

# The Selling Process

This outlines the typical steps involved when you want to sell your home.

- Most people also need to buy a home when they sell so there may be some coordinating required between the two. It is nice to have an overlap to make moving from one home to the other easier but if you have a mortgage involved you may need bridge financing to cover the gap. A key point to consider at this stage is "If I list my home for sale today and I receive an offer right away, how soon do I want to move?" When you know how soon you would like to move, that will help you get prepared for the other steps in the process.
- Often a good first step to do when you consider to sell is call your lender if you have a mortgage on the home, to find out how much the penalty will be for paying off the mortgage early. Often it is only 3 months mortgage payment but the lender could also use mortgage differential to calculate it which may be a significantly higher cost.
- Make sure you have the authority to sell. Things like Dower, Power of Attorney or Estate sales can take much longer to deal with than first anticipated so sit down with a lawyer ahead of time if you are in this situation.
- There is no capital gains tax when you sell your personal residence but if it was ever rented out there may be capital gains tax involved so speak with your accountant first. If it was a rental property you are selling, depending on income and expenses, your accountant may advise holding off selling now and sell next year instead.
- Have all the documents ready. You may need to sit down with your Realtor ahead of time to make sure you have all your paperwork in order before you can sell. Find everything you have from when you bought the home, such as copy of title and Real Property Report. Other things that you may need include property tax and copies of building permits if you have done improvements, or receipts for big ticket items like roof, windows, furnace or hot water tank as these may have warranties that can be transferred to the new buyer, or at the very least can prove when they were last replaced.
- Unless you are selling an apartment or townhouse, most likely you will need an updated or current RPR (Real Property Report) with evidence of municipal compliance or non-conformance. The RPR will show property lines and all improvements to the land such as house, garage, fences, decks and sheds. It will also show any easements, encroachments or utility right of ways. If you are looking to sell and do not have an RPR it is best to call a surveyor and order one right away as it may take several weeks to get the compliance stamp unless you pay extra for rush fees. Some sellers may offer title insurance in lieu of RPR but not all buyers like to accept title insurance as it doesn't cover any known issues. Best to sit down with your Realtor to discuss if you need an RPR when you want to sell.
- If you want to sell your home and buy a new one, a lot depends on timing. Ideally if you move into your new home a couple of days before you leave your old home, then you have less stress for moving, plenty of time for cleaning, unpacking and even some small renovation projects, like painting the bedroom just the right colour. This only works if you can afford to buy your new home without having to sell your old home first. If you don't fit that boat then a bridge loan may be for you. Often your mortgage broker will organize it for you at the same time they organize the rest of your financing for the new purchase.
- When you sell your home you want to sell at or above market value and you want to sell quick. As licensed Realtors, we sell homes everyday and know market conditions intimately including any changes in the market even before they are publicly announced. We know the area, market value and what it takes to sell your home. You could try and do it all yourself to

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save commission or list with a discount brokerage but there is a saying "you get what you pay for" so we offer a full listing service and we have proven track record of results.

- How much will I pay in commissions is a common question we hear when working with people who want to sell their home. When working with someone who wants to sell their home we sit down and go through our listing presentation with them which covers the full range of services we offer and the associated fee for service.
- When to sell? More homes are listed for sale and sold in spring than any other time, particularly here in Edmonton. If you want to sell in spring make sure any yard or gardens look their best and have plenty of curb appeal. This may mean starting while there is still snow on the ground or having a lawn care company pre-seed and fertilize in the fall so your yard looks magnificent as soon as the snow melts.
- Should I paint or do renovations before I sell is often asked when we sit down with the home owner. The answer is "It depends". Sure it would make the home look nicer if you do the work but will it add value and increase the sale price significantly. We need to look at the target audience of who will be buying the home along with several other factors to determine if it is worth taking on any renovation projects. There is no point spending all that time, effort and money if the person buying it wants to knock it down so they can build their dream home.
- Should I renovate the kitchen or finish the basement? With a background in construction and many years spent renovating, fixing, flipping and selling houses, I know exactly what if anything needs to be done to improve a home to get the most bang for your buck in getting it ready to sell and maximize your return. Generally there is no point spending \$20,000 to renovate your kitchen if it only increases market value by \$25,000, but if it translates to a quicker sale or possible multiple offers, then it may make sense, so let's sit down together and put our years of experience to use in coming up with the right strategy to sell your home.
- Less is More. You will have heard the expression "declutter" when you want to sell your home. It's good for a couple of reasons. One, your home will look much more presentable and will sell faster. Two, you won't need to move as much stuff and chances are it won't match your new home and sometimes it's simply good to clean out the old and have fresh new energy in your new place. Remove half the stuff in your closets. If it's seasonal items you can consider to store in a basement or mini storage. If you haven't worn it for a while you may consider to donate it to free up room. Go through fridges and cupboards too, giving them a spring clean and removing old and expired items. Kitchen countertops generally look their best when they are bare so move as much off them as practical.
- Removing personal pictures allows the new buyer to walk through the home without the feeling of intruding into someone's personal space. The more comfortable the buyer is, the more likely they are to buy, and that's important if you want to sell.
- If the home is vacant you may consider staging to make it look its best. Often this is a good strategy but don't limit it to just vacant homes. Sometimes adding the right piece of furniture to the home while you are still living there can make all the difference.
- Most buyers do their first home hunting online and many decide which homes they like based on the pictures. Good Realtors always hire a Professional photographer to make a home show its best in photos. Most Real Estate boards have a professional photographer that your realtor can hire. These photographers have more than just an expensive camera, they bring years of experience to the table from shooting dozens of houses every single day so they know how to make your home look its best.

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- Everything mentioned so far is getting you ready to sell your home. Now you need to sign the listing agreement. Your Realtor will explain it to you, along with their fiduciary duty, and then they can upload to the MLS System. There is a lot of paperwork you need to sign when you sell a home and it seems they add to it every year.
- Your home is now listed for sale and within a day or two the for sale sign goes up out front. Not everyone wants a for sale sign but the more exposure you can get, the better chance your home sells fast, and for sale signs help do this. Open houses also increase exposure but depending on the city and the market, the chances of selling your home with an open house are slim. Yes you will have nosey neighbours coming by to check out your home. They are not really looking to buy but they want to know what it is worth as they may consider to sell their own home if it looks favourable. If someone at an open house does want to buy your home, they normally deal with the listing Realtor (yes your Realtor) so your Realtor can no longer look after your best interests and represent just you when this situation occurs. Instead they have to become impartial.
- Remove personal items and any valuables before showings or keep them out of sight at the very least just to be on the safe side. There have been cases where someone posing as a buyer has gone back to the property later by themselves and taken items.
- A home shows its best when it smells its best so give it a good airing out before hand and no cooking smells, pet smells or even air fresheners.
- You should leave lights on, but alarms, music and TV off when you leave due to a showing request.
- If you are at home and there is a showing request, go for a walk or drive, chat with neighbours but it is best if you are not present while the potential buyer is there so they can imagine the home as if it is theirs already.
- Dealing with offers can be an emotional time. First, be grateful you have an offer, and second, have someone such as your Real Estate Agent to help you with it.
- Most offers will require some negotiation before an agreement is reached. Negotiating is not everyone's strong suit so that's where your agent really comes into play.
- Once both Buyer and Seller have agreed, they both need to have signed and initialled any changes and whoever signed last does what is called final signing. Congratulations, it's officially Pending.
- If there were conditions then they will need to be removed before the purchase is binding. Once the Buyer removes conditions then congratulations, your home is officially SOLD.
- Depending on your moving date you may want to start packing and booking a moving company.
- Arrange a time to meet with your lawyer and sign off the paperwork.
- Notify your utility providers you have sold and to disconnect utility services in your name on the day of closing.
- It's a good idea to inform your insurance company you have sold and to cancel that policy the day after closing, that way, just in case there was a delay, you are still covered.