



Seller's Guide

Seller's Guide **Contents**

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What Makes a House Sell



Effective communication of features and benefits	Professional photos	Well-priced
Great showing condition	Easy to get in to see it	Good experience during showings

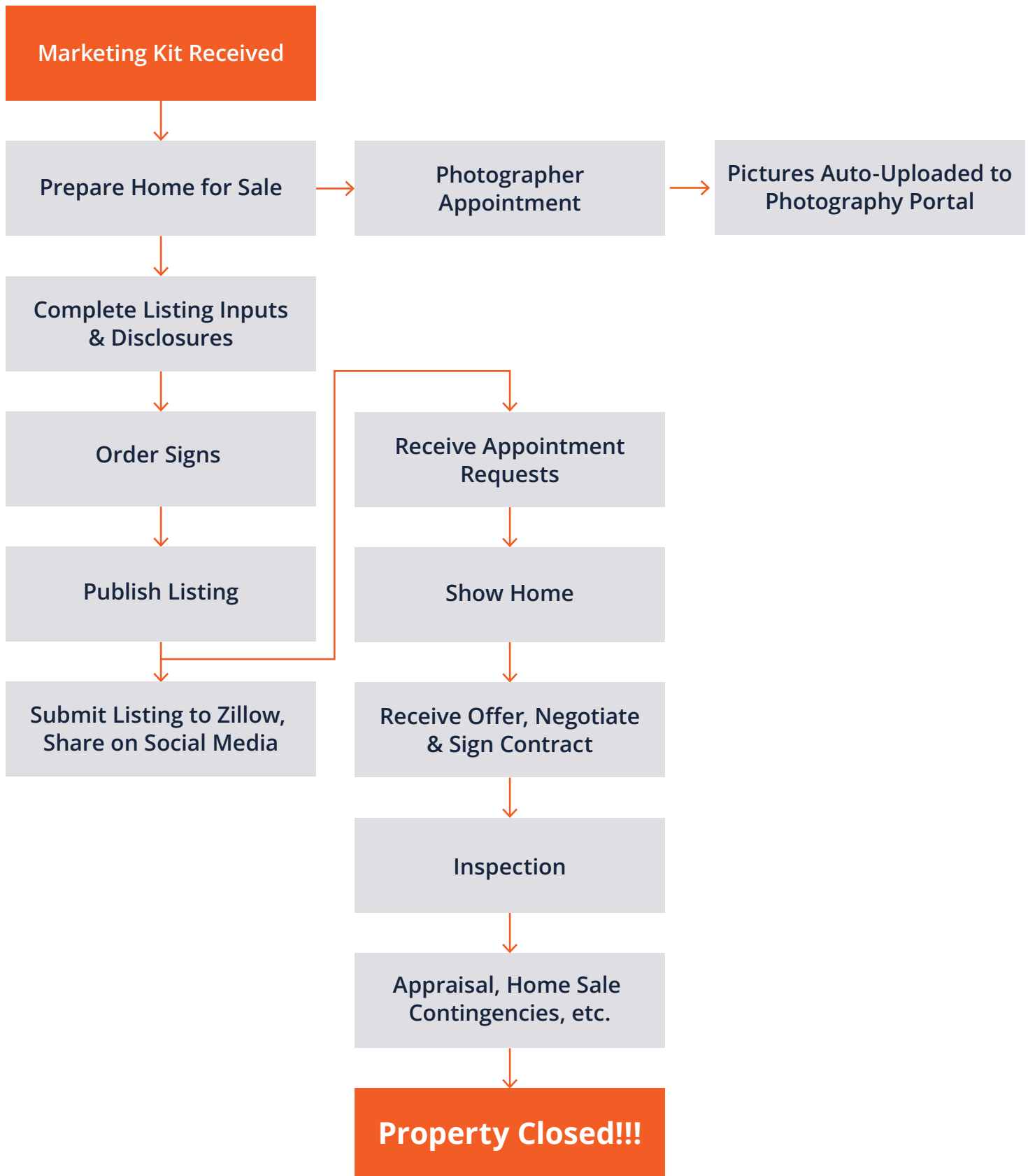
Price is certainly an important component in getting your home sold, but **the rest are key as well.**



A well-priced home not supported by showing condition will have a hard time selling at that price.

If it's difficult for a buyer to see the home, it will take longer to sell – the longer a home is on the market, the lower the price in the buyers' minds.

The Home Sale **Process** for Sellers



Your Marketing Materials – Broker-in-a-Box

Premium agent-designed marketing materials



Shoe covers, basket, shoe cover sign

- Un-bundle the shoe covers and place them loosely in the basket, with the shoe cover sign over the basket.
- A thoughtful chair or bench near the front door helps for putting on and taking off shoes/shoe covers.
- Your shoe cover bin is reusable. A tree is planted for every box – scan the QR code to locate yours.

Sign-in Sheet

- Keep a record of open house visitors.



Lock Box

1. Put a key on the fob and put the key/fob in the lock box.
2. Set a unique code for the lock box.
3. Use at your discretion and comfort-level. For example...
 - If you are familiar with the buyer
 - If the house is vacant
 - For appraisers, inspectors, etc. to gain access

Room Cards

1. Directs attention to areas of interest so you can explain less during the tour.
2. The “Do Not Climb” sign placed on ladders, steep staircases, a jungle gym, wherever appropriate alerts buyers to obstacles and helps avoid an injury on your property.
3. The “Watch your Step” sign alerts to tripping hazards, or an unexpected step or two down.
4. Additional blank signs can be used to call out other specific items. Write with a marker in nice printing.

Your Marketing Materials – Exterior Signage

Signs are easy to request through your portal when you are nearly ready to list. The For Sale sign will be installed, and remaining signs delivered to your door at the same time. Once you have sold your home, place all signs and riders at the door for pickup. You are responsible for the safe return of all signs.

For Sale Signs

You may wish to order additional For Sale signs if you:

1. Live on a corner
2. Want to demonstrate significant frontage
3. Have exposure on the backside of the home (like on a lake)



Open House Sign Riders

1. To announce your upcoming open house, place the rider on top of the for sale sign, no more than one week in advance, (otherwise it will be confusing which day you are holding the home open). This is great advertising. Remember to also add your open house to your portal.
2. Remove these riders immediately after the open house, unless you are planning another one immediately the following week.

Open House Directional Signs

1. These help buyers find your open house – whether specifically looking for it or just stumbling across it.
2. Place at the nearest intersection or in front of your home, wherever is the most helpful to buyers. In front is good notice you are currently open. You may wish to order additional signs for a pathway to the home.

Under Contract Sign Rider

1. Waiting to put up the “Under Contract” sign rider until the inspection period concludes may give you more negotiating leverage – you don’t want to look too antsy and have less negotiating strength.
2. Once the inspection period has concluded, celebrate that milestone and put up the sign!

Additional Signs

1. Additional signs can be ordered and delivered with your order if placed at the same time.
2. You can order more signs later, but there will be a delivery charge.

Preparing Your Home for Sale

Once you decide to sell, it's no longer your home -- it's the buyer's. Help make them connect with the space.

Clutter makes even the largest spaces look cramped and chaotic. You'll need to deal with excess at some point to move, so now is a good time. When your home appears tidy, it translates to other areas where the buyers will assume you are maintaining well, like the mechanicals.

I also felt if there was something you were planning to fix that is not necessarily a disclosure item, but not visible like for example a window with a rotting sill, I recommended waiting until it is requested by the seller (which may not even happen) - either way you might do it but it takes the place.

What to do with excess?

1. Sell. Whatever you aren't taking with you of value, there are many easy places to sell it.
 2. Donate. Good for quickly getting rid of a lot that you can't sell.
 3. Store. Any thing you don't need now like out-of-season clothes, sporting equipment, etc.
 4. Toss. Items that are no longer useful to anyone.
- Thin out and organize pantries and closets. It's purely psychological, but if it seems like there isn't enough room for you, it will seem like there isn't enough room for the buyers.
 - Replace burnt out light bulbs.
 - Remove any firearms, weapons, visible kitchen knives, etc.
 - Repaint where needed to freshen up any tired, distinct, embellished or polarizing walls, using neutral colors
 - Consider professionally repainting dated/dark/cabinets – it can perhaps make the difference between receiving an offer or not. What is that worth?!
 - Remove anything with the slightest potential to offend -- political signs, provocative pictures or artwork, even sports memorabilia. Yes, you do (or should) care. There's zero upside to alienating buyers – not even an eye roll.
 - Exclusions are a turn off – they not only point out something that must have value that isn't staying, but also translates to a Day-1 "to do" for the buyer. If you must exclude, say, a light fixture you can't part with, replace it instead before photographs.
 - Window treatments are usually specific to each window/room and usually stay. If they are an exact match with your other design elements and will also fit in your new home, then exclude if you wish. After going under contract you can always ask the buyer if they want them or if you can take them – they might not be to their taste.

Staging Your Home

Put your home's best foot forward!

Unless the home is vacant, staging rarely requires items to be brought in, except perhaps pops of color. Usually it's getting items out, re-arranging, and moving things around.

- If your home feels neutral, consider adding “pops of color” to add character and depth to enhance photographs and in-person visit. Artwork, throw pillows, a blanket, flowers, etc. Or, you can add texture or interest with a cowhide throw rug, unique tasteful pillows, etc. The best staging is that which you can take with you or return when finished.
- If your home doesn't feel very neutral, tone it down. As much as a buyer may say they can see past a red wall... they can't. My favorite color of the moment is Moonshine, by Benjamin Moore. It's the perfect gray, in my opinion. You don't need to worry about it being in style in a year, only for now.
- Return rooms to their original purpose so it's easy to understand the utility. If the living room is currently a playroom, transform it back to what the buyers are expecting.
- De-clutter counter tops but don't go to the opposite extreme of taking everything away. You want the home to feel authentic and lived in, in an organized way.
- Create cozy seating areas. Don't line the perimeter of the room with furniture.
- Create a focal point to draw attention to the most-defining feature of that room. Perhaps a fireplace, the TV, exterior view, etc.
- Remove collections – they are not as interesting to buyers as they are to you. They are distracting at best, uncomfortable or offensive at worst.
- Staging empty rooms, even just in photos, helps a buyer connect and imagine themselves and their furniture in the space. Rooms appear larger and reduces fixation on cosmetic flaws, which is otherwise ALL you see.

Staging **examples** from my archives

Working with items already in the home

Creating a Focal Point

completely changed perception of the room and view



De-cluttering and Adding Utility

resulted in listing, and receiving, \$20,000 higher



Stage rooms back to their original intention

Previously received feedback there was no common space on the 1st floor, changed the staging back into a living room and didn't receive that feedback after fixing the perception



Staging Your Home – Exterior

The home's outside is the buyer's first and last impression, whether driving by or arriving for a showing, so don't overlook buttoning it up. It also provides an assumption what the inside looks like.

- It's difficult to sell a home a buyer can't see! Removing trees and overgrown shrubs provides better curb appeal and improves interior natural light as well.
- Rake leaves, pull weeds, and trim bushes and hedges for a neat appearance.
- Make any obvious repairs such as leaning mailboxes, deteriorating flower boxes, falling fence posts, loose stairs and railings, etc.
- Paint the house or deck if it is in need. If your home is polarizing in color, consider painting it – you will get more interest and a higher price if it's a neutral color.
- Pick up pet feces. No explanation needed.
- Repaint front porch steps, risers, etc.
- Discard old or broken lawn furniture, pots -- any exterior clutter.
- Clear and sweep walkways, patios, decks, steps and porches.
- Have the windows professionally cleaned – very important!
- Empty gutters filled with leaves and debris.
- Pops of color are key. Flower beds, containers, a well-placed bench or geranium next to the front door, can all make a big difference in that all-important first photo.
- The outside is additional living space. Extend the season on both ends even if the thermometer doesn't agree. Stage your outdoor furniture with cushions, open the pool, etc. So much nicer than everything covered up.



Preparing for your Photographer Appointment

Pictures are the single most important element for attracting buyer interest

Photos say everything about the home – 1,000 words. You should prepare for the photography appointment as you would for any other showing. The photos will only look as good as what they are shooting.

The home should be clean, staged and ready for the shoot. The photographer won't be in a position time-wise to wait for you to work on getting things ready.

- Pick up toys inside and in the yard.
- Open all curtains, let in the natural light (looks better from the outside as well).
- Make the beds – turn down the top of the bedding.
- Turn on all lights.
- Put away toiletries.
- Toilet lids closed!
- Pull cars out of the driveway.

Perhaps take pictures first on your phone to see what you notice. Sometimes clutter or a distraction appears you didn't notice previously. Photographers are not able to move furniture, or large heavy objects, although may do "light staging" such as aligning window treatments, closing toilet seats, turning off ceiling fans and televisions, etc.

Many top agents take the cheap route and take their own photos. I've seen some terrible images of photos taken by top Chicago-area agents who didn't spring for a professional photographer. What a disservice to the seller who is paying their hefty commission. Here are some of the mistakes...

1. Misspelling the name of the main park in their own town
2. Left garage doors open with the cars and toys visible inside
3. Had shadows of themselves outside in the photo
4. Used an image of the front of the house with Halloween decorations... in April
5. They shoot a picture of the bathroom showing themselves in the mirror
6. Shoot a room with the TV on
7. Take pictures after dark with all the windows blackened out

Alas! These won't happen to you because you will have what many sellers with agents don't have -- a professional photographer!

Keep Photos Updated with the Season

Are you on the cusp of seasons? If you list when there is snow on the ground, but now it has melted, re-shoot the exterior images to keep it fresh and colorful. In Chicago we basically have no Spring, so the season goes from Winter (with late season snow) to Summer pretty quickly. The home's exterior photos are much healthier looking with some leaves and color.

Winter



Early Spring



A couple of weeks later



Floor Plans

Media Upgrades to Photography

There is no better way to illustrate the flow of your unseen home than with floor plans or a virtual 360° tour. They give the buyer an opportunity to assess the layout and process the location of bedroom and bathrooms, hallways, etc. It makes the home easier to digest prior to visiting and have expectations better set.



A Good Listing Description

The description you write should capture the story of your home and compel a visit.

1. Market the home's features, without exaggerating. You want the buyer to be overwhelmed not underwhelmed.
2. Note special or unique (positive) features about the home and neighborhood.
3. Feel free to be playful or creative if appropriate.

Descriptive.

Explain the home's utility and layout along with unique selling features. On paper most homes sounds alike. Be dynamic and market your home to stand out. Separate yours from the pack. What is your "wow" factor?

- Chef's kitchen with the accoutrements you'd expect in this level of home.
- Open floor plan for your morning rush hour traffic patterns.
- The dining room can comfortably fit a table for 8.
- First floor master --- you know you go back in the house several times before leaving.
- Feel free to be playful or creative as appropriate!

Experiential.

What is it like to be there? How does it make you feel? Sell the lifestyle.

- Large workshop makes knocking off your "honey do" list a breeze.
- The natural light is so perfect we rarely need to turn on lights, even on a cloudy day.
- The dog shower keeps the dog AND the house clean.
- The hot tub after a long day is just the ticket, all year long.
- The stunning sunsets from the back deck are like nature's artwork.

A Good Listing Description

Historical information.

- If a prior owner was noteworthy (not notorious) or had an interesting role in the community (like the first mayor), include it. I had a listing on a cobblestone street where a past owner was an actual cobblestone contractor for the village. I photographed one with his name on it.

What to avoid...

- Abbreviations
- Writing in ALL CAPS -- please don't
- Misspellings
- Swearing or other offensive language
- Making it too long -- buyers will lose interest and important details will be lost
- Pointing out negatives, even if offering a solution, because what bothers you may not be an issue for the buyer or they may not notice (e.g., don't mention the electric stove could be replaced with gas, just focus on the potential if a fixer-upper).
- Exclusionary words -- write about the house, not the people, avoiding words like church, synagogue, children, families, singles -- rather than making people feel like it's a place for them, they can make one feel excluded or like it's not a place for them.

Examples of a Good Listing Description

I have no doubt you can write a better description of your own home's features and benefits, than someone who doesn't know anything about what it's like to live in your home, probably even your neighborhood, maybe even your town.

**Here are some examples of descriptions I've written.
None sound like another.**

- Uniquely charming, adorable (and affordable) farmhouse on ¼ acre in A+ walk to everything location. Recent renovation cultivated a refreshed home. Eat-in kitchen with many updates – snack bar seating, table space, granite counter tops and pantry. 1st floor also includes dining room, office, living room, family room with fireplace, sitting area, and updated full bath. The basement offers a large rec room, charming wine cavern, and great storage. This charmer is well-suited for gatherings large or small, inside or out (and nice flow both ways). Entertain on the new deck overlooking the wide and deep lot, providing plenty of lawn space for games. Bonus points for updated windows, electrical, mechanicals, and gorgeous new 2.5-car extra wide X extra deep garage (complete with attic for even more storage.) Enjoy in-town living where you can be out the door and at the train in 3 minutes. No other Glenview location is as close to everything including restaurants, coffee shops, groceries, ice cream, library, fine purveyors, theater, parades, art fair, Summerfest. Or just sip lemonade on the front porch and don't go anywhere. Happy 100th Birthday 1936 Dewes! You look great!

- Just drop your bags and move into this adorable home in sought after Southeast Wilmette location. Stepping into this beachy prize is like walking into a page of a magazine. Throughout the home you will encounter charm, hardwood floors, architectural details. Large eat-in kitchen - stainless steel appliances with 6-burner range, granite countertops. Spacious master bedroom with 2 walk-in closets. Many improvements including mechanical updates, windows, etc. Spacious finished basement with family room, 4th bedroom, stunning full bath, laundry room, and nice storage. Professionally landscaped fenced-in yard with paver patio and sprinkler system. Very fun and welcoming neighborhood with happy hours, block parties, book clubs, etc. Walk to 4th & Linden shops, restaurants, "L" station; Maple Park is right there; walk to Gillson Park/Beach and Canal Shores. Six days in the fall brings fun family-friendly activities at Northwestern home football events. The other 366, just kind of normal :).

- Welcome to one of Wilmette's original residences in a desirable location where you can enjoy neighborhood living yet be close to it all. This widely updated and impressive home has great space and is a pleasure to show. High ceilings, architectural details and moldings, and hardwood floors throughout. Easy floor plan includes proper foyer, eat-in kitchen, and sought after first floor family room with fireplace. Sensible 2nd floor layout includes four nicely-sized bedrooms including a master with two walk-in closets and full bath with separate shower. Many other significant updates such as windows, furnace, drain tile, etc. Finished basement offers additional space for playroom, workout room. Walk-up attic storage. On weekends laze on the inviting front porch or relax and entertain on the pretty backyard patio. Perfect for those who enjoy being able to walk to everything -- Metra train, school, restaurants, shops, movie theater, farmer's market, & the beach/lake, all within easy reach.

Examples of a Good Listing Description

This first one is for a home I sold, twice – the buyer the first time asked me to sell it for them a few years later when they relocated. Always a huge compliment.

- This updated and stylish Kenilworth Gardens home is perfect for today's savvy buyer. Ideal entertaining home with gracious flow including inside to outside. A foodies kitchen offering quartz countertops, stainless steel appliances, two full size ovens, wine fridge, French door refrigerator, and a large island with seating for 5. This spacious home enjoys 5 bedrooms + 3 full baths + laundry all on the 2nd floor. Large master bedroom has enviable his and hers closets and a fabulous bathroom. Additional features include 1st floor office, mudroom, all updated windows and doors, and new electrical and plumbing. Outside you'll find pretty paver stone walkways and an entertaining patio overlooking a nicely-sized yard and a 2-car garage with additional driveway parking! Join in the daily migration to and from Harper School, Highcrest Middle School, and Wilmette Junior High. Thornwood park is a close asset as well, with entertainment such as concerts, baseball, playground, tennis, and seasonal ice skating. Friendly neighborhood vibe and get togethers makes it easy to meet others and make new friends. No need to worry about your commute either, this location is an easy 10 minute/3.5 block walk to the Kenilworth train station. Don't spend your first few months in your new home renovating, this is a home where you can fall in love, move in and RELAX!

- Gorgeous opportunity in East Wilmette. This whole house renovation was just completed, not anticipating a relocation. Very upscale finishes and choices with universal appeal. Nothing untouched - beautiful new kitchen with designer stainless appliances, granite countertops. Eat-at island with wine refrigerator & beverage center. Refinished hardwood floors throughout (1st level brand new wide width). Wilmette-sourced wood features & other charming details. This home isn't one that falls apart at the basement or 3rd floor - beautiful 3rd floor suite with stunning newly added full bath. All fresh lighting and new windows are the finishing touches that make this home like new construction, but better. Smart mudroom addition leads to exterior with the same high attention to detail - 196' deep fenced-in lot includes a brand-new 2+ car garage, freshly sodded lawn, new paver patio with gas line for grill. Not to mention FANTASTIC location for walking to both trains, schools, town and beach!

- Set on one of East Wilmette's favorite and most quintessential cobblestone streets, this newer construction feels brand new except better, with designer updates everywhere. Curb appeal to spare including a sweet front porch. Hardwood floors throughout, wide plank on first. Updated kitchen has great prep space, large island with seating, and all the accoutrements you'd expect in a chef-level kitchen. Butler's pantry w/desk & wine fridge, and a rare walk-in pantry. Kitchen opens to a warm family room with stunning fireplace. French doors lead out to an amazing patio and yard, with various stations to enjoy dining, lounging, fire pit, or jumping. Extra-large bedrooms with pretty bathrooms and walk in closets. Large basement finished with rec room, 6th bedroom, gym, office (currently music room), wine cellar & full bath – BUT NOT LAUNDRY, that's upstairs! You'll covet this location where you can walk to the most beloved aspects including the train, restaurants, school, shops...!

Examples of Poor Listing Descriptions Written by Top Local Agents

What's wrong: Positioning a positive that is really a negative as positives (the mechanicals are old, not new),
Telling the buyer the house is too small before they have even seen it – it's not small.
And no one cares about the triplets...

...Homeowners made extensive improvements to plumbing, electric, HVAC system and more when they moved in with their family 23 years ago. They also had the first triplets to graduate from Central Elementary School! Five bedrooms and three and a half baths include a third level suite perfect for your live-in helper, out of town visitors, or college-kid-come-home. Master suite includes sitting area overlooking gorgeous, professionally landscaped yard. Extra deep yard will accommodate expansion like the next door neighbors' to the west.

What's wrong: Misspellings, no punctuation or spacing, too many abbreviations, all over the place,
doesn't tell a story. It's better to say less and deliver more.

Breathtaking Lake/Gilson Park panoramic views directly across the street from all that Wilmette's Lakefront offers-beaches,parks,tennis,music theater &more!Fall in love with the stately elegance of French Normandy beauty on oversized 82' x 171' lot.This majestic residence offers 4+ BR,3.1 bths,formal living room w/fireplace,grand formal dining room & expansive eat-in kitchen w/top-line appliances & granite countertops.Main floor also features office/guest room w/ensuite,spacious mudroom&1/2bath. Awesome lake views from master suite,3 additional BRs,family bath & access to spectacular rooftop deck-perfect for annual 4th fireworks or entertaining family & friends!The full-height unfinished 3rd floor is a great opportunity for build-out. Expansive finished basement as well!Magnificent architectural details,gracious floor plan,unmatched old world craftsmanship,stunning parquet flooring,leaded windows,tall ceilings &many updates all hallmarks of this exceptional,impeccably maintained gem!

5 Reasons to List at the **Right Price**

Overpriced Properties...

1. Fail to compete with others on the market. Buyers look at many properties and eliminate by comparison. Your home may help sell others.
2. Fail to meet expectations. Certain things are expected within a particular price range.
3. Can remain unsold for extended periods, causing buyer concern and fatigue. Buyers can become immune to the existence and may disregard completely.
4. Can ultimately cause a monetary loss. Consider your carrying costs for the next six months.
5. An overpriced home often carries the stigma the seller is unrealistic or unreasonable.



How to Price Your Home

Location. Location. Location.

This is the most important criteria in pricing (and selecting) a home, as it's the one thing that can't be changed. Sellers are often more aware than agents of their own neighborhood dynamics.

- How close are you to desired amenities? Can you walk to high value features like a beach, town, train?
- What is nearby that influences price -- are you across from a park, or across from a gas station? How well do your neighbors take care of their homes?
- Highway, train or flight path traffic noise impacts price. While you may be used to it, and likely your buyers will too, you can't price your home as if those encumbrances do not exist.

Physical features of the property

- Curb appeal
- Size of home and lot
- Floor plan/flow
- Architectural style
- Updates and upgrades – if your home is dated, don't price the same as if it were a fully updated home. Kitchens and baths are big items.

Market Conditions

- Buyer demand
- Inventory levels
- Seasonality

The Competition

- Get comfortable with your competitors. Stop by open houses to see the homes your buyers are viewing and evaluate objectively how yours compares. Assess your pluses and minuses against theirs.

If you are fortunate to get an offer right away, it is the result of getting the home in great showing condition, putting it on a fantastic platform, and pricing it right. DON'T feel it means you priced too low. It's the opposite – you did everything right.

If you don't get an offer right away, especially in a hot market, look at the feedback to see where you can make tweaks to the showing experience or price. If someone relays a negative, it translates to "for the price." At the right price everything is acceptable. When you are overpriced it's never by a little, otherwise you'd be close enough to get a low offer in. Consider a meaningful reduction like 4-5%.

Additional Pricing Tips

You'll get more for your home and sell it faster if you price it right from the onset. The greatest interest and traffic comes when you first launch, so be realistic for your largest audience. Those are all the people waiting for the next thing to come on. After that, it is buyers trickling in, who may or may not be ready to pounce on something.

It's very difficult to get full price after even a week on the market – most buyers feel like if it were at the right price it would already be gone. In any market, a well-priced home in great showing condition should go quickly.

Price the home at fair market value to effectively compete with other homes listed for sale. A home that sits on the market too long ultimately helps sell your competitor's homes as they are positioned as a better value.

Most sellers have their thumb on the pulse of the local real estate market, with a fairly good idea as to their home's value. However, there are also those who think their home is worth more than it is – don't be that person. It's difficult to sell an over-priced home, no matter who is listing it.

Side story: *I had a seller who wanted to price their home too high against my advisement. We got a buyer very quickly who uniquely wanted the home. They asked for a few unreasonable items at the inspection, still putting the home way ahead of market price. The seller refused to cooperate and we lost them. After a price reduction this buyer came back and we agreed on a price far lower than where we were at the first time, however they needed a few days to conduct a radon test. The seller instructed me to lower the price and do an open house that weekend. I told them the buyer would walk, They said "I. Don't. Care." Within minutes of making the requested changes, the news came they were out. Long story short, weeks later I got the same buyer back again a 3rd time, but the final purchase price was significantly lower than what that same buyer was willing to pay initially.*

Ultimately, the buyers decide the home's value. They have seen everything. Given that, their feedback on your home is valuable in knowing where you sit among the competition.

Sellers sometimes think buyers will make an offer even if the home is over-priced. If that were true there would be no homes sitting on the market, as they all will sell for the right price. What really happens with an incorrectly-priced home is it may not show up on the buyer's search or be on their radar. An over-priced home helps sell other correctly-priced homes.

Don't price your home with an unusual or very specific number, like \$538,450. Everyone knows pricing isn't that exact of a science. Getting too clever backfires.

Buyers search on round numbers. If you believe the right price is \$400,000, don't start at \$399,000. Everyone knows it's the same. You'd be missing buyers with searches starting at \$400,000. Once you are on the market and take a reduction, then it doesn't matter.

Pricing Resources

Cribbed Past Sales

You can search homes sold on Cribbed to evaluate against yours.

Open Houses

Go to open houses in your neighborhood to see what the competition is charging, and objectively compare it to your home. How much higher or lower should your home be priced compared to these homes?

Public Records

Every county has an assessor's office with information on recent sales for your community.

Appraiser

Hire an appraiser to give you their opinion on the value of your home. For a relatively small fee they can compare it against other recently-sold homes in your area.

Pricing Models

There are many pricing tools available to sellers, some more useful than others. Most models don't take into account subjectivity, which as you know is extremely relevant. None of these models have been in your home and can't assess qualitative aspects, however they are good benchmarks. If you would like to use them, try a couple of different ones and see if they are at all similar.

Disclosures

Each state is unique in what is required to reveal to a prospective buyer. Disclosures are a vehicle to transfer that knowledge. Truthfully disclosing an issue will help protect you if things go haywire later on.

You are not usually required to proactively seek out issues that may exist. If you don't know there is a problem, you are remaining honest if an unknown issue is not disclosed. With my clients, I generally advised against having a preinspection on the home completed for this reason.

If asked questions about potential defects, or potential stigmatization (e.g., it's haunted, a murder or suicide took place, etc.), you should respond truthfully, whether they are on the disclosure forms or not. If something comes up after the inspection, the same rules apply to notifying the buyer.

While some disclosures are provided through the Cribbed site, the ultimate responsibility for knowing the requirements of your specific state falls on you. If you fail to provide key information to your buyer, or wait too long into the process, you risk them backing out. Or if they find out information another way that seems like you already knew, it could make the process more complicated as trust may be an issue.

Federal Disclosures

1. According to the EPA, homes built before 1978 are more likely to have lead-based paint. Here is a link to the EPA website addressing lead in the home.
<https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-sources-lead>
2. Radon – according to the EPA, “Radon is a naturally-occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Radon gas is inert, colorless, odorless.” It's only inside, where the gas can be confined, it is considered a danger to your health. It enters a home through cracks or veins in the earth and foundation. Testing is the only way to measure radon test levels in the home. The radon testing company will inform you at what levels they recommend remediation. The solution for removing the gas is common, effective, and not crazy expensive (which the seller normally pays for). Many municipalities require all new construction to have a radon remediation system installed when the home is being built. Here is a link to the EPA website addressing radon in the home.
<https://www.epa.gov/radon>

State and Local Level Disclosure Examples, Among Others

Most states, but not all, have additional disclosure requirements of some kind. Some more than others. These can be property disclosures, mold, environmental disclosures, registered sex offenders, to name a few.

Regardless of whether the documents are completed by the seller or someone responsible for the home/estate, they need to be completed honestly regarding any knowledge of the items in questions – if you know, you know.

You are Ready to Publish Your Listing!

Before Publishing:

- Make sure you have all your Listing Builder modules completed.
- Block out any necessary time on the schedule.
- Enter any open house dates.

If you are not able to publish you will receive a message letting you know what modules need to be completed.

Once Published:

- Print out listing sheets.
- List any open houses on Cribbed.com, Zillow, and market them on social media.
- Try to be flexible in getting buyers in to see your home, and have the home in showing condition.
- Use showing feedback to direct changes to the buyer experience such as staging, showing efforts, price, etc.
- Agents might ask to “preview” the home for a buyer. They have plenty of information available on the Cribbed platform. Rather than prepare the home just for an agent without a buyer in tow, encourage them to bring their buyer during the same appointment. an open house, or bring their buyer for a private appointment. There is a good chance they just want to meet you to encourage you to list with them or to discuss a buyer agent payment.
- With Cribbed there is no barrier for a buyer to come to you directly. Listings are not hidden behind the locked MLS doors. That said, any decisions are your own!

Marketing your Home

Zillow

Immediately after listing on Cribbed you should add your home on Zillow. It's free to submit an owner-listed home in most states. You are required to put in a phone number -- use the Cribbed customer service number (833-856-2343), not your personal mobile number. All inquiries and appointment requests must go through Cribbed for buyer accountability and seller privacy. One of the benefits of Cribbed is your privacy is maintained by not providing personal phone or email information. Here is direct link.

https://www.zillow.com/for-sale-by-owner/?t=sellerlandingpage_v6-21_learnmore

Social Media

You can post your listing to Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest directly from your seller dashboard, just click on the provided links.

Email Link

You can email your listing to anyone with the link provided on your dashboard.

Listing Sheets

You can print listing sheets for showings and open houses by going to the buyer portal, searching on your address and click on "Listing Sheets" under your main photo.

Your Seller Portal

Your seller portal is a very powerful tool, indeed, with diagnostics unique to Cribbed. No other real estate website can provide you with analytics on 100% of the activity because, until now, these elements were scattered across multiple folders, websites, smart phones, agents, brokerages, etc.

Some of the highlights of your portal:

Listing Builder

Contains all the components necessary to get your home on the market. You won't miss anything as you are required to complete all elements before publishing.

- Property Details Input
- Order photographs
- Request For Sale sign and other exterior signage
- Complete and sign disclosures
- Add additional owners
- Add additional household members to receive appointment request/notifications

Seller Dashboard

This is Command Central for your active listing. You'll find all of the relevant statistics, with everything at your fingertips to make any necessary adjustments.

Appointments

Here are your appointments at a glance, present and past. You can block off time for when you absolutely cannot show the house - napping baby, work meetings, vacation day, illness, etc.

Open Houses

You can schedule open houses up to two weeks out. Your home will be flagged with the date and time on the buyer portal.

Timeline

Your timeline helps guide and keep things moving along to closing. Once you are under contract, the title company, as well as attorney and lender (if applicable) largely take the ball across the goal line, with assists as required.

Showings

1. Cribbed's intuitive texting feature makes it easy to receive and respond to appointment. The add-to-calendar feature keeps you organized. Keep an eye out for requests as they come in and respond expeditiously.
2. Be flexible in accommodating requests. The more people that get through the door the faster it will sell. If you cannot accept an appointment, provide guidance on re-framing the request so they can adjust (earlier/later, different day, etc.).
3. Abide by fair housing laws. Don't judge any buyer except by their ability to successfully close on your home.
4. Be wise with admitting strangers into your home. All appointments need be registered on Cribbed.com. Cross-check photos with your front door guests.
5. The Reliability Index and the Platinum Buyer tool are designed to help set expectations on the buyer's readiness to purchase a home. Go extra lengths to get a strong and reliable buyer into your home, even if not super convenient.
6. The lock box provides access to your home when you can't be there in appropriate situations.
7. Remember to respond to the request for feedback after each showing, every time. Responding helps improve the experience for you and other sellers, and keeps the reliability index measure accurate for the benefit of all.



Put Your Home's Best Foot Forward. Every. Showing.

- Turn on every lamp in the entire house for an inviting and easy to process experience. This also eliminates awkward fumbling for switches.
- Put out cookies, candy, lemonade, bottled water, etc. to create a welcoming indoor or outdoor space.
Side story: *A Connecticut agent had my kids all sitting at the island with milk and cookies while my husband and I toured the home. It was genius. I stole the idea for my showings.*
- Make beds – watch the video on how to make them perfectly.
- Open curtains and blinds to let in natural light.
- Give the home a quick vacuum (wood floors and stairs too).
- Hang towels in bathrooms – a good place for a pop of color.
- Toilet seats down, toiletries and prescriptions stashed – no one wants to see personal effects.
- Rid sink of dirty dishes.
- Put away financial or high-value items (money, checkbooks, passports, etc.).
- Contain/remove pets for showings. For showings you can ask a buyer if they are OK if a friendly dog stays, especially on short notice. A barking or jumping dog, however, is never welcoming.
- Clean up dog waste in the yard (ick!) and empty litter boxes inside.
- Open windows and doors to let in fresh air.
- Turn TVs off and music on (not too loudly) fitting of the home's character.
- Eliminate odors by preventing them – refrain from smoking inside, using the fireplace, or cooking spicy foods that linger.
- Fresh flowers brighten up a home (remove when expired).
- Set thermostat to a comfortable temperature. If it's cold, turn on the gas fireplace.
- Keep winter walkways and steps cleared and free from snow and ice.
- Open hot tubs and pools as early in the spring as possible. Some houses are meant to be sold during a particular season so stretch the calendar to highlight your amenities

Open Houses

- Request identification from visitors you don't know and ask everyone to sign in. If someone isn't willing to confirm who they are, I wouldn't let them into my home.
- Consider requesting guests to wear shoe covers, or to remove their shoes as appropriate, based on weather, traditions, preferences. Some people really don't like going shoe-less, but they are understanding, particularly when the weather is inclement. **Caution visitors that shoe covers can be slippery.**
- When giving the home tour, avoid over-explaining – agents even have a hard time with this. For instance, buyers can readily see “this is the kitchen” but they might miss a pantry. Use your Room Cards to help direct so you have less you need to relay. I used to hate when another agent gave a tour and pointed out closets.
- Buyers will want to process what they are seeing and discuss amongst themselves. You don't want to invite awkwardness with your presence as they are less likely to talk with each another with you...right...there. And you want them to feel free to talk with each other while they are there and it all has context. Use your judgment with how much leash you want to give.
- Avoid volunteering imperfections or other things they could change about the home...unless they ask. Something you've been meaning to do might not be noticed, or it may be something they wouldn't change. Adding unnecessary awareness to issues can result in escalating doubt, expenses, and to-dos in their head.
 - Example, don't volunteer the electric stove could be converted to gas if it's not brought up.
- A buyer with an agent: If a someone comes through with an agent, give them freedom to show the home unless they prefer a tour (ask). Hovering might seem like the natural thing to do but it's awkward and probably unnecessary. Remember, just because an agent is present doesn't mean you are obligated to compensate them. This platform is designed to avoid that fee.

Safety

At Cribbed we want you and your home to be as safe and protected as possible. Cribbed has implemented measures to help provide legitimate buyers:

- Buyer registration is required on Cribbed to have the ability to make appointment requests.
- 2-Factor verification on emails and cell phones.
- Photo upload required for buyer to have the ability to request appointments (note: you will not be able to see the photo of the buyer until an appointment is confirmed).

While home showing accidents are rare, you can minimize with some diligence. Consider the following safety tips while presenting your home:

- Don't show your home to anyone not registered on Cribbed.
- Request open house visitors to sign in and ask everyone to provide identification. I wouldn't allow individuals into my seller's homes who wouldn't tell me who they were.
- If you expect a big open house turnout it may be a good idea to have someone on each floor to answer questions and to keep an eye on things.
- Don't box yourself into a corner in your home. Let buyers go down into the basement in front of you.
- Don't show your home at night, especially by yourself.
- Don't provide personal, financial or confidential information to a buyer. Nothing is required to be shared until you are under contract.
- Most importantly, like with anything you might sell to a stranger at your home, if something doesn't feel right trust your gut instinct.

Managing Feedback

Feedback is super important when selling your home. We get very myopic with our views of the home we love, a home we've perfectly tweaked to make it work for us. The key is that it works (or did work) for us. Now it doesn't. Some of the things that no longer work for you also won't work for a buyer. Some things that worked great for you maybe doesn't for their needs. It's hard to hear criticism, no matter how constructive. This is where you need to have a thick skin. Appreciate what buyers like about the home along with what doesn't work for them, so you can sell what's working, and make adjustments where possible.

- Buyers aren't as imaginative as we would like, and they might not have the vision or resources (time, money, a contractor) to do the work. You might not either, but every downside relates to price and time on market, so it is worth more to you than it is to them. You only have one house to sell and they likely have other options to buy.
- Not everyone has the same tastes in design, decorating or furnishings. Common feedback is that a home is "dated." Take a step back and think about easy and inexpensive modifications. You'll likely get back what you put in with even minor tweaks. Paint can make a tremendous bang for the buck. Other improvements that you take with you (like accessories) are a double bonus!
- If expectations aren't met, take it to heart and modify the listing description. If you say there are 4 bedrooms, but one of them is closer to a closet, call it 3 bedrooms, the way the buyers see it. It's better to overwhelm ("3 bedrooms AND THIS HUGE CLOSET!") than to underwhelm with only 3 usable bedrooms. It's a waste of time for everyone to pretend a buyer won't notice things like that. Agents make this kind of mistake all the time, and sometimes their sellers don't take this advice.
- If you get feedback you objectively agree with, make the improvements.
- If you get consistent feedback about something you can't imagine being an issue, but you can do something about (like a polarizing wall color) then fix it. We are trying to please the buyers and they are telling you what they want.
- If you get consistent feedback about something you can't imagine being an issue, but you cannot do anything about (like a location issue, layout/flow, dated kitchen) then adjust the price. Buyers are telling you it's too expensive for the barrier. Lastly, if you make any major modifications mid-stream, you should get the relevant photos retaken so it looks as good online as it does in person.

You've received an offer!

1. It's a best practice to negotiate in good faith and provide timely responses and updates.
2. Everything is negotiable. If you have an item agreed upon, know that item may still be up for debate if used to offset a different term. There is a saying...until all things are agreed upon, nothing is agreed upon.
3. Not everything is about price. Consider what else is of value to you or your buyer. Does an earlier or later closing date save you money or work better for your move? Or maybe you are flexible and can focus on other terms.
4. If the offer price is not close to your asking price it can be discouraging. Don't let it be. Offers almost always come in lower than you hope. But more often than not, working with the buyer results in mutually agreed-upon terms. If nothing else, you end up with a baseline from which to evaluate other offers.
5. Unless you are significantly over-priced, the buyer's usually plans to negotiate. I have found the desired end point is almost always dead-center between the starting point and the list price.
6. If someone presents a "highest and best" offer, there may still be room for negotiating – either with price, or with other terms that help offset a better price.
7. Know what items are non-negotiable to you and your buyer, and communicate. It's important to understand those, so you can give on things that are less important to you but may have more significance to the buyer.
8. An offer may come in low simply because the buyer loves your home but just cannot afford it. You are not obligated to reach an agreement when you can't come to terms. But there is a benefit to negotiating, to try to get to an agreement, and see where it lands. It may seem like you are worlds apart, but more often than not, even in those situations, it comes together. Worst case, you have a data point and have established a baseline.
9. Be wary of any offers that come in sight-unseen. Even if from a legitimate buyer, the chance of backing out is higher than with someone who knows what they are buying.
10. The name of the buyer(s) is on the presentation of terms. Research them thoroughly. If you are unable to verify the person or business, it's important to seek advice from an attorney before making any decisions. Trustworthy buyers will have no problem providing you with the information you need to verify their legitimacy.
11. **DO NOT INCLUDE ANY** personal property on a contract containing financing – banks will typically finance only the home itself, not contents. In that event use a separate bill of sale.
12. Review all accompanying documentation including proof of funds and pre-approval letters. See the following page for vetting pre-approval letters.
13. Be concerned with offers that provide or request cash upfront, or that circumvent the Cribbed system. Like with showings, trust your gut. And if something seems too good to be true, it quite likely is.

Financing Contingency

1. Financing typically takes 30 - 45 days for final approval. The buyer should complete a mortgage application expeditiously after going under contract.
2. Before signing an offer contingent upon financing, I always called the lender to get a better understanding as to the depth of the buyer's credentials. Lenders are agreeable to answering certain personal questions specific to the pre-approval letter. Most agents don't know to do this or just don't go through the effort - I did, every time. You can do this as well.

Ask the lender if they have:

- Pulled credit.
 - Personally seen the buyer's documentation vs just discussed (W2s, check stubs, tax returns).
 - Put the buyer through an automated underwriting process. You will get a decent idea as to the depth of knowledge on the buyer's ability to get across the finish line. Assess how strongly the lender convinces you about the buyer's ability to purchase.
3. Lenders usually, but not always, require an appraisal to be ordered, at the buyer's expense. That appointment is coordinated through you to gain access. The buyer does not usually appear at that appointment. It is recommended the seller provide the appraiser with a listing sheet along with any comps, updates and upgrades that add value to the home. You want the home to appraise out.
 - Sometimes the appraisal isn't ordered until after the home clears the inspection period.
 - Keep the home in showing condition through the home inspection and the appraisal period.
 - There is a saying in real estate..."First you sell it to the buyer, then you sell it to the bank."
Treat the inspector the same as a buyer.
 4. Monitor the financing dates.
 5. It's not uncommon for a lender to need more time to complete the financing approval. If you receive a request to extend the contingency date, find out why. Most often it's a reasonable procedural request and typically granted. If it seems like there is more to it, try to gain understanding as to why they need additional time. If you have an attorney they will monitor and advise.

Home Sale Contingency

When a buyer has a home to sell, they can make an offer contingent upon finding a buyer for the home, or upon the home's actual successful closing, by a deadline.

First and foremost, if you find yourself in this situation, you should consider contacting an attorney for advice on your legal options and responsibilities.

1. The buyer goes through the inspection and resolution process the same as for a non-contingent sale.
2. The house is flagged as Contingent/Home Sale. The home may still be shown, and you may continue to receive and negotiate other offers. You may also be able to accept another offer *contingent upon release of this contract*.
3. The contingency remains until either your buyer has fulfilled the contingency on their current home OR if they release the contingency due to your presentation of a contingency-free offer from another buyer.
4. If your buyer is unable to fulfill the contingency by the agreed upon date, or if they aren't in a position to release it in the event of the presentation of another viable buyer's contract, the original contract could be canceled.

Also Consider:

- While many transactions with this contingency successfully close, there are additional risks with the added complexity and hurdles to the sale – all completely out of your control. And the risk is 100% on your end.
- If the buyer's home is not yet on the market, there are a lot of factors and variables outstanding, making it riskier, and reducing the likelihood to close.
- The further along that deal is in the process, and the more hurdles it has cleared, the less risk you take on *(just like with your home sale)*. Ideally the home has cleared inspections.
- Read your buyer's home sale contract. It provides you with a view of that situation and buyer. *Just like with your buyer, you would need to call that lender and ask the same questions.*
- I would not have allowed my seller to accept a home sale contingency where their buyer also has a home sale contingency. It's a lot of dominoes to fall. *(For the same reason, if you accept an offer with a home sale contingency, you'd have limited success making an offer also with a home sale contingency.*
- How is the overall activity on your home and how many days has it been on market? If it's slow, and this buyer loves the house, needs to move, can make up for this hurdle with other terms, and it feels like their deal is solid, it might be a good buyer for you and worth considering – with due-diligence.

Multiple offers

Multiple offers may sound like a dreamy situation, but in the end someone is disappointed they are not getting your home.

Consider which buyer is the strongest and most likely to get to closing. This could be based on interest, need, or ability to pay.

1. Who is the most motivated? Who loves the home (or location) the most? Who needs the home the most (maybe they've sold their home and need to move, often by a certain date)? Who seems like the easiest to work with? You aren't paying a middleman to absorb annoying or difficult buyers.
2. Who is the most qualified and buttoned-up? Which buyers seem like it's an easy purchase for them?
3. What buyer seems the most informed about the house? The buyer who has done more due diligence and whose eyes are the most wide-open might be more committed than someone who has spent less time. Maybe.
4. Be wary of an offer made by someone who has not laid eyes on the house. This is more common now with information available online, and there may be legitimate reasons, but there is an increased likelihood of disinterest when they see it in person.
5. Be slightly cautious with a ridiculously-high offer. This buyer may legitimately really need or want the home (see #1 or #2), but remember, if the buyer is acquiring financing to purchase the home, it is likely that it will need to appraise out. Or I even found buyers over-offering just to "get" the home just to try to renegotiate later.
6. Remember, the best offer isn't just about price. All the components make up the terms, and other elements can, and usually do, offset price.
7. If one of the offers has a home sale contingency, there is a price tradeoff for that risk.
8. This platform presents new opportunities for buyers and sellers. You are free to ask each person why are interested in purchasing your home and see what they say.

Under Contract

Congratulations! Getting under contract was probably easier than you expected with Cribbed. Your listing status will automatically change to “Under Contract” as your home is no longer fully available, but appointments are still able to be made.

Showings will slow down significantly, but you may get a few requests here and there. You can still show it and take back up offers. All the way up until closing.

It is wise to retain good relations with your buyer throughout the process, making it easier to keep the deal together and get to closing. Remember, you have a common goal – they would like to buy your home, and you would like to sell it to them.

Your seller portal timeline will help take you through to closing. The buyer also has a timeline, with instructions that relate to the purchase side of the transaction.

Next Steps:

1. The buyer submits agreed-upon earnest money to the escrow holder: the title company identified prior to publishing your listing.
2. All paperwork (contract, signed disclosures, earnest money receipt) goes to the title company performing the closing.
3. The buyer will schedule the inspection and let you know the day/time.
4. After the inspection has been completed, and any outstanding items resolved, the path is mostly cleared, and contingent only upon other remaining elements such as financing.

Some states require using attorneys in the closing process. Although, even if not required or even customary, you can and should hire a real estate attorney regardless. It may be worth the price to protect you in a complicated situation or from things you haven't considered.

With an attorney and/or title company you are passing the football to the quarterback who will cross the end zone for the touchdown. You may have to do blocking and tackling as requested to provide documentation or pay fees as instructed.

As a general word of caution, be wary of any requests for wiring money, expected or unexpected, and be sure they are coming from a trusted source, such as the title company.

The Inspection

The inspection period is probably the most nail-biting part of the process. The buyer wants to ensure it is a solid purchase, and the seller hopes the evaluation and any repair requests are reasonable.

All due-diligence is the responsibility of the buyer and is performed at their expense. They are working against a contractual deadline, as well as a tight inspector schedule, so try to be agreeable to the proposed day and time. It can take anywhere from 3 to 4 hours, depending on the size, age and condition of the home.

Make sure all the utilities are turned on so the inspector can properly assess the home and insure working order of all material components.

The inspector evaluates the condition of the home from top to bottom, inside and out. This allows the buyer to get to know their new home, learn how to maintain it, and what to budget for deferred maintenance. The inspector evaluates structural, mechanical, appliances, etc., noting any material defects, safety issues, or environmental concerns.

In addition to a general inspection, a buyer might order other inspections as appropriate. Some of these may be conducted by the general inspector, or the inspector may schedule someone else to conduct them.

1. Pool
2. Sewer Scope
3. Septic System
4. Well
5. Radon

Follow-up evaluations are also common if a general inspection turns up the need for further exploration by a specialist. This can extend the inspection contingency period.

Examples of the most typical follow-ups:

1. Basement/Foundation/Structural
2. HVAC
3. Fireplace/Chimney

Sellers are traditionally not present during the inspection, providing privacy for the buyer to learn about their new home. If you choose to be present, provide appropriate space and respect private conversations.

An electronic report is usually available within 24 hours, although the buyer will have immediate feedback as well.

Resolving Inspection Issues

No seller wants to see a laundry list of inspection items. If you receive such a response, remain calm.

Focus on:

- 1) Legitimate safety and mechanical items you too would want in acceptable working order
- 2) Easy and/or inexpensive things to fix (petty or not).
- 3) Repairs you were considering making anyway

My best advice is that unless this buyer is a complete nightmare, work with the deal you have in hand. Keep the deal together with the buyer you know. Don't lose a deal over principle. If all a buyer asked for was every light bulb in the home to be replaced, I'd do it. In a heartbeat.

Also keep in mind, if requested items will be the same that another buyer will request.

Think as a buyer and what you'd perceive as a fair resolution to uncovered issues. For everything they are asking for, know there are probably dozens of small items that require fixing they are absorbing.

You can, and should, also do your own follow-up inspections to more effectively negotiate the issues that have been raised.

If defects are uncovered that affect the buyer's interest in the home, and/or affects the value for them, the following options are possible resolutions:

1. Repair request
2. Closing cost credit
3. Renegotiate the price
4. Any combination of the above

In most cases, a credit at closing is safer than agreeing to repairs as it reduces confusion and liability about what constitutes a satisfactory repair. There is no subjectivity in a dollar amount. Some environmental items (e.g., mold, radon, asbestos), however, may require being addressed on your side of the closing line.

Keep in mind:

- It is unlikely lenders will underwrite a home where defects are specified in writing, no matter how minor. Same if there are projects or renovations in progress when the appraiser comes out. Make sure the project is not in progress when the appraiser arrives.

From Inspection until Closing

1. Get final utility readings if required and cancel service effective the day after closing. Let your buyer know when completed so they can schedule service start.
 - Electrical Service
 - Gas
 - Water Meter
2. Check with your local municipality, attorney or title company, regarding any transfer taxes you are required to pay.
3. Cancel services:
 - Telephone (if you have a home phone)
 - Cable TV
 - Internet
 - Pest control
 - Home security monitoring
 - Landscaping services
4. Notify your insurance company of the sale.
5. Complete a change of address with post office, which can be done online, and contact the following to change address directly with them.
 - Magazines/Newspaper subscriptions
 - Bank Accounts
 - Credit cards, car loans
 - Insurance Companies
 - Health care providers
 - School Records
 - Place of Employment
 - Family and friends
6. Send the attorney or title company scanned receipts for any completed agreed upon repairs.
7. Damages to the home and property occurring after the inspection which can't be fully corrected with a repair need to be disclosed to the buyer. Anything not operational or in existence from inspected should be replaced with an item of similar value or otherwise agreed. A new stove may be good news, but if a tree falls on the shed, you need to discuss a solution.
8. If the sign hasn't come down, notify the sign company to come have it removed.
9. Set up services and utilities at your new home.

Final Walk-Through

The buyer typically conducts a final walk through just prior to closing (usually the morning of) to make sure the home is in the same condition as last seen. Leave the home as you would want to be receiving it if you were the buyer.

- Property should be completely empty including closets, refrigerator, cabinets, garage, attic, storage locker, etc.
- Make sure everything agreed to as conveying with the home remains on the property (window treatments, mirrors, etc.).
- Property should be cleaned including floors, counters, inside cabinets and drawers, all appliances (especially oven and fridge) and all bathrooms, showers, etc. Although not a legal requirement, it is strongly recommended you have your home professionally cleaned after moving out – an appreciative and happy buyer will likely lead to a smoother final walk through. As a result, the buyer is less likely to nitpick and look for new issues.
- Have the lawn mowed and the yard picked up.
- Arrange for pick up or disposal of trash left from cleaning out the house.
- Leave out all appliance and HVAC warranties and manuals in your possession.
- Leave paid receipts on the kitchen counter for agreed upon repairs.
- Leave keys (including mailbox keys) and garage door openers (take out of the car) on the kitchen counter.
- Electric and gas service **MUST BE ON** for the day of closing. Please have your accounts transferred as of the day after closing.
- Dispose of paint and cleaning supplies unless the buyer has asked for them.
- Take the lock box off the front door.
- Consider leaving a small gift, a bottle of wine, fresh flowers, something they admired that you were going to get rid of anyway, whatever is appropriate for your buyer you have probably gotten to know a bit. That gesture can go a long way in ensuring a smooth transition at the closing and beyond.

Closing

Once all contingencies have been satisfied, the closing is then scheduled. If the buyer is obtaining financing, the lender will issue what is called the “clear to close” once the mortgage commitment has been met.

The attorney or title company will work with the parties to arrange a time and location as convenient as possible. This might take place at a title company office, an attorney’s office, a residence, or even possibly online.

The closing could take anywhere from less than an hour for a cash transaction, to several hours if the buyer is obtaining financing.

In some cases, depending on preferences and local customs, sellers are able to sign their minimal paperwork in advance and don’t need to attend the closing. Otherwise, sellers attend the same closing as the buyers, in person or virtually, wherever the wherever it is occurring.

If you choose to not attend the closing, make sure to leave keys and a garage door opener with the attorney, the title company, or any other place the buyer can access.

Bring to Closing

- Identification for anyone signing paperwork
- Keys to property (can leave extras at the house)
- Garage door openers included in the sale (remember to take out of the car) -- extras can be left at the home
- Security alarm code
- Receipts for agreed-upon repairs

Once the closing is final, be sure your Cribbed listing is closed out to avoid any monthly fees.

Open Houses

- Request identification from visitors you don't know and ask everyone to sign in. If someone isn't willing to confirm who they are, I wouldn't let them into my home.
- Consider requesting guests to wear shoe covers, or to remove their shoes as appropriate, based on weather, traditions, preferences. Some people really don't like going shoe-less, but they are understanding, particularly when the weather is inclement. **Caution visitors that shoe covers can be slippery.**
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