

BEFORE YOU LIST ANYTHING

What should be happening—
whether you're the one doing it
or the one hiring it

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1. What Isn't Checked... Becomes a Problem Later

Before a home is listed, the details should be understood—not assumed.

Additions.

Decks.

Finished basements.

Conversions that “have always been that way.”

These aren't just features. They're records.

And those records don't live in one place.

They live with the building department,
the Board of Health,
and the assessor's office.

Too often, this step is skipped—not intentionally, but because no one slows down long enough to look.

And everything feels fine... until something doesn't line up later.

A buyer asks a question.

An attorney reviews the file.

An appraiser flags a discrepancy.

Or a deeper issue surfaces—

((a home presented as five bedrooms is only approved for three based on septic capacity, or taxes that reflect long-standing exemptions—not what a new owner will actually pay)

Now what could have been handled quietly at the beginning becomes a negotiation point in the middle.

Or worse—an issue at the end.

What to Do Instead

- Visit (or contact) the local building department
- Review permits and certificates of completion
- Confirm whether any violations exist—and if they are open or closed
- Check with the Board of Health for septic approvals and bedroom count
- Verify property taxes with the assessor—understand exemptions and what a buyer should expect
- Compare what exists to what is officially documented
- Ask questions when something doesn't match
- Address open permits, violations, or discrepancies early

Preparation isn't about doing more.

It's about doing the right things early—
so they don't become bigger problems later.

2. Speed Isn't Strategy

There's a quiet pressure to move quickly once the decision to sell is made.

Get the photos done.

Pick a price.

Get it live.

It can feel productive. Even exciting.

But speed—on its own—isn't a strategy.

Because what often gets rushed in those early days are the very things that determine how the rest of the process unfolds.

Details are skimmed over.

Decisions are made without enough context.

Preparation is reduced to "good enough."

And for a moment, everything feels fine.

Until it isn't.

Showings slow down.

Feedback doesn't align.

Adjustments become necessary—publicly.

And now the process becomes reactive instead of intentional.

Moving quickly isn't the issue.

Moving without clarity is.

What to Do Instead

- Give yourself enough time to prepare—rushing to market rarely creates a better outcome
- Review comparable sales in detail, not just at a glance
- Walk the home with a critical eye—pay attention to what a buyer will notice first (cluttered countertops and refrigerator magnets distract and pull attention away from the space)
- Look beyond what you're used to seeing—what feels normal to you may stand out to someone else
- Decide what truly impacts first impression, and address only what matters
- Set a pricing strategy with intention—not as a test
- Plan your launch so each step builds on the next

A few extra days of preparation won't cost you.

But rushing past important decisions often will.

3. Knowing the House Is Part of the Job

A home isn't just what you see when you walk through it.

It's how it functions.
How it's been maintained.
What's been updated—and what hasn't.

And yet, too often, a property is brought to market based on surface-level understanding.

That's not enough.

Because questions don't come from what's obvious—
they come from what's unclear.

A buyer will ask.
An inspector will note.
An attorney will review.

And when the answers aren't there—or are guessed—
confidence begins to erode.

Not all at once.

Quietly.

What to Do Instead

- Know the home's updates and history—not just broadly, but specifically
- Review the age and condition of major systems (roof, HVAC, septic, well, etc.)
- Walk the home slowly and intentionally—note anything that may raise a question later
 - (When was the addition done?
Can another bathroom be added?
How has this space been used over time?)
- Look for inconsistencies between what's said, what's visible, and what's documented
- Gather supporting information early (receipts, warranties, reports, etc.)
- Confirm whether a current survey exists—and obtain one if needed
 - (property lines, easements, encroachments—details that don't show up in a walkthrough)

You don't need to know everything.

But you do need to know enough to answer with confidence—
or know exactly where to find the answer.

4. What Shows Up Later Is Decided Early

There's a moment after an offer is accepted when everything begins to feel real.

Inspections are scheduled.

Attorneys get involved.

Details are reviewed more closely.

And this is where things either move forward smoothly...
or begin to feel uncertain.

Not because something suddenly went wrong—

But because something earlier wasn't fully addressed.

A detail that wasn't confirmed

(an open permit that was never closed)

A question that didn't come up

(who is responsible for a shared driveway or easement)

Information that wasn't clearly communicated

(a known issue mentioned casually but never documented)

These don't stay small.

They become discussion points.

Negotiation points.

Sometimes, reasons for hesitation.

And what felt like a solid deal
starts to shift.

The truth is, most issues don't begin during contract.

They're revealed there.

What to Do Instead

- Confirm key details early so they don't become questions later
- Keep information clear and consistent across all materials and conversations
- Disclose known issues upfront—even if they seem minor
- Anticipate the questions a buyer, inspector, or attorney will ask
(permits, responsibility, documentation)
- Keep documentation organized and accessible
- Communicate proactively so small uncertainties don't grow into larger concerns

A smooth transaction isn't created at contract.

It's built long before that.

5. The Emotional Side Isn't Optional

Even when everything is handled thoughtfully—
the preparation is solid,
the details are confirmed,
the process is clear—

this part still shows up.

Because selling a home—even under the best circumstances—is a meaningful change.

A home holds more than space.

It holds routines.

Memories.

A version of life that existed there.

And once the process begins, that emotional layer becomes part of it—whether expected or not.

At different points, it can look like:

Second-guessing (“Are we doing the right thing?”)

Feeling unsettled during showings (“This doesn’t feel like ours anymore”)

Reacting strongly to feedback (even when it isn’t personal)

Unexpected hesitation when an offer comes in (“That was fast... maybe too fast”)

None of this means something is wrong.

It means something important is changing.

And if it isn’t recognized for what it is,

it can quietly influence decisions in ways that don’t serve the outcome.

What to Do Instead

- Expect moments of doubt—even when everything has been done right
- Separate feedback about the home from personal attachment to it
- Avoid reacting in the moment—give decisions space when needed
- Keep communication open so concerns don’t build quietly
- Stay grounded in the facts and the original goal when emotions start to take over

You don’t need to remove emotion from the process.

But you do need to make sure it isn’t the thing making the decisions.

6. Before Anything Begins

This process doesn't begin when a home is listed.

And it isn't defined by any one moment along the way.

It's shaped—quietly—by the decisions made early.

The details that are either confirmed or assumed.

The pace that is either intentional... or rushed.

Even when everything is handled thoughtfully,
there is still a human side to this process.

And that matters too.

Most of what determines the outcome isn't visible in a listing.

It's in the preparation behind it.

The understanding of the property.

The clarity of communication.

And the ability to stay grounded—when things become uncertain.

None of this is complicated.

But it does require attention.

Care.

And the ability to see what others might miss.

Whether you're the one doing the work—
or the one trusting someone else to do it—

those things matter.

Before You List Anything — A Simple Checklist

Property & Documentation

- Confirm permits and certificates of completion
- Confirm whether any violations exist—and if they are open or closed
- Verify the home matches what's on record
- Gather documentation (receipts, warranties, surveys, reports)
- Know the age and condition of major systems

Building Department, Board of Health & Taxes

- Review building department records for permits and approvals
- Check Board of Health records for septic approvals and bedroom count
- Verify property taxes with the assessor
- (understand exemptions and what a buyer should expect)

Understanding the Home

- Know updates and history
- Walk the home with intention
- Identify anything that may raise questions later
- Look for inconsistencies between what's visible and what's documented

Preparation & Timing

- Allow time—don't rush
- Decide what (if anything) should be addressed before going live
- Plan your launch intentionally

Communication & Clarity

- Keep information consistent across all platforms
- Disclose known issues early
- Avoid assumptions—confirm details

Looking Ahead

- Anticipate questions from buyers, inspectors, and attorneys
- Keep documentation organized and accessible
- Stay involved throughout the process

Emotional Awareness

- Expect moments of doubt
- Separate emotion from decision-making
- Stay grounded in your original goal