



# Selling guide

# What sells a house?

In today's market many sellers want to know the secret to selling their homes quickly. They want to know ways to hold on to the equity they've built over the past decade.

Unfortunately, there is no golden equation that equals to the perfect sale. Yet, while there is no "sure thing" in the housing market these days, there are certain factors that affect how quickly and for how much your home sells. Here are the top ten. Consider how these apply to your own home, how that affects marketing, as well as what aspects of your home you should "play up" to elicit a better response from buyers.

**1. Price** - It's a common misconception that location is the leading factor of whether or not a home sells. It is, instead, price. Think about this scenario. You have a home located in a prestigious and sought-after neighbourhood, yet the list price is tens of thousands of dollars over the comparable homes for the area. No one will be interested. This same property priced just below the competition will fly off the market.

**2. Location** - Okay, location is still important. A home that sits next to a refinery, or on a busy street is less desirable than one that is across from a park. If your home has a fantastic location, then by all means feature it in your marketing.

**3. Liveability** - This is fast becoming a hot button word in real estate. Buyers today are looking for neighbourhoods that deliver amenities such as schools, parks, shopping centres, access to freeways and train stations.

**4. Condition** - There is a certain segment of the market that is made up of renovators and investors. You won't find as many people these days eager to buy your run-down property that is in a good location. They simply can't sell the property fast enough before monthly mortgage payments begin eating up their profit. Homes that are wellmaintained or in move-in ready condition appeal to a broader range of buyers. Even simple fixes, such as new paint, cleaned carpets, or well maintained gardens, can have an effect.

**5. Competitive Advantage** - Don't make the mistake of assuming that you're in this race alone. Past area sales, as well as current listings are your direct competition. You must take these into consideration when settling on a list price for your home. What amenities and upgrades do these homes have? Do the homes in your neighbourhood all have updated baths, kitchens, or landscaped yards? In order to price in line with them you must be able to boast these same things.

**6. Curb Appeal** - Curb appeal is the first impression your property makes on prospective buyers. You must keep the gardens orderly and maintained when your home is on the market.

**7. Staging** - Once inside your home, a buyer must be wowed. Intoxicate their senses. They want to see up-to-date furnishings, smell a clean un-cluttered home, touch cabinets that are in good repair, hear peace and quiet, and of course "taste the good life."

**8. Kitchens** - A kitchen sells a house. It is where families gather and connect. Minor kitchen upgrades rank high among the list of top remodeling projects, with owners updating cabinets, counters, and floors. Nobody wants an outdated kitchen. What fixes are in your budget? If your kitchen is already spectacular, be sure you play this up in any marketing.

**9. Agents** - An accomplished, knowledgeable agent can be your biggest ally during the selling process. They know the latest market trends and have built a network of contacts to market your home to. With an arsenal of marketing tools available to agents today, from video tours and websites to brochures.

**10. Marketing** - Marketing has gone global. With the power of the Internet, you can showcase your home to millions of potential buyers. Sit down with your agent and develop a solid marketing plan. This is why you are paying them a commission. Make them earn it!

The market is not what it once was. You must be realistic about what's selling in today's market and keep in mind your home may not be "worth" as much today as it was yesterday, last month, or last year. Consider these top ten ways a home sells and help your home put its best face forward to achieve a sale

## Preparing your home for market

Every seller wants their home to sell fast and for a top dollar. Does that sound good to you? Well, it's not luck that makes it happen. It's careful planning and knowing how to professionally present your home that will send buyers hurrying to put an offer in. Here's how:

### Disassociate yourself with your home

Make the mental decision to "let go" of your emotions and focus on the fact that soon this house will no longer be yours. Say goodbye to every room and picture yourself handing over the keys to the new owners. Look toward your new future.

### De-personalise

Pack up those family photographs you want buyers to imagine their own photos on the walls, and they can't do that if yours are there.

### De-clutter

People collect an amazing amount of stuff. Consider this: if you haven't used it in over a year, you probably don't need it. If you don't need it sell it, donate it or give it away. Pack up those knickknacks. Clean everything off the kitchen counters. Remove pieces of furniture that block or hamper the flow of the house.

Rearrange bedroom closets and kitchen cupboards. Buyers love to snoop and will open closets and cupboards. Think of the message it sends if they are in a mess. Now imagine what the buyer believes about you if everything is organised. It says that you probably take good care of the rest of the house as well. Please note we supervise buyers at all inspections and home opens.

### Make minor repairs

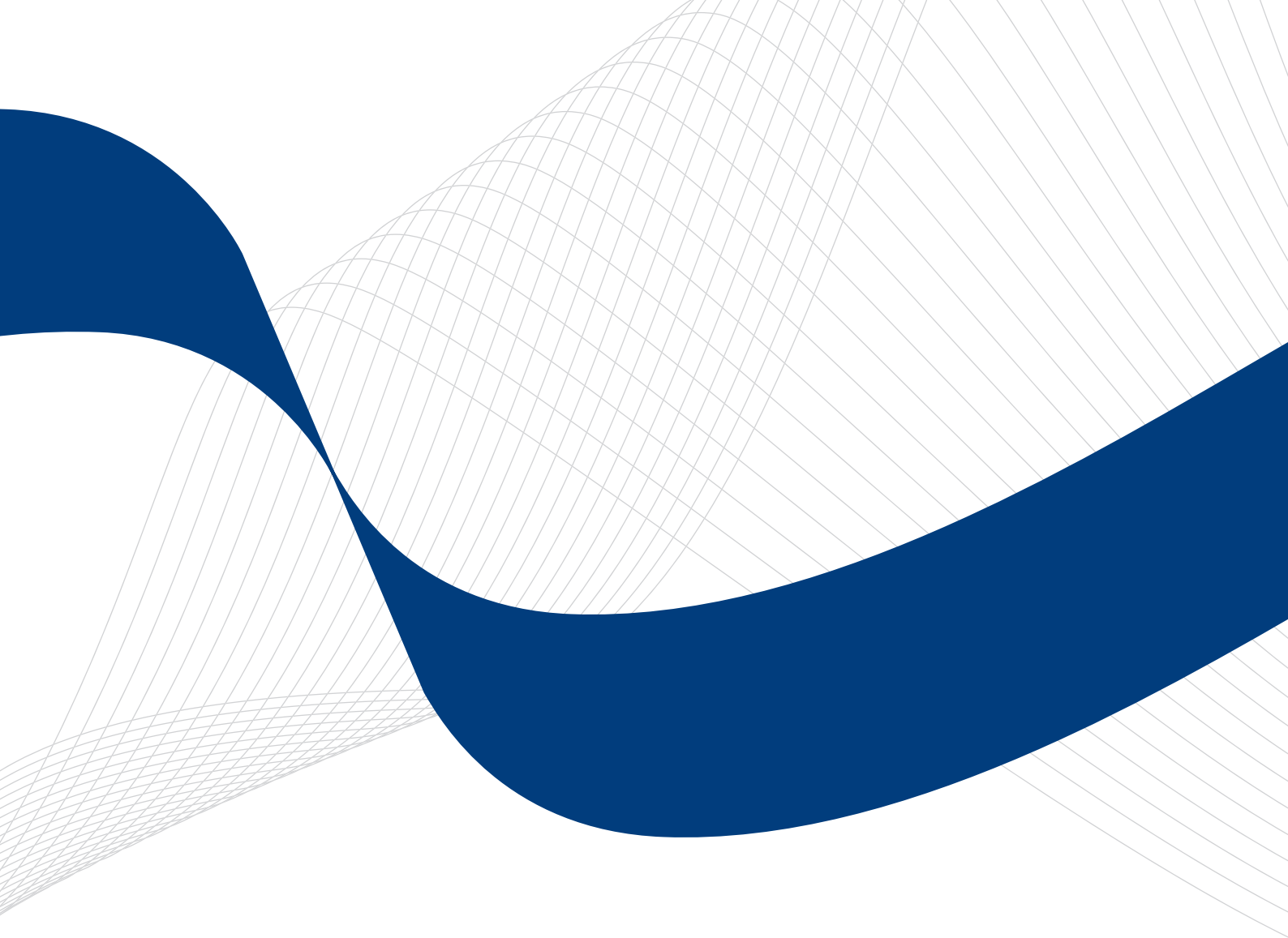
Replace cracked floor or wall tiles, patch holes in walls, fix leaky taps, wash windows, remove all magnets and flyers from the fridge, consider painting your walls in a neutral colour.

### Street appeal

The street appeal of your home can add or subtract up to 10% of the value of the home. Mow the lawn, trim, weed and mulch the garden beds, paint the front door, clear gutters and pressure wash driveways and pathways. Plant yellow flowers or group flower pots together, yellow evokes a buying emotion

# The seller's Checklist

- Spent time researching your agent so you are comfortable with your decision and trust both their expertise and integrity?
- Honestly assessed, together with your agent, ways to maximise your home's strengths and minimise its weaknesses in all the key areas?
- Started work of your home's presentation, arranged a working bee of family and friends, or appointed the necessary contractors?
- Together with your agent, arrived at a strategic selling price, developed appropriate marketing strategies, and decided on a suitable settlement period?
- Notified your agent of any relevant notices received from any authorities, the occupier of adjoining land, etc?
- Arranged a home loan or re-financing if purchasing a more expensive home?
- Worked out a realistic budget that includes home improvements, advertising, agent and other professionals' fees, moving costs etc?
- Started thinking about and arranging the move?
- Started preparing your children for the move so the transition is as smooth and stress-free for them as possible?



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