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AT HOME ::

Looking for help to sell your house?

'People's Realtor' offers advice on marketing a home

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With a sluggish real estate market, homeowners may be worried about how to put their properties on the market.

Realtor Connie De Groot -- of the Beverly Hills, Calif., Coldwell Banker, which is billed as the firm's No. 1 office in the world -- offers these recommendations for what sellers can do to expedite the sale of their homes.

Select a true "listing agent" to sell your home.

It is important to find a Realtor that has experience representing sellers both in your neighborhood and price range.

Ask to see data from the Multiple Listing Service to support a real estate agent's claim of what he or she has sold in your area.

Listen to your Realtor about pricing.

Deciding where to price your home is the most crucial decision affecting your net profits. Mistakes in pricing do cost the seller.

A fresh new property receives the most attention. Thus, an accurate price will produce results and perhaps multiple offers.

Look at comparable homes.

Visit open houses and look at as many properties as you can online.

It is important to understand how your home stacks up against those currently on the market or those sold recently.

Take steps to make your property and its features look its best.

Add a fresh coat of paint (neutral colors are preferred), freshen up landscaping, trim trees, clean up clutter and remove personal items such as photos.

Then prospective buyers can picture themselves in the home rather than seeing you there.

Consider staging your home.

Decorating the home helps to create an "emotional attachment." When that happens, there is a good chance an offer will follow.

The popularity of staging has grown tremendously because the results are impressive, but make sure you select a stager who understands that area and the type of buyer for that home.

Lastly, look at homes the stager has on the market now.

Be flexible with showings.

It only takes one buyer to get your home sold. Do not make your Realtor feel as though his or her request for a showing is an inconvenience.

Do some general home inspections.

Doing a general home inspection or termite inspection will allow you to know what repairs need to be made to the property in advance.

When the buyers do their inspections of the property once in escrow, they will see a home that has been well-maintained.

Buyers may become upset or turned off to a home that has many small repairs that need to be made.

If you are looking to sell quickly out of necessity, price your home aggressively.

To sell fast, you will need to price your home slightly under the list price of other homes on the market comparable to yours.

This will likely result in getting your home sold first.

Make sure you play up your home's best features.

If you have fireplaces, make sure you have fires burning so there is a beautiful, warm glow and the sound of crackling.

If you have a gourmet cook's kitchen, have some great-smelling treats baking in the oven.

Turn on soothing music.

Set on all lights and lamps if the home looks dark or feels heavy. Lighting is crucial.

Do the same as if you were having a formal dinner party, and the house will certainly sparkle.

Today's home prices are high and your home must be ready to perform at every showing.

Make sure people know your house is for sale.

Have lots of signs and flags out front so your house is easily seen.

Advertise in local papers, and be sure to include beautiful photos. Each photo should showcase something interesting and unique about the property.

Lastly, try to keep a positive attitude.

FIND OUT MORE

Connie De Groot is a Realtor with Coldwell Banker in Beverly Hills, Calif., and is distinguished for being within the top 2 percent of all Coldwell Banker agents internationally. She also is the star of the Fine Living TV Network program "Real Estate Confidential" and is frequently called upon as an expert on trends and news in the real estate market.

Dubbed "The People's Realtor" for her support of individual buyers and sellers, De Groot is an advocate for educating homeowners on the intricacies of the market, what they can and should expect from their Realtor and how homeowners can best position their home for sale at the maximum price in the most expeditious manner.

More information is available at www.ConnieDeGroot.com