

H YOUR HOME



When the Going Gets Tough

If your home isn't selling, there could be a problem with its condition or the price. So if you don't want to spend every weekend for the foreseeable future getting ready for an open house, it's time to take some action.

Ask your agent if you should add a few incentives that may sweeten the transaction for a prospective buyer.

Here are a few things you can do to nudge along the sales process:

- 1 Offer freebies.** This might sound like a desperate measure, but sellers have been known to throw in everything from the cars in the garage, free landscaping services for one year, gift certificates to a home appliance store, free airfare to a sunny destination and even cash for decorating their new home.
- 2 Offer to pay a year's worth of real-estate taxes.** This will cost you a pretty penny, but it will set your house apart from others on the market.
- 3 Offer to take care of a problem.** If parking spaces are at a premium, rent one for a year for the new owner. Whatever the problem is, take care of it. Make it difficult for the buyer to walk away.
- 4 Pay the buyer's closing costs.** This could set you back several thousand dollars, but it might also enable you to keep the price of your home a bit higher since the buyer can finance it.



SOLID FOUNDATIONS

You may not have time before your home goes on the market for all the home projects you've been putting off, but you should definitely make time for your floors.

Buyers looking at a home with hardwood floors want them to be in great shape, not warped, scratched or cracked. Home buyers will also notice cracked floor tiles in the bathroom, peeling vinyl flooring in the laundry room or stained wall-to-wall carpet in the bedroom. So it comes down to this: Start at the bottom and make sure your floors are in great condition. When it comes to tiles, go to your local hardware store for tubes of ointment that can lighten your grout. Your carpet might look much better with a professional steam cleaning, but if you have to replace it, choose a neutral color that will go with almost any type of décor.

If you're a do-it-yourselfer, you may want to start on syndicated columnist Tim Carter's Ask the Builder Web site, www.askthebuilder.com. He offers advice on everything from installing vinyl floors to putting in hardwood floors over concrete. He also offers advice on slate floors, cork floors and even squeaky floors.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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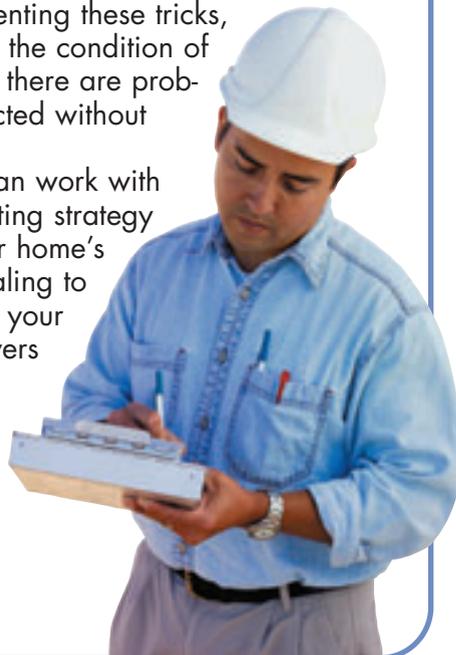
Trying to Trick the Inspector? Don't Bother

If you think you can fool the home inspector by painting over water spots on the basement floor or hiding a crack in the wall by hanging a picture, think again. Although most inspectors don't have X-ray eyesight, they're used to sniffing out cover-ups. So painting your basement floor or walls might actually raise a red flag even if there's nothing wrong.

The same goes for heavy furniture or boxes pushed up against a wall or rugs that are tacked down to cover a stain. Likewise, if you have a water problem, turning of the water valve will cause concern (after all, a good inspector will test all the faucets).

So instead of implementing these tricks, talk to your agent about the condition of your home, especially if there are problems that can't be corrected without spending a fortune.

A good REALTOR® can work with you to develop a marketing strategy that is honest about your home's condition, yet still appealing to potential buyers. Selling your home "as is" allows buyers to understand that there may be potential problems with the house and you discount the effect of any possible pre-closing negotiations the buyer might try upon learning of a problem.



CRS: Only The Best

Choosing the right REALTOR® is the key to a successful sale. Picking an agent can be tough. But knowing the credentials to look for in a REALTOR® will help both the seller and the buyer feel at ease throughout the entire real estate transaction.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) agent has an outstanding level of achievement in the profession. CRS agents have both a high volume of sales and high number of transactions, as well as advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. As additional peace of mind, CRS agents must maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics.



CRS agents are in the top 4 percent of agents in the country. They offer years of experience, demonstrated success and advice to help you make smart decisions about selling your home. The real estate market is tough, fast-paced and competitive, but with a CRS agent by your side, selling your home becomes an enjoyable experience.