



Setting Your Home's Sale Price

Factors that Determine the Value of Your Home

Location – Where your home is located may be the single most important factor when determining the value of your home.

Condition – The condition of your home affects the price and how quickly it will sell. The appearance both inside and out can bolster the buyer's perception. Since emotion plays a large part in buying a home, the buyer's first look is important.

Price – Establishing the correct price for a home will help insure a quick sale. A comparative market analysis will enable you to decide the optimum price for your home.

Competition – Buyers will evaluate your home against others they deem comparable. Properties currently for sale and properties that have recently sold will have the greatest impact on the market value of your home.

The Market – The real estate market is always changing and these changes may affect property values. It is difficult to forecast the market; therefore a flexible marketing plan will help prepare you and your home for sale.

When Your Selling Price is too High, Beware!

So you've decided to sell your home and have a fairly good idea of what you think it is worth. A couple of the Realtors you've met with have come up with prices that are lower than you expected. They back up their recommendations with recent sales data of similar homes, and yet you remain convinced your house is worth more. When you interview the third agent's figures, they are much more in line with your own anticipated value, or maybe even higher. Suddenly, you are a happy and excited home seller, already counting the money.

If you're like many people, you pick Realtor number three. This is an agent who seems willing to listen to your input and work with you. This is an agent that cares about putting the most money in your pocket. This is an agent that is willing to start out at your price and if you need to drop the price later, you can do that easily, right? After all, *everyone else does it!*

The truth is that you may have just met an agent engaging in a questionable sales practice called "**buying a listing**." He "bought" the listing by suggesting you might be able to get a higher sales price than the other agents recommended. Most likely, he is quite doubtful that your home will actually sell at that price. The intention from the beginning is to eventually talk you into lowering the price.

Why do agents "buy" listings? There are basically two reasons. A well-meaning and hardworking agent can feel pressure from a homeowner who has an inflated perception of his home's value. On the other hand, there are some agents who engage in this sales practice routinely.

What Happens Behind the Scenes

Whichever the case, if you start out with too high a price on your home, you may have just added to your stress level, and selling a home is stressful enough. There will be a lot of "behind the scenes" action taking place that you don't know about.

Listing agents market and promote your home to the hordes of other local agents who work with homebuyers, dramatically increasing your personal sales force. During the first couple of weeks your home should be a flurry of activity with buyer's agents coming to preview your home so they can sell it to their clients....If the price is right.

If you and your agent have overpriced, fewer agents will preview your home. After all, they are Realtors, and it is their job to know local market conditions and home values. If your house is dramatically above market, why waste time? Their time is better spent previewing homes that are priced realistically.

Dropping Your Price...Too Late

Later, when you drop your price, your house is “old news.” You will never be able to recapture that flurry of initial activity you would have had with a realistic price. Your house could take longer to sell.

Even if you do successfully sell at an above market price, your buyer will need a mortgage. The mortgage lender requires an appraisal. If comparable sales for the last six months and current market conditions do not support your sales price, the house won't appraise. Your deal falls apart. Of course, you can always attempt to renegotiate the price, but only if the buyer is willing to listen. Your house could go “back on the market.”

Once your home has fallen out of escrow or sits on the market awhile, it is harder to get a good offer. Potential buyers will think you might be getting desperate, so they will make lower offers. By overpricing your home in the beginning, you could actually end up settling for a lower price than you would have normally received.