

An Inconvenient Truth about Selling Your Home

Truth is few things are more inconvenient than having your home on the market.

Imagine a bad reality show, where you are forced to live in *Macy's* window for weeks on end. Your personal items, your life, constantly exposed to strangers and their criticisms – with no end in sight.

If your home is currently on the market, or going on the market soon, you may already feel this way. So what's the best way to get out from under the microscope? Sell fast. Well, that sounds easy – and obvious – but how do you sell fast?

In addition to the right price and a good real estate agent, the winning combination also includes home staging, effort, and a willingness to be inconvenienced while your home is on the market. The following questions will help you understand if you are ready, willing, and able to do what it takes to sell a home in this market?

1. Are you willing to detach yourself emotionally from this home and view it as a product or commodity?
2. Are you willing to let go of your personal style and decorate to appeal to the widest variety of buyers?
3. Are you willing to pack up anything you won't need for the next few months – even if it includes children's toys, personal photos and keepsakes?
4. Are you willing to eliminate or hide TVs, computers or other electronic devices?
5. Are you willing to send your pets away when the home is being shown?
6. Are you willing to furnish an unfurnished home so that it is warm, inviting, and spacious?
7. Are you willing to clean like you've never cleaned before?
8. Are you willing to establish a budget of no more than 3% of the price of the home for repairs, upgrades and updates?



If you answered "yes" to most, or all of these questions, then you are probably ready.

More than ever, home buyers are looking for move-in ready homes that feel fresh, spacious and up-to-date. On the Web, buyers may like the price, pictures and attributes your home has to offer, but that's not always enough. They need to be impressed the minute they walk through the door. Showcasing every space will make them fall in love at first sight. It's this positive emotional response that can lead to an offer and hopefully a sale.

Here are a few tips to meet buyers' demands, "up" your game, and beat the competition. At the same time, you'll reduce the amount of time your home is on the market and consequently the amount of time that you will be inconvenienced.

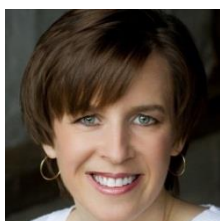
Be prepared. The hardest part of living in a home that is on the market is constantly being prepared to show your home. But you must be ready at a moment's notice. You never know when your perfect buyer will walk through the door. This is not a good time to entertain or have guests.

Clean sells. All homes should be thoroughly cleaned prior to listing. Daily touch-ups may be necessary for occupied homes, but vacant homes can become surprisingly dirty as well. Dust on surfaces, cobwebs in corners, stains in stagnant toilets, fingerprints on windows and appliances—all of these areas need to be inspected and cleaned regularly. Occupied or vacant, consider hiring a professional cleaning service during the period your home is on the market.

Pack it up. Pack up and store anything you won't need while your home is on the market. Packing sooner, rather than later, will make the transition easier. Many moving companies offer storage options for those staging their homes to sell.

Stick to the essentials. Too much or no furniture can make a home feel small. Cluttered homes are distracting, while vacant homes can leave a buyer cold. Either way, buyers will have trouble picturing their furniture in these spaces. Define each space to have a single purpose, minimize clutter, and make sure there is plenty of light.

The more you do in advance of listing your home for sale, the faster it will sell, and the sooner you can return to a normal life. Showcasing or staging your home will help to minimize the stress and inconvenience that comes with selling. The truth is that you will be inconvenienced, but it will be well worth it, and your efforts will be rewarded, when your home sells fast and for top dollar.



Susan Atwell, home staging expert and President of *AtWell Staged Home*, is passionate about staging homes to sell quickly and for top dollar. Contact Susan for more information or to schedule an appointment.

Sign up for our free e-newsletter at StageEveryListing.com for home staging and decorating tips. Designed for real estate professionals, home owners, or anyone who enjoys interior decorating.

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