

New Listing Guide



USA National Title
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Superior Customer Service Without Compromise

New Listing Guide

15 HOME LISTING TIPS

1. Pricing Your Home

-> Your agent can research comparable sales in your area and advise you of the appropriate price range for your property.

2. Flexibility On Financing

-> Have your agent explain what financing options are available. Flexibility on financing terms may secure a better selling price.

3. Market Timing

-> Ask a real estate professional to determine whether the market cycle is poised to net you the most money.

4. Property Accessibility For Potential Buyers

-> Lock boxes are a great way to make your home the most accessible to agents for showing. Appointment-only showings are the most restrictive. If your lifestyle is not compatible with frequent showings, your agent will help you determine a solution to suit your needs. Remember, the easier a home is to show, the better the odds are of getting the deal you want.

5. Latest Marketing Technology

-> Make sure your agent utilizes the latest technology, such as internet sites that cater to home buyers. In some areas, cable access advertising is popular. Others use 800-number interactive voice response systems. A good agent will know where you can get the best exposure.

6. Present Your Property Correctly

-> Put some items in storage, create more light, play music, or otherwise improve the ambiance. Your agent can offer helpful advice to create the right first impression.

7. Seasonal Property Sales

-> Don't base selling decisions on the season. Property sells year-round.

8. Re-evaluate The Marketing Plan

-> Re-evaluate your agent's marketing plan every 20 days. Make needed adjustments based on the current market and buyers.

9. Analyze Why You Aren't Getting Offers

-> Eighty percent of all buyer activity comes from signs and MLS listings. So if you are not getting any offers and are flexible with showing your home, it may be time to re-evaluate your price, not necessarily your agent.



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15 HOME LISTING TIPS - CONTINUED

10. First Impressions Are Golden

-> Sales have gone south thanks to unkept lawns, cluttered closets, unpainted front doors, hard to work locks, blown light bulbs, bad colors, stains, unlit areas and foul smells. Spend time on the little things. Double up on your gardening. Keep things cleaner than usual. Take serious control of your pets during this time period.

11. Make The Right Kind Of Repairs

-> Before making improvements prior to listing, consult a real estate professional. Some upgrades will not yield any real increase in value, while others may increase property value substantially. Ask for low-cost solutions to minor repairs that will yield the best profits.

12. Give The Sales Process Enough Time

-> Homes may take 3-6 months to sell in any market. Estimate how much time you have before you need to sell and then plan ahead to allow extra time. You don't want to be forced to accept a disappointing offer.

13. Screen Prospects Adequately

-> One of the best reasons for hiring a realtor is his or her ability to pre-qualify a prospect financially so that you don't lose valuable negotiation time. Your agent may discover when a prospect has an ulterior motive for shopping homes, other than purchasing.

14. Believe That You Can Make A Difference

-> The top agents in the industry report that their sellers are responsible for at least 1 out of 10 sales. You can network your business and personal friends, hand out flyers and keep your house in move-in condition. Your realtor should be ready to hand you all sorts of assignments to make the team effort successful.

15. Test The Market

-> Never put your property on the market unless you really want a sale! Get ready for a professional sales push when you list with a great agent. If your plan harbors some indecision, resolve it before you list because success is every great realtor's objective!



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PRESENTING YOUR HOME



Enhancing how your home shows to potential buyers cannot only help to sell it more quickly but can often improve the selling price.

Stand Out In Your Neighborhood

-> A well kept, neatly landscaped property can be very inviting to the potential buyer interested in viewing your home. Refuse containers should be out of view, and the lawn should be freshly trimmed. Fertilizing a few weeks prior to listing will help your lawn look lush and green. Woodwork should be free of chipped or cracked paint.

Fresh Look

-> The front door should be clean or freshly painted. Brass knobs should be polished. Consider placing a planter of fresh flowers on your front porch.

Small Repair Details

-> Repair all loose doorknobs and cupboard hinges, dripping faucets, stained sinks, loose or missing caulking, sticking doors and windows, and damaged or missing window screens.

Tidy Up

-> Tidiness makes a room look larger and helps the buyer visualize his/her décor in your home. Workout rooms, sewing rooms, laundry rooms, and home offices should be as organized and clutter-free as the main living space in your home.

Light Up Your Home

-> An open, airy feeling generates comfort and welcomes the potential buyer into your home. Drapes, curtains and mini blinds should be open to allow plenty of light in your home. Turn on all the lights when showing your home at night.

Clean Closets

-> Neat, well-organized closets appear larger. Larger closets help sell homes.

Squeaky Clean

-> Remove stains from sinks, toilets and bathtubs, including hard water spots on shower enclosure doors. If drains run slowly, unclog them. Hang fresh towels on towel rack.

Clean Kitchen

-> Make the most important room in the house appear larger by cleaning clutter from the countertops. Avoid dirty dishes in the sink. All countertop appliances should be kept out of view. Replace or repair worn out flooring. Clean the ventilation hood over your stove. A brighter kitchen is always more attractive.



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PRESENTING YOUR HOME - PART 2

6 House Showing Tips

1. Avoid having too many people present. The potential buyer may feel uncomfortable or pressured to hurry through your home.
2. Don't tag along or force conversation with the buyer.
3. Turn down the stereo or television so the buyer and realtor can talk undisturbed.
4. Keep pets out of the way, preferably, out of the house.
5. Never apologize for the appearance of your home. Let your realtor handle questions and concerns the potential buyer may have.
6. Let your realtor negotiate price and terms with the potential buyer. Realtors are trained negotiators who know what the buyer is looking for in a home.



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TITLE INSURANCE - *Do I NEED IT?*

Title insurance offers home buyers financial protection against ownership disputes and other title problems after escrow closes. When you consider that real estate is probably your most valuable asset and the most significant investment you may ever make, title insurance offers welcome peace-of-mind.

Title insurance is also a selling feature used to make your property more attractive to buyers as well as to lenders who are more willing to make mortgage funds available in areas where they know little about local market conditions.

Title Insurance Uncovers Hidden Problems

The title insurance process begins with a search for title records on the property for purchase. The search may uncover things that need correction before providing a clear title, such as:

1. Outstanding mortgages, judgments and tax liens
2. Deeds, wills and trusts that contain improper vesting and incorrect names
3. Incorrect notary acknowledgments
4. Restrictions on height or use of the land
5. Easements for utilities or access rights

In spite of the expertise and dedication that go into a search and examination, hidden defects are still a possibility after a real estate purchase is complete, including:

1. Previously undisclosed heirs with claims against the property
2. A forged deed that transfers no title to real estate
3. Instruments executed under expired or fabricated power of attorney
4. Mistakes in the public records or unrecorded claims
5. Forced removal of encroachments onto the adjoining property

Title Insurance Partner

The title insurer, on your behalf, negotiates with third parties, defends against title disputes and pays on any valid claims. Unlike other kinds of insurance that protect against future events and charge an annual premium, title insurance is a one-time payment and safeguards against loss from hazards and defects already existing in the title. Extended coverage is also available to cover future events, as well.



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HOLDING TITLE

Tenancy in Common	Joint Tenancy	Community Property	Community Property with rights of survivorship
Parties - Any number of persons. (Can be husband & wife)	Parties - Any number of persons. (Can be husband & wife)	Parties - Only husband and wife.	Parties - Only husband and wife.
Division - Ownership can be divided into any number of interests, equal or unequal.	Division - Owner interests must be equal.	Division - Ownership & managerial interests are equal.	Division - Ownership & managerial interests are equal.
Title - Each co-owner has a separate legal title to his or her undivided interest.	Title - There must be unity of title and time (created in one document).	Title - Title is in the "community." Each interest is separate but management is unified.	Title - Title is in the "community." Each interest is separate but management is unified. Title must state community property with right to survivorship.
Possession - Equal rights of possession.	Possession - Equal rights of possession.	Possession - Both co-owners have equal management and control	Possession - Both co-owners have equal management and control
Conveyance - Each co-owner's interest may be conveyed separately by its individual owner.	Conveyance - by one co-owner without the others will terminate that individual's joint tenancy.	Conveyance - Written consent of other spouse is required, and separate interest cannot be conveyed except upon death.	Conveyance - Written consent of other spouse is required, and separate interest cannot be conveyed except upon death.
Purchaser's Status - Will become a tenant in common with the other property co-owners.	Purchaser's Status - Will become a tenant in common with the other property co-owners.	Purchaser Status - can acquire title from the community with written consent or joinder of both spouses.	Purchaser Status - can acquire title from the community with written consent or joinder of both spouses.
Death - On co-owner's death, his or her interest passes by will to that person's devisees or heirs. No survivorship right.	Death - On co-owner's death, his or her interest ends and cannot be disposed of by will. Survivor(s) own(s) the property. An Affidavit of Death of joint tenant establishes death.	Death - Upon death of one spouse, 50% belongs to surviving spouse, 50% goes by will to decedent's devisees or by succession to surviving spouse.	Death - Upon death of one spouse, his or her interest ends and cannot be disposed of by will. Survivor owns the property 100%. An affidavit of death (community property with rights of survivorship) establishes death of a spouse.
Successor - Devisees or heirs become tenants in common.	Successor - Last survivor owns property 100%.	Successor - If passing by will, tenancy in common between devisees and survivor results.	Successor - Purchaser can only acquire whole title of community; cannot acquire a part of it.
Creditor's - Co-owner's interest may be sold on execution sale to satisfy his or her creditor. The creditor becomes a tenant in common.	Creditor's - Co-owner's interest may be sold on execution sale to satisfy creditor. The creditor becomes a tenant in common.	Creditor's - Property of community is liable for contracts of either spouse which were made after marriage and prior to or after Jan. 1, 1975. Co-owner's interest cannot be sold separately; whole property may be sold on execution to satisfy creditor.	Creditor's - Property of community is liable for contracts of either spouse which were made after marriage and prior to or after Jan. 1, 1975. Co-owner's interest cannot be sold separately; whole property may be sold on execution to satisfy creditor.
Presumption - Favored in doubtful cases, except in husband and wife case.	Presumption - Must be expressly stated. Not favored.	Presumption - The legal presumption is that property which has been acquired during the course of the marriage is community property.	Presumption - After July 1, 2001, there is no presumption. The code reads that deeds must state "community property with the right of survivorship."

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ESCROW PROCESS



ESCROW

What Is Escrow?

When the decision is made to purchase a property, terms and conditions are established for the ownership transfer of that property. These terms and conditions are given to a third party known as the escrow holder. The escrow holder acts for both parties and protects the interests of each within the authority of the escrow instructions.

How Does Escrow Work?

The escrow is a depository for all monies, instructions and documents necessary for the purchase of your home, including your funds for down payment and your lender's funds and documents for the new loan. Generally, the buyer deposits a down payment, and the seller deposits the deed and any other necessary documents with the escrow holder. Prior to close of escrow, the buyer deposits the balance of required funds with the escrow holder.

The escrow holder forwards the deed to the title company for recording and delivers the monies to the seller. The title company notifies the escrow holder that a policy of title insurance can be issued, showing title to the property is vested in the name of the buyer.

Escrow holder handles the prorations and adjustments on any fire/hazard insurance, real estate taxes, rents, interest, etc., based on the escrow instructions of both parties.

Escrow is completed once all terms and conditions have been satisfied, documents have been recorded and funds have been disbursed.

How To Open An Escrow?

Your real estate agent will open the escrow for you. As soon as you execute your purchase agreement/joint escrow instructions, your agent will place your initial deposit into an escrow account with a closing company such as escrow.

How Will I Know Where My Money Has Gone?

Written evidence of your deposit is generally included in your copy of the purchase agreement/joint escrow instructions. Your funds will then be deposited in an escrow or trust account.

How Long Is An Escrow?

The length of an escrow is determined by the terms of the purchase agreement and can range from a few days to several months.

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ESCROW PROCESS - CONTINUED

What Information Is Needed?

Confidential statement of identity Because many people have the same name, the statement of identity is used to identify the specific person in the transaction by determining date of birth, social security number, etc. The statement form is necessary and the information is kept confidential.

Lender information provides the escrow holder with the name, address and phone number of your lender as soon as possible after opening escrow.

Hazard/Fire information If you are purchasing a single family, detached home, or in some cases, a town home, be sure to order your fire/hazard insurance once your loan has been approved. You should immediately begin looking for an insurance agent; not all companies can write fire hazard insurance. Call escrow with the insurance agent's name and phone number so that he/she can make sure the policy complies with your lender's requirements. You must have your insurance in place before the lender will fund money to the title company.

Title to Home Page 6 shows common ways of holding title to help you understand the criteria for determining how you wish to hold title to your home. The escrow holder will need this information in order to prepare the grant deed, and your lender will need this information to prepare loan documents. We suggest you consult an attorney, tax consultant, or other qualified title professional before you decide.

What Is Close Of Escrow?

The close of escrow signifies legal transfer of title from the seller to the buyer. Approximately three days before the scheduled close of escrow date, the loan documents are executed by the buyer. The new lender takes 24 to 72 hours to review the final executed documents and then wires the loan funds to the title company. Escrow collects the remainder of the buyer's down payment and closing costs. When loan funds are wired, the file is then set up to record (a legal transfer of title from the seller to the buyer). The escrow holder then handles all final accounting, issuance of official closing statements and disbursement of any remaining proceeds to all parties.



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PAYMENT PROCEDURE

On these pages, you will find the traditional distribution of expenses associated with a purchase of real estate. However, many of these items can be negotiated by both parties at the time of the offer, excluding some expenses required by the lender to be paid specifically by seller.

Buyer Usually pays for:

1. Escrow fees
2. Document preparation (if applicable)
3. Notary fees
4. Recording charges for all documents in buyer's name
5. Termite inspection (according to contract)
6. Tax proration (from date of acquisition)
7. Homeowner's transfer fee
8. All new loan charges (except those required by lender for seller to pay)
9. Interest on new loan from date of funding to 30 days prior to first payment date
10. Assumption/Change of Records fees for take-over of existing loan
11. Beneficiary Statement fee for assumption of existing loan
12. Inspection fees (roofing, property inspection, geological, etc.)
13. Home Warranty (according to contract)
14. Lender's policy
15. Fire insurance premium for first year

Seller Usually pays for:

1. Real estate commission
2. Escrow fees
3. County documentary transfer tax (55 cents per \$500 of consideration, exclusive of the value of any lien or encumbrances attaching to the property at time of sale)
4. Applicable city transfer/conveyance tax (according to contract)
5. Document preparation fee for deed
6. Any loan fees required by buyer's lender
7. Payoff of all loans in seller's name (or existing loan balance if being assumed by buyer)
8. Interest accrued to lender being paid off
9. Statement fees, reconveyance fees and any prepayment penalties
10. Termite inspection (according to contract)
11. Termite work (according to contract)
12. Home warranty (according to contract)
13. Any judgments, tax liens, etc., against the seller
14. Tax proration (for any taxes unpaid at time of transfer of title)
15. Any unpaid homeowner's dues
16. Recording charges to clear all documents of record against seller
17. Any bonds or assessments (according to contract)
18. Any and all delinquent taxes
19. Notary fees, escrow fee
20. Title insurance premium: Owner's policy

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INSPECTION - *PROCESS*

Structural pest control inspection

Often referred to as a "Termite Report", the structural pest control inspection is conducted by a licensed inspector. In addition to actual termite damage, the pest report will indicate any type of wood-destroying organisms that may be present, including fungi (sometimes called "dry rot"), that generally results from excessive moisture. Most pest reports classify conditions as Section 1 or Section 2 items.

Section 1 conditions

Section 1 conditions are those that are "active", or currently causing damage to the property. Generally, section 1 items need to be corrected before a lender will make a loan on a home.

Section 2 conditions

Those that are not currently causing damage, but are likely to if left unattended, are section 2 items. A typical section 2 item is a plumbing leak where the moisture has not yet caused fungus decay. Who pays? The purchase contract will specify who is responsible for the inspection and making these corrections. This is a negotiable item and should be considered carefully.

Physical Inspection

The physical inspection clause in your purchase contract, when initialed by both parties, gives permission to have the property thoroughly inspected. This is usually done through a General Home Inspection. While home inspectors are not currently required to have a license, most are, or have been, general contractors. The inspection and the resulting report provide an overall assessment of the present condition of the property.

What is Inspected?

The home inspection covers items such as exterior siding, paint, flooring, appliances, water heater, furnace, electrical service, plumbing, and other visible features of the property. This is a general inspection and will call for additional trade specific inspections, such as roof and furnace inspections.

Further Inspections

If conditions warrant, the home inspector may recommend a Structural Engineers Report. Such a report would identify structural failures and detail recommended corrections. Who pays? Typically, this inspection is paid by the buyer.

Geological Inspection

You may also elect to have a Geological inspection to educate yourselves as to the soil conditions at the home. This inspection is performed by a geological engineer and involves not only physically inspecting the property but also researching past geological activity in the area. The primary purpose of a geological inspection is to determine the stability of the ground under and around the home. Who pays? Typically the buyer pays, but as with other inspections, this is negotiable according to the contract.

Home Warranty

Home protection plans are available for purchase by a buyer or seller. Such plans may provide additional protection of certain systems and appliances in the home.

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15 HOME LISTING TIPS

MOVING AND PACKING - TIPS

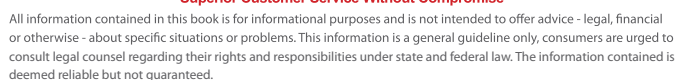
Moving to a new home can be time consuming and costly. Sorting your belongings and making sure you don't lose or misplace things is important in the moving process. Here are 10 tips to go by when moving into a new home.

1. Make a List of your belongings, that way you can keep track of what is left to move.
2. Label your boxes.
3. Buy tape and packing paper.
4. Make sure you use packing paper for your fragile items.
5. Rent a truck or van for hauling items. This could save you money by moving a huge amount of your belongings all at one time.
6. Set placement ahead of time so you have an idea where to place things accordingly.
7. Use a dolly for moving heavy items.
8. If your not using a moving company, ask family members or friends for help. The more help you have the faster you can move in to your new home.
9. Pack your items with other items that match, for instance: Cloths with Cloths, pictures with pictures, etc.
10. Drive carefully... Driving fast and taking fast turns can drop boxes and break your belongings on the way to your new home.



NOTES -

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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