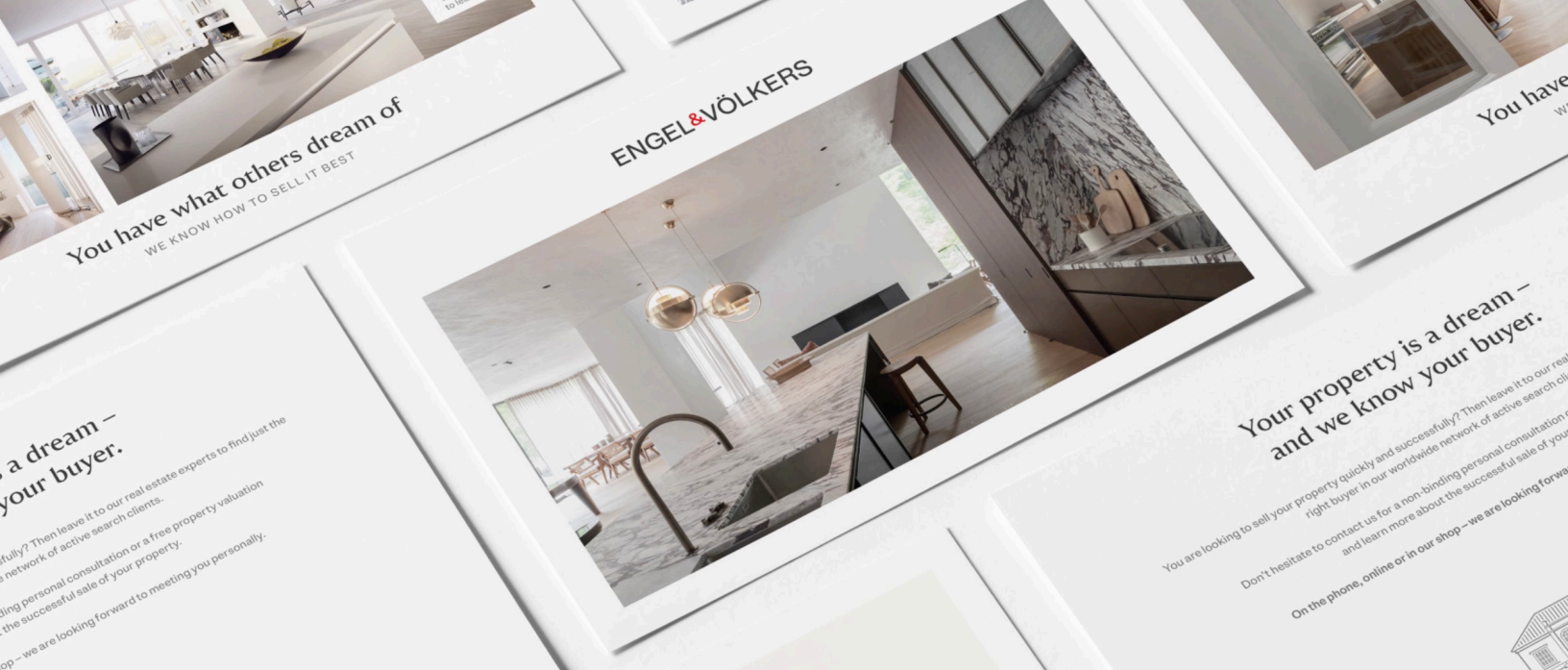
Sustained Credibility and Awareness

Sustained credibility of our brand and properties come from these articles, features and broadcasts from the world’s most well-regarded news outlets- through efforts generated from our Engel & Völkers North America headquarters in New York City and our global communications division in our corporate office in Hamburg.

Exclusive Local and Global Connections

We reach out regularly to reporters, editors and producers on an ongoing basis to keep them apprised of our latest listings and company news. News stories about the properties we have listed and about our brand have appeared in The New York Times, The International New York Times, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, in major metropolitan news media in markets throughout North America as well as in major outlets throughout Europe and Asia.

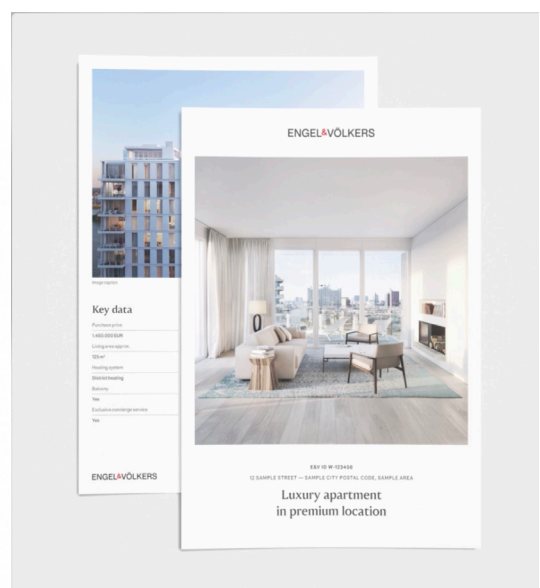




Distinctive Deliverables

Our team executes based on a thoughtful marketing approach, which is custom-tailored for each unique client and each unique property. We ensure your property has online exposure in all major markets, which is imperative for selling property to today's digital-savvy and often international clientele.

- Targeted Print & Digital Outreach
- Social Media Campaigns
- 3D Matterport Tours
- Network of Online Partnerships
- GG Magazine Exclusive Features
- Photography & Videography



Showing Your Home

Now that you've scrutinized, staged, and scrubbed down your property, the showings will begin. While your property may be in immaculate shape, it is important to follow some unwritten etiquette rules sellers should follow to show their home in the best possible light.



Expectations of Showings

Sometimes agents make showings by appointment and other times a lockbox will be placed on your house. Through a lockbox, your agent will electronically receive information about who is showing your property, when, and any additional contact information associated with the showing.

Leave During Showings

Buyers are less comfortable when homeowners are watching their every move. They are trying to picture themselves living in your property, so it is important that you give them privacy to experience your house.

Take Your Pets with You

In addition to having allergies, some home shoppers may not be in the market for a run-in with an unfamiliar animal. Taking your pup with you will alleviate the potential your pet may not love the idea of strangers in your home, either.

Move Your Car

Make it easy for visitors to park and view the home. No one likes parking issues and a potential buyer having parking issues during a showing is a sure way to get a viewing off to a bad start.

Lay Out Important Documents

If questions arise while buyers are on the premises, it may help them decide to put in an offer that much faster if they can find answers quickly and in writing. Leave out the home inspection report, appraisal, home warranty, etc. so that people considering your home can review.

Offer Some Refreshments

Putting out a few small, bottled waters in a small bowl of ice is always appreciated, along with some light, easy grab-and-go sort of refreshments like mints or cookies.

Be Patient Waiting for Feedback

Buyers often want to process what they've seen and think it over before making an offer. It is reasonable to ask for feedback from your real estate agent after the showing, but understand it may take a day or two for the buyer's agent to respond.

Lock Up Valuables

Although buyers will be accompanied by real estate agents, it is still best to protect your valuables by locking them up safely. This includes jewelry, credit cards, money and checks and is especially important during open houses.

No-Shows

Unfortunately, there will be times when buyers schedule a showing and do not show up. There could be many reasons for a "no-show". Keep an open mind and remember sometimes unexpected things come up.

Navigating the Contract Process

Agreements Between Buyer & Seller

Coming to an agreement on price and terms between the seller and the buyer is the first step. Generally, the buyer makes an offer, and the seller will either accept it or issue a counteroffer. This counteroffer procedure might involve just one counter, or it can evolve into a multitude of counteroffers back and forth over a period of time. At some point, however, there's a meeting of the minds. The listing status then changes from an active listing to a pending sale. Some agents put a sign up in the yard that says "pending" or "under contract." But your house is not yet sold just because this happens.



Binding Agreement Date

The Binding Agreement Date is the day on which all of the timelines and deadlines for the contract contingencies begin, such as the due diligence period, the financing contingency period, and the appraisal contingency period.

Earnest Money

Earnest Money is a deposit made to a seller indicating the buyer's good faith in the purchase and is typically 1-3% of the purchase price. The earnest money paid is put toward the buyer's down payment when the transaction is finalized. The transaction is usually finalized after inspections are done and the buyer secures a mortgage with the bank.

The Purchase and Sale Agreement

The Georgia residential Purchase and Sale Agreement is a contract that legally binds two parties (seller and buyer) together for the purpose of making a transaction of a residential property. This contract covers all the pertinent information regarding the transaction including price, financing terms, rights and obligations of both parties, and a closing clause. Should any problems arise during the sale, the agreement exists to mediate the situation and ensure the transaction is fair to both parties. Once the agreement has been signed, it may not be terminated unless both parties agree.

Due Diligence

The buyer may elect to perform inspections on the property as part of the Due Diligence period defined in the contract. These inspections must be completed by a number of days specified under "buyer's right to terminate" in the standard purchase and sale agreement contract. The amount of time of the due diligence is an agreed upon time between the buyer and seller.

The Appraisal

Another inspection is the appraisal. This is usually required by the bank if a buyer is obtaining financing. If the appraisal is lower than the contracted price, most lenders will decline to offer the buyer a loan. In this instance, the buyer and seller may renegotiate to the lower appraised price.

2023 Purchase & Sale Agreement Sample

PURCHASE AND SALE AGREEMENT
ENGLVÖLKERS
2023 Printing
A. KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS
1. Property Identification
2. Parties
3. Purpose of the Agreement
4. Closing Date and Possession
5. Financing
6. Earnest Money
7. Inspection and Due Diligence
8. Representations and Warranties
9. Taxes and Fees
10. Title and Encumbrances

B. FURTHER EXPLANATION TO CORRESPONDING PARAGRAPHS IN SECTION A
1. Purpose and Scope
2. Definitions
3. Assurances
4. Title and Encumbrances
5. Closing
6. Financing
7. Inspection and Due Diligence
8. Representations and Warranties
9. Taxes and Fees
10. Title and Encumbrances

6. Holder of Earnest Money
7. Assignment
8. Inspection and Due Diligence
9. Taxes and Fees
10. Title and Encumbrances

11. Lead-Based Paint Hazard Evaluation
12. Seller's Disclosure
13. Seller's Representations and Warranties
14. Buyer's Representations and Warranties
15. Closing
16. Assignment
17. Inspection and Due Diligence
18. Taxes and Fees
19. Title and Encumbrances

10. Title and Encumbrances
11. Lead-Based Paint Hazard Evaluation
12. Seller's Disclosure
13. Seller's Representations and Warranties
14. Buyer's Representations and Warranties
15. Closing
16. Assignment
17. Inspection and Due Diligence
18. Taxes and Fees
19. Title and Encumbrances

18. Taxes and Fees
19. Title and Encumbrances
20. Assignment
21. Inspection and Due Diligence
22. Taxes and Fees
23. Title and Encumbrances

1. Nature of Binding Agreement
2. Assurances
3. Title and Encumbrances
4. Closing
5. Assignment
6. Inspection and Due Diligence
7. Taxes and Fees
8. Title and Encumbrances

1. Nature of Binding Agreement
2. Assurances
3. Title and Encumbrances
4. Closing
5. Assignment
6. Inspection and Due Diligence
7. Taxes and Fees
8. Title and Encumbrances

By Signing this Agreement, Buyer and Seller acknowledge that they have read and understood this Agreement and agree to its terms.
Buyer's Signature
Seller's Signature
Buyer's Address
Seller's Address
Buyer's Phone Number
Seller's Phone Number
Buyer's Email Address
Seller's Email Address



A Buyer's Appraisal

A home appraisal is an unbiased estimate of the true (or fair market) value of what a home is worth. All lenders order an appraisal during the mortgage loan process so that there is an objective way to assess the home's market value and ensure that the amount of money requested by the borrower is appropriate. An appraiser may not know of all of the improvements or repairs that you as a homeowner have made; an easy task to communicate this to the appraiser is for an owner to do is complete a one-pager with all of this information. If an appraisal comes in below contract price, a Seller will have to lower the price of the house to sell.

Here are a few quick fixes for improving the value of your home your agent should have told you by D. Scott Murphy, Appraiser.

- Landscaping
- Paint
- Wash Your Windows
- Update Hardware Throughout the House
- Remove any Personal Items
- De-Clutter
- Maximize Potential Bedroom Options
- Upgrade Your Driveway
- Add Insulation, Weather Stripping, or other Energy Conservation Projects
- Install Closet Organization Systems

The Inspection

10 Most Common Issues that Arise During Inspection

As a component of the Purchase and Sale Agreement, a Buyer has the right to inspect your property during their due diligence. Preparing for the home inspection is important as it prepares you for any issues that may arise as a result. Identifying any items that need repaired prior to a Buyer discovering them better positions you to deal with possible negotiations that may arise after the initial contract has been negotiated. The Seller is not obligated to agree to pay for repairs- these items are all negotiable. Additionally, if mold or radon is found within the home, the Buyer could request re-mediation of these items as well. Here are the ten most common issues that arise during a home inspection.

1. Faulty Wiring

Worn or outdated systems and homeowner additions are the most common defects, especially in older homes. Electrical system problems are safety related and require immediate attention.

2. Roof Problems

Improperly installed and aged surfaces occur frequently. We also see poorly installed or missing flashing at transition areas. Repairs may be simple, or the entire roof may need to be replaced. Follow up any adverse roofing system findings with an evaluation by a competent roofer.

3. Heating/Cooling System Defects

Improper installations, inadequate maintenance and aged components are common.

4. Plumbing Issues

The most common defects are leaking, outdated or problematic systems such as polybutylene. Repairs can often be made, but on occasion total system replacement is the only solution.

5. Inadequate Insulation and Ventilation in Attic

Poor insulation and poor ventilation cause excessive utility costs and lack of occupant comfort.

6. Whole House Is Poorly Maintained

Deferred maintenance represents a potential high-cost situation to bring the home back into condition. If the homeowner did not properly care for the home, someone will need to later.

7. Poor Drainage Around the Structure

Water needs to drain away from the structure at its perimeter to prevent water intrusion. Roof gutters and downspouts can sometimes be added to rectify site drainage problems.

8. Air and Water Penetrating Cracks And Window Perimeters At Exterior

Structure cracks and separations at windows can allow water into wall cavities, which is conducive to mold growth.

9. Minor Structural Damage

Cut and broken trusses are often seen in attic cavities and on occasion we also see structural components missing. Usually repairs are needed, however we find it is rarely an imminent safety hazard.

10. Potential Environmental Problems

Signs of mold growth represents the latest environmental scare. Homebuyers should consider a complete environmental evaluation of the property before buying.

Potential Issues During Inspection

Mold

Mold is a type of fungus, and there are thousands of species of mold in houses, ranging from the mold that grows on bread and fruit to the mold that tends to populate humid spaces. Some types of mold are more toxic than others, and consistent exposure to large quantities of mold can cause health problems such as breathing difficulties, coughing and worsening asthma. These symptoms are more likely to occur in people with compromised immune systems and those who have allergies or asthma. Brief exposure to mold is unlikely to cause serious problems, but you'll need to get the mold removed from the home as soon as possible to be safe.

Mold grows in moisture, and small amounts of mold are common in basements, near unsealed windows, under air conditioning units and other damp areas. If you find mold in an obviously damp area, it's probably just a sign that the area has not been properly cared for. Sometimes mold can indicate a prior problem with the house, such as a flood. If there is a large, visible overgrowth of mold, it's important to find out what caused the mold. Mold could be your first clue that there's another serious problem with the home.

There's no right or wrong answer as to purchasing a home with mold issues, however it can add a few sales complications. Not every home has a mold problem or is at risk of developing one. Every home has mold in small quantities – it's normal. The possibility for serious mold growth depends solely on moisture accumulation. Bathrooms and other poorly ventilated, moisture-prone rooms, attics, basements/ crawlspaces, behind water heaters, and other high-humidity or water damaged areas are all prime locations for mold growth.

If you see mold or mold pops-up in an inspection, it is well worth the money for testing and a re-remediation quote. You should also plan on postponing your move-in date until after cleanup. Rest assured, addressing the issue is often far easier and less expensive to resolve than people realize. Do your due diligence before putting in an offer – and offer accordingly. Mold does effect appraisal value and is often a surprising 'find' during inspection as both sellers and buyers tend to overlook eyeballing basements, crawlspaces, and attics for mold issues.

Potential Issues During Inspection

Radon

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that is produced by decaying uranium. It is present in nearly all soils, and very low levels of radon are found in the air we breathe every day. The problem occurs when radon gas enters your home and gets trapped. Long-term exposure to high levels of radon can cause lung cancer. The gas moves from the soil into a home. Although it can seep directly through pores in concrete, the worst entry points are gaps in walls and floors. Any house, of any age, in any state can have elevated radon levels. It really depends on the way your specific house interacts with the surrounding soil. Your neighbor's radon level may differ significantly from yours.

Testing is the only way to know your home's radon levels. There are no immediate symptoms that will alert you to the presence of radon. It typically takes years of exposure before any problems surface. The US EPA, Surgeon General, American Lung Association, American Medical Association, and National Safety Council recommend testing your home for radon because testing is the only way to know your home's radon levels.

Radon is a national environmental health problem. Elevated radon levels have been discovered in every state. The US EPA estimates that as many as 8 million homes throughout the country have elevated levels of radon. Current state surveys show that 1 home in 5 has elevated radon levels.

Stucco

Stucco siding is a type of hand-troweled masonry plaster consisting of cement, water, and sand. Due to its brittle nature, stucco siding will crack if a house foundation settles. It simply isn't the best choice in regions where soil is high in clay, notorious for swelling and causing foundations to shift. Over time, even stucco on homes with firm foundations can develop hairline cracks. While small cracks won't affect the integrity of the siding and can often be repaired without calling a pro, cracks of 1/4-inch or wider spell trouble such as water intrusion, unsealed bottom edges of foam, gaps around decorative trim, and windows and doors that are not flashed and caulked. Water intrusion can lead to even bigger problems. As time goes on, these homes may be prone to larger cracks and/or chunks of stucco falling off, and the only real option is to have the faulty siding removed and replaced by a reputable contractor.



Potential Issues During Inspection

Lead-Based Paint

If your house, townhouse or condominium was built before 1978, there is a good chance it has lead-based paint. In 1978, the federal government banned consumer uses of lead-containing paint, but some states banned it even earlier. Lead from paint, including lead-contaminated dust, is one of the most common causes of lead poisoning.

Lead paint is still present in millions of homes, sometimes under layers of newer paint. If the paint is in good shape, the lead paint is usually not a problem. Deteriorating lead-based paint (peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking, damaged, or damp) is a hazard and needs immediate attention. It may also be a hazard when found on surfaces that children can chew or that get a lot of wear-and-tear, such as windows and window sills, doors and door frames, and stairs, railings, banisters, and porches.

Be sure to keep all paint in excellent shape and clean up dust frequently. Lead dust can also be tracked into the home from soil outside that is contaminated by deteriorated exterior lead-based paint and other lead sources, such as industrial pollution and past use of leaded gasoline. Renovation, repair, or painting activities can create toxic lead dust when painted surfaces are disturbed or demolished.

Termites

Termites typically are small-white-soft-bodied insects, which feed on wood. When signs of termite infestation are not noticed earlier, the damage can escalate to a higher level, which can affect the structure of the building. Most people see the termites when they have caused structural damage, which may cost them thousands to repair. It is essential for a property owner to beware of the termite infestation as early as possible to avoid losses in the future, as they can put preventive measures in place or seek pesticides to kill termites. Mitigating termite damage is possible but can be quite costly.

A termite letter is not required by law in Georgia. Up until a few years ago, the seller always provided the termite letter. Present day, the lender is the one whom decides if one is needed or not; it is common for buyers to add a stipulation that the seller provide either a termite letter or proof of bond. It costs, on average, \$45 to obtain a termite letter. It is money well spent, and you should order one to be sure you are safe from termites. The price of a Termite Bond may run between \$500 and \$2000 dollars which is a one-time cost.

Potential Issues During Inspection

Polybutylene Pipe

Polybutylene is a form of plastic resin that was used extensively in the manufacture of water supply piping from 1978 until 1995. Due to the low cost of the material and ease of installation, polybutylene piping systems were viewed as “the pipe of the future” and were used as a substitute for traditional copper piping.

You can sometimes tell if you have Polybutylene pipes as underground water mains are usually blue but may be gray or black (do not confuse black poly with polyethylene pipe). It is usually 1/2” or 1” in diameter, and it may be found entering your home through the basement wall or floor, concrete slab coming up through your crawlspace; frequently it enters the home near the water heater. Your main shutoff valve is attached to the end of the water main. You should also check at the water meter that is located at the street, near the city water main. It is wise to check at both ends of the pipe because we have found cases where copper pipe enters the home, and poly pipe is at the water meter. Obviously, both pipes were used and connected somewhere underground.

Interior Polybutylene pipes used inside your home can be found near the water heater, running across the ceiling in unfinished basements, and coming out of the walls to feed sinks and toilets. In some regions of the country, plumbers used copper “stub outs” where the pipe exits a wall to feed a fixture, so seeing copper here does not mean that you do not have poly.

While scientific evidence is scarce, it is believed that oxidants in the public water supplies, such as chlorine, react with the polybutylene piping and acetal fittings causing them to scale and flake and become brittle. Micro-fractures result, and the basic structural integrity of the system is reduced. Thus, the system becomes weak and may fail without warning causing damage to the building structure and personal property. It is believed that other factors may also contribute to the failure of polybutylene systems, such as improper installation, but it is virtually impossible to detect installation problems throughout an entire system.

There is virtually no maintenance of the piping required of the homeowner, but leaks can occur at the pipe joints. In most cases, the resolution is the replacement of the pipes.

The Closing

What Comes Next

Closing is when the house buyer and seller fulfill all of the agreements made in the sales contract. In more literal terms, it is about the transfer of money and documents so that you, the seller, can transfer ownership and possession of the property free and clear to the buyer. Also, you will pay off all loans that you are still carrying on the house and pay all of the parties who contributed documents or services to facilitate the sale and closing.

A closing is often called “settlement” because the seller, together with the buyer, the buyer’s lender, the sales agents, and the seller’s lender, are “settling up” among yourselves and all of the other parties who have provided services or documents to the transaction. In Georgia, closings are handled by attorneys. In a cash purchase, the attorney represents the Buyer. When the Buyer is obtaining a loan, the attorney represents the lender. To avoid conflict, the attorney handling the closing may not represent any other parties of the transaction. If the Buyer/Borrower wants legal representation, they would need to hire independent counsel.

Seller’s Tasks

- Maintain the house in good condition
- Negotiate and perhaps repair something the buyer’s inspector finds
- Notify your utility companies of a final service date
- Prepare to Move



Closing Day

The day your home transaction closes is the day your deed is sent to be filed at the county courthouse. You and the buyer will sign a stack of closing documents. All bills will be paid, such as agent commissions, mortgage payoffs, and down payments. You will receive a proceeds check if one is due to you. The buyer receives the keys, remotes for the garage doors, and possibly receipts from any work agreed to be done. Don't forget to gather warranty and instruction books for heating, cooling, and plumbing systems and for appliances that will stay with the house. Leave them for the buyer when you move out.

Here are a few quick notes to remember on closing day as it pertains to your tasks as a seller and what to bring to closing.

What to Bring

- The deed to your home, if the home is paid off and has no mortgage or liens
- Photo ID – a driver's license or passport
- A certified check, if required, in the amount told to you by escrow
- The keys and security codes for the house



What the Seller Pays at Closing

What the seller pays at closing depends partly on local law and practice, and partly on the terms negotiated in the sales contract. Just remember that the contract rules. You can't decide you don't want to pay something that was already agreed to by both parties and written in your contract — unless you can get your buyer to agree. Of course, that means amending the paperwork, which could mean delaying the closing. Some expenses may include:

- Typical seller expenses
- The outstanding mortgage
- Real estate commissions
- Property taxes, utility bills, homeowner's insurance, and condominium dues, if any are due (most of this is prorated at closing)
- Escrow, title and/or attorney fees
- Home warranty

Whatever you agreed to pay at closing is deducted from your selling price or proceeds, that is, unless your sales price doesn't cover the total cost of paying off your loan and the other costs of sale.



Your Moving Checklist

It's a given that moving can be stressful. However, if you cross off the items on the following checklist as you go, your advance planning will pay off. The following pages consist of a checklist you'll need to prepare for your move.

8 Weeks Before the Move

- **Get organized:** Set aside a folder or file where you can put all your move-related paperwork. Dedicate a notebook as your moving notebook for all your notes.
- **Start sorting:** Decide what to keep, discard or donate. If you're moving to a smaller place, be aggressive in your decision making.
- **Research moving companies:** Go online to search for moving companies with positive reviews. Ask friends and family if they have any references for moving companies. Take a week or two to research. You're not in rush-mode quite yet.

7 Weeks Before the Move

- **Get supplies:** Buy packing materials: boxes, tape, markers and bubble wrap.
- **Plan a garage sale:** As you go through your possessions, you'll find things you don't want to move. It's a perfect time to lighten your load. In the process, you'll make a few bucks at the garage sale to spend on moving expenses.

6 Weeks Before the Move

- **Notify Schools:** If you have kids, tell the staff at their schools of the impending move. Get copies of their school records and look into the enrollment process at the schools near your new residence.
- **Medical Records:** Check with your doctor to get copies of your family's medical records.

5 Weeks Before the Move

- **Book a moving company:** Thanks to your research, you are ready to pick your movers. Pick a company you feel confident with and confirm the date, time, and details of your move.

4 Weeks Before the Move

- **Start packing non-essentials:** Begin boxing up the things you won't need right away. Make sure to label the boxes.
- **Notify your landlord:** If you're moving from a rental, let your landlord know. Find out when you can have your security deposit returned.
- **Notify your building:** If you are moving to or from a condominium building which requires scheduling of elevators, be sure to set this up.

3 Weeks Before the Move

- **Strategize your food situation:** Use up food items that you don't want to move. Plan ahead to have nothing left in your freezer by your move date. Same goes for your pantry - make a plan to consume anything that's already open.
- **Pets and plants:** Make arrangements to get your animals and plants to your new home.
- **Change your address:** Complete a change of address form on the USPS website. Notify banks and credit cards of your new address.
- **Transfer insurance:** If your current home is covered, check with your agent to transfer the policy to your new home.
- **Take care of your car:** Have your car serviced, especially if you're embarking on a long-distance move. Check with your car insurance company about transferring your policy.

2 Weeks Before the Move

- **Pack with a vengeance:** Now's the time to start boxing up most everything left in your home. Again, make sure to label everything to ensure a smooth transition to your new place.
- **Coordinate your valuables:** If you have jewelry, heirlooms or other valuable items, sequester them from the main move. You don't want valuable items mixed up with your other packed items. Keep them in a safe place so you can transport them yourself.
- **Notify utilities:** Start the process of closing out utility service at your current place and getting utilities set up at your new residence.
- **Make a clean move:** If your new place needs a thorough cleaning, make arrangements to have it scrubbed before you arrive.
- **At your disposal:** Properly dispose of any items that can't be moved such as cleaning materials, propane, or paint.



1 Week Before the Move

- **Confirm and confirm again:** Check in with your mover to confirm the time and date of the move.
- **Pack an essential kit:** Prepare a suitcase with items you will need right away at your new place. Take it with you. Don't load it on the truck.

1 Day Before the Move

- **Keep important documents handy:** Make sure to have any documents related to the move at the ready.
- **Defrost and clear:** Clean out your empty fridge and freezer. Check your cupboards and pantry for any open food items.

Moving Day

- **Work with your movers:** Help your movers by identifying fragile or large items right away. Be there when the movers load your items onto the truck. You'll be responsible for verifying that they loaded everything, so it's vital that you're there to coordinate and answer questions. Sign the bill of lading when you're satisfied that everything is accounted for.
- **One final sweep:** Before the movers pull away, do a final check of your home to make sure nothing was left behind.



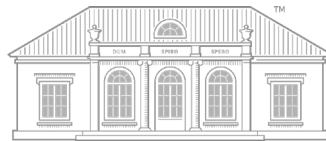
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Congratulations On Your Closing!

As you begin to settle into your next dream home, remember that your Engel & Völkers Advisor is here to guide and support you in any way they can, even beyond your closing. We look forward to assisting you.

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