

RE/MAX

HOME SELLING GUIDE

A resource to help you
navigate through the
home selling experience,
from “listed” to “sold.”



A photograph of a diverse family of five moving into a new home. In the foreground, a young girl with curly hair and a boy are smiling and carrying large cardboard boxes. Behind them, a man and a woman are also smiling, with the man carrying a large box on his shoulder. The scene is set in a bright, modern living room with a blue sofa and a large window in the background.

Trust Us, You've Got This

Selling a home can be complicated. There's lots to do, from preparing the property for sale, to marketing the listing, to the negotiations and paperwork. If you're ready to embark on the home selling process, or just get a head start on planning, take your first step with the RE/MAX Home Selling Guide. This is a resource to help you navigate through the home selling experience, from "listed" to "sold."

The *RE/MAX Home Selling Guide* features relevant information including tips on finding the right listing agent, selling strategies for move-up buyers, advice on transacting safely in today's environment, DO's and DON'Ts when listing and showing your

home, and important terms you should know. By familiarizing yourself with these home-selling basics, you'll be better equipped to make a smart – and hopefully lucrative – home sale.

Choose the RE/MAX Agent That's Right for You



QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING YOUR AGENT:

1. Are you a full-time real estate agent?
2. How much experience do you have in my neighborhood?
3. How many clients are you working with simultaneously? Do you have the capacity to take me on as a client or will you delegate to someone else?
4. What services and resources do you offer?
5. How does the home-selling process work and what is expected of me?
6. How long are homes in my neighborhood on the market?
7. How would you price and market my home?
8. What disclosure laws apply to me and what do I need to be aware of?
9. What does the listing agreement entail and what is your fee?
10. What kind of preparation do you recommend I do to get ready to put my home on the market?
11. What happens if I'm not happy with your services?

Studies show that home sellers who use a licensed real estate agent to represent them generally get a better price than those who sell the home themselves.

RE/MAX agents have access to current market information and resources to help price and market your home. Equally as important, REALTORS® add objectivity to an inherently emotional transaction: the sale of your home. As you move through the process, your RE/MAX agent can walk you through confusing paperwork and help you make informed decisions about the sale of your home.

The real estate market is a big place and an experienced RE/MAX agent can help you navigate it.



3 Selling Strategies for Move- Up Buyers

Move-up buyers are often in a better position than their first-time counterparts. They typically have some savings and home equity to work with, making the move feel less like a compromise and more a thoughtful selection. But move-up buyers face their own set of challenges that call for a carefully considered strategy. Here are three options for the smart move-up buyer with a plan!

SELL FIRST, BUY LATER

The “Sell First” strategy is ideal for the move-up buyer who doesn’t want to get stuck paying two mortgages simultaneously. Selling the existing home first eliminates the risk of having to carry two mortgages. It also reduces the chances of having to lower your asking price if the sale isn’t happening quite fast enough for your liking. This is a good option for move-

up buyers who are banking on the proceeds of their sale to fund their new (and likely more expensive) property. By selling first, you’ll know exactly how much money you have to purchase your next home.

TIME AND ALIGN YOUR PURCHASE AND SALE

All things considered, this approach to “moving up” is ideal, but getting there is another story. Aligning



your purchase and sale closing dates can be tricky. Remember that there are three parties to these transactions: you, the person you're buying from, and the person you're selling to. You'll also have to move out and move in on the same day. In this scenario, time is your best friend and flexibility your saviour. This means you've planned ahead – you've researched neighborhoods, gotten pre-approved for a mortgage, and you've started the organizing and decluttering process before the big move.

BUY FIRST, THEN SELL

If you're buying in a seller's market, then buying first might be the way to go. By buying your new home before selling your old one, you won't feel rushed into settling for a sub-par property, or

having to seek alternative temporary housing options while you shop a tough market. This move-up buyer still lives in his or her existing home, allowing them time to shop around, and continue looking until they find that perfect place. This move-up buyer often requires a bridge mortgage.

Your move-up strategy will depend on a number of factors, such as your financial situation, the current housing market conditions, personal comfort level and even your personality. Consider this when making your decision. Plan ahead and work with a knowledgeable RE/MAX agent to ensure a smooth transaction at both sides of the offer table.



Seller Dos and Donts

DO

Clear Out & Clean Up

You want house-hunters to imagine your house as their own, so clear out the clutter. Remove excess home décor, pack up the collectibles, put away the kids' toys, and eliminate pet evidence. You'll also want to clean everything, from the baseboards to the ceilings and every spot in between. In addition, keep the house at a comfortable room temperature.

Update & Upkeep

Impress house-hunters with simple yet visually appealing updates. Inside, consider swapping out old light fixtures, painting dark walls lighter, and replacing dingy carpets. Outside, keep up with your yard work: trim bushes and trees, keep the grass cut or the driveway shoveled, and plant flowers or add greenery for a flattering first impression.

Organize & Categorize

Everything has a place. Arrange furnishings to complement the size, traffic flow and natural light of the room. If you're not sure, consult a professional stager. You'll also want to organize all of your paperwork: inspection reports, property disclosures, appliance manuals, etc. Then, categorize them in an easy-to-access binder for quick reference.

Respect & Respond

You may be partial to your home, but not everyone will be. Respect professionals' (appraiser, inspector, stager, etc.) opinions on what changes can be made to make your home appeal to more people. Don't be offended by a low offer; respond to the buyer and let them know the offer was too low but that you are serious about accepting a better one.

DON'T

Fall Behind

Selling your house is hard work. Don't slack, stay up-to-date on your responsibilities. Keep your home clean and the yard well-maintained throughout the process. Once you find a buyer, don't fall behind on bills; keep paying your mortgage and utility bills on time so you don't have extra costs to cover at closing.

Get Ahead

It takes time to sell a house in today's market. Don't try to get ahead of the trend and enter into negotiations with buyers who aren't pre-approved for a mortgage. Don't price your home excessively, listen to your agent and price it according to market conditions. Pricing it too high can keep it on the market and make it appear unattractive, flawed or stale.

Hide or Hover

Your house needs to be available, you do not. Don't make your house unavailable for showings by requesting a day's notice or not answering the phone or email. Your home needs to be ready when buyers are. Don't hover around during showings. Buyers like their space and may feel awkward or uncomfortable sharing their thoughts with you present.

Do it All or Leave it All

Working with a real estate agent can be invaluable. Why try to do it all when you can hire a professional agent with the experience and expertise to do it for you? However, when you hire a real estate agent, don't leave it all up to them. You'll have a number of personal responsibilities to manage to help make your home selling experience successful.



CLEAN UP THE CLUTTER

If you are listing your house and getting it ready for showings, clean up the clutter. A good way to start is to go through everything you don't use on a daily basis and create three piles: pack it, donate it, and junk it.

Pack It

For the items you're packing, go online and search "portable storage and moving containers." These convenient containers can be rented monthly and take the trip out of the traditional storage unit. They are delivered to your house, you pack it up, and they're picked up and stored for you until you're ready to add more – or unload it at your new house!

Donate It

For the items you're donating, a number of charities now offer scheduled donation pick-ups. Visit your favorite charity's website to learn when they'll be in your neighbourhood.

Junk It

For the items you're dumping, first make sure they can be dumped. Certain items need to be recycled or properly disposed of. Check with your municipality website to find a convenient and affordable way to properly dispose of certain materials. If what you have truly can be junked, consider renting a dumpster for large quantities.

For a more extensive room-by-room list of staging tips, ask your RE/MAX agent for a copy of the RE/MAX Home Staging Guide.

6 STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Not interested in hiring a professional stager? Consider these six staging suggestions to help enhance your home:

1. **FIX** minor flaws and imperfections; buyers don't want deferred maintenance issues.
2. **REMOVE** excess furniture and de-clutter countertops to make usable space and rooms appear larger.
3. **CLEAN** and organize everything including garages, closets, storage rooms and laundry rooms. Buyers look everywhere.
4. **WASH** windows, pull back curtains and turn on lights in dim rooms to brighten areas and make rooms appear larger.
5. **PAINT** walls in neutral tones and pack up family pictures so buyers can envision their color preference and portraits.
6. **MANAGE** your yard; shovel the paths, mow the lawn, plant flowers, and remove cobwebs from the door frame.



Home Seller's Glossary

1. Asking Price: The price that the seller has agreed to list their property for. The asking price is different from the selling price, which is the final price that has been agreed upon by the buyer and seller.

2. Balanced Market: There is an equal balance of buyers and sellers in the market, which means reasonable offers are often accepted by sellers, and homes sell within a reasonable amount of time and prices remain stable.

3. Bridge Financing: A short-term loan designed to “bridge” the gap for homebuyers who have purchased their new home before selling their existing home. This type of financing is common in a seller’s market, allowing homebuyers to purchase without having to sell first.

4. Buyer’s Market: There are more homes on the market than there are buyers, giving the limited number of buyers more choice and greater negotiating power. Homes may stay on the market longer, and prices can be stable or dropping.

5. Capital Gains: If you have a high “capital gain” on your primary residence, you can celebrate; it means you’ve received a certain percentage of “profit” from the sale of your home because the sale was above the initial purchase price plus any fees. However, capital gains are taxed differently on 2nd homes and investment properties. Talk to your tax specialist about 1031 exchanges and other exemptions.

6. Chattels: Unattached items in the home that can be removed without doing any damage to the property, such as curtains, but not the curtain rods since they are physically attached to the home. Chattels are usually not included with the home purchase, unless specified in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale.

7. Closing: This is the final step in the home selling process. Once all offer conditions outlined in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale have been met at the end of the closing period, ownership of the property is transferred to the buyer and the keys are exchanged on the closing date outlined in the offer.

8. Conditional Offer: When the sale of the home hinges on predetermined conditions, such as “conditional on financing” or “conditional on a satisfactory home inspection.” If the conditions are not met, the buyer can back out of the deal.

9. Counteroffer: When the original offer to purchase a home is rejected by the seller, the seller can counteroffer with adjustments, usually to the price or terms of the purchase, such as the closing date.

10. Curb Appeal: The appeal of a home when viewed from the curb. Curb appeal includes the home’s exterior, front yard, and anything else that’s visible from the street.

11. Current Market Assessment: A CMA (Current Market Assessment) is provided by your real estate agent during the listing process and is complimentary. This report assists with determining the asking price of the home, using current housing market information such as supply and demand, seasonality, home information like location, age, square footage and more.

12. Fixtures: Items that are physically attached to the home and require tools to remove. Fixtures are included as part of the purchase. Examples of fixtures include ceiling lights, cabinet hardware and appliances. If the seller plans to take any fixtures with them when they move, either remove them prior to listing the home, or be sure to specify the fixtures in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale.



13. Listing Agreement: A listing agreement is a contract under which a property owner (as principal) authorizes a real estate broker (as agent) to find a buyer for the property on the owner's terms. In exchange for this service, the owner pays a commission.

14. List-To-Sale-Price Ratio: The difference between the listing price of a home and the final selling price, expressed as a percentage. If the list-to-sale-price ratio is more than 100%, the home sold over asking. If it is below 100%, the home sold under asking.

15. MLS: The Multiple Listing Service, commonly referred to as MLS, is a real estate selling system operated jointly by real estate Boards and Associations across the country.

16. Offer: An offer is a legal agreement to purchase a home. An offer can be conditional on a number of factors, commonly conditional on financing and a home inspection. If the conditions are not met, the buyer can cancel their offer.

17. REALTOR®: The terms licensed real estate agent and REALTOR® are often used interchangeably, although not every real estate agent is a REALTOR®. A REALTOR® is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

A REALTOR® promises to uphold the Code of Ethics of the association and to hold each other accountable for when serving the public, customers, clients and each other, with a high standard of practice and care.

18. Seller's Concessions/Credits: Sellers may offer concessions to incentivize buyers to purchase the home, or sweeten the deal. Concessions are often seen as a contribution towards the buyer's closing costs, up to certain limitations and approvals by a buyer's lender, which ultimately leaves more money in a buyer's pocket when all is said and done.

19. Seller's Disclosure: A seller's disclosure is a disclosure filled out by the seller of information about the property, or which could affect a buyer's decision to purchase the property, all of which to the best of the seller's knowledge. All material facts about the home should be laid out in the Seller's Disclosure.

18. Seller's Market: In a seller's market, there are more buyers than there are homes for sale. With fewer homes on the market and more buyers, homes sell quickly in a seller's market. Prices of homes are likely to increase, and there are more likely to be multiple offers on a home. Multiple offers give the seller negotiating power, and conditional offers may be rejected.

19. Staging: Preparing a home for sale to appeal to a wide range of homebuyers. The staging process often includes decluttering, depersonalizing, deep-cleaning, and minor updates such as painting and rearranging furniture.

20. Title Search: A historical review of all legal documents relating to ownership of a property to determine if there have been any flaws in prior transfers of ownership or if there are any claims or encumbrances on the title to the property.

21. Virtual Deals: The home-buying process completed by means of technology in place of face-to-face contact. Some common technology tools include 360 home tours and video showings, video conference calls, e-documents, e-signatures and e-transfers.



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Let our experience be your guide.

Each office independently owned and operated.



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Let a RE/MAX Agent Be Your Guide



Meet Kara,

Kara is a dynamic and innovative Realtor® known for her exceptional customer service and genuine relationships with her clients.

As a State College native, Kara has deep roots in the local community and a wealth of knowledge about the area's real estate market. Kara is both a State High & Penn State Alum, with bachelor's degrees in Psychology & Anthropology. She began her real estate career in San Francisco, at a boutique brokerage specializing in multi-family acquisitions and luxury leasing. After spending 5 years in the Bay Area, Kara returned to Happy Valley because she truly believes it's the best place on earth to call home!

Leveraging her experience in Bay Area luxury markets, she incorporates industry-leading technology and digital marketing strategies. Whether you're a first-time homebuyer or seasoned investor, Kara's creative approach helps clients achieve their unique goals. For a white glove real estate experience, call Kara today.

Kara joins The Greg Copenhaver & JoAnn Lew Team, nationally recognized RE/MAX hall of fame members with over 70 years of combined experience and 3000 homes sold in Centre County and surrounding areas.

Kara Peterson | Realtor®

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