



Heidi Seagren of Jameson Sotheby's celebrates another sold home for a client.

The Difference Between Hoping to Sell, and Sold

HERE ARE FOUR MAJOR PITFALLS to avoid when preparing to list your home. Follow these and you'll enjoy celebrating a successful closing!

NOT WORKING WITH SEASONED PROFESSIONALS

Hire a Realtor you trust, who works full-time and has successfully sold during different market conditions. Hire an agent based purely upon reduced commissions and you'll get just that, someone experienced in cutting prices. An accomplished Realtor, Contractor, Lender, and Attorney can make the difference between hoping, and selling. This is not a market where you should test the pricing, a friend's experience, the buyer's ability to see past things, or red flags for inspectors.

NOT ADDRESSING THE CONDITION OF YOUR HOME

Inspectors have a field day with mold, foundation cracks, drainage problems, signs of roof and window leaks, dry rot, and any type of moisture concerns. "As is" is a catch-all phrase meaning your home may have major issues and you don't want to fix them. Don't cover things up. Address them.

Signs of moisture: check your attic for proper ventilation, your window wells for water, your gutters for leaves and blockage, and the slope of the soil around your home, making sure it drains away from the house. Small fissures in the walls could be a sign of settling, but a crack in the foundation could be structural. Have a specialist confirm they are not structural—and fix them if they are. Provide documentation and the warranty any good contractor offers when addressing. There are companies that 'shampoo' a home, cleaning siding and roofs. If you have broken window seals, repair or replace. Roof damage is yours to correct, not the buyer.

IGNORING THE RULE OF THUMB THAT FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

Put your best foot forward. Front pavers that have settled, keys that don't work, wobbly door knobs, and burned out light bulbs all set the tone for a negative showing. If your front door needs to be painted, and your deck is peeling, hire a painter. Most buyers don't have vision, so showcase your home's best assets. Buyers want to walk in and picture themselves and their possessions there, not all of yours. Less is best. Staging is a buzzword for dressing your home for success. Sometimes it's as simple as decluttering and making sure every room has a purpose.

Freshen up paint in white or neutral "greige" tones, and remove dated wallpaper. A buyer will typically deduct from the purchase price, up to four times the actual cost of the work. So, if the bid to repaint (or do a small update) is \$4,000, buyers will often take \$16,000 off the purchase price. They don't want the hassle of doing it themselves.

INFLATING THE ACTUAL MARKET VALUE OF YOUR HOME

I tell my clients that I am being hired to sell the home twice. Once to the buyer, and then to the bank. There is no Mr. Zillow walking into your home and assessing a 'zestimate' (which is not a market analysis). Lean on your trusted Realtor for an accurate value she can defend with an appraiser- who is hired by the lender to 'buy' into the contract. Your home's worth is determined by a qualified buyer, not what you need from it or what you put into it.

Once you get the home under contract, be realistic and collaborative and you'll be on your way to celebrating a successful closing. 



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