

FAQ - The Selling Process

How long will it take to sell my property?

That depends on the condition of your home, your learning curve as a Seller, your willingness to negotiate in good faith, the market demand, the available Buyers in the market come time to sell, your timing and presentation, the prevailing interest rates, the pricing strategy, and your home's positioning relative to other "like-kind" homes. In short, there are a lot of moving parts and many variables to the successful sale of any property. If we have appropriately priced and prepared your home, properties typically trade in less than two weeks.

Can I skip the preparation and staging?

Yes, you can but there will be a significant tradeoff for doing so. Home purchases, by and large, are emotional purchases, not pragmatic ones; therefore, the more engaging the home and grounds, the better the result, and that's where we come in. Dollar for dollar, staging brings the best return on your investment, and statistically sells a house for 17% more than its unstaged counterpart and 11 days faster. In short, the difference to your net return can be hundreds-of-thousands of dollars. Given the dramatic results, why would you shortchange yourself?

How long will it take to get my home ready for the marketplace?

A typical home requires 3-4 weeks of preparation, assuming that everyone's calendars align (including yours). This is obviously much easier to accomplish if we have a running start, as opposed to signing a listing agreement once you have already moved out. It's important to understand that the preparation period requires each segment of the link to take place in a specific order. If one task gets delayed, it can cost us weeks, not days, to reschedule the Stager; consequently, once our calendar is set, we do our best to adhere to it, and ask you to do the same.

What should we expect?

Sellers should expect this journey to be more difficult than they imagine. Under the best of circumstances, a move is challenging and difficult, both logistically and emotionally, but psychologically, the physical move may actually be the easiest part. Once the movers have come and gone, we descend with a Swat Team of professionals to essentially update and transform your house into a marketable product that's often unrecognizable, or dramatically different from how you and your family lived in your home. While this quick turnaround can feel disconcerting, or worse yet, highly offensive, the changes we suggest are not personal; the intention is to bring you the greatest level of interest, which in turn, should bring you the highest and best result.

Moreover, once your property is ready to be unveiled and marketed, you may feel extremely vulnerable knowing the market is now judging your home. This too, can create real anxiety,

irrespective of the reasons for selling, or how prepared you believe yourself to be. Selling is a highly emotional journey, and it is fraught with unexpected findings and unwelcome discoveries.

Therefore . . .

- You should expect to feel anxious.
- You should expect that there will be difficult discussions, and decisions to make.
- You should expect that you won't always like, or agree, with our answers or our process.
- You should expect to hate the findings of every inspector. (Their job IS to poke holes in the house.)
- You should expect to be pushed beyond your comfort zone.
- You should expect conflicting emotions that often create a love-hate-love trajectory with respect to both your Agents and your Buyers. (This is par for the course.)
- You should expect us to work with good intentions, to put your interests first, to clearly define the goals, to act professionally, and to hold your private matters confidential.

How will you value our home?

Seasoned Agents understand that we do not set the value of any home; we design a market strategy designed to bring you the highest price with the cleanest terms. The market will ultimately determine the value of any given property. Any agent that guarantees you a price or a result simply isn't being honest. Our pricing advice and suggestions will be based on sales comps in the neighborhood, on our extensive experience, and in part, on gut instinct. (Pricing is an art, not a science.) It will NOT be based on price per square foot, which may be a starting point, but not the deciding criteria. Price per square foot gives us a baseline only. Depending on your property's attributes and deficits, the yardstick for value will likely adjust. Although the business of real estate is highly localized, VALUE is based on both macro and micro determinants: location, condition, interest rates, desirability, competition, the health of the stock market, world events, pluses, minuses, etc., etc., etc. in short, value is a moving target.

What's the most common mistake Sellers make?

Assuming their house is better, more special and worth far more than the prevailing rate. Your house may be all of those things, but if a Buyer doesn't exercise, a work-out room holds little value. If they don't appreciate chardonnay, there's no upside to a "temperature-controlled" wine-tasting cellar. Moreover, 75% of all home buyers in Northern California do NOT want a pool for reasons of liability. In other words, "value propositions" are highly subjective. Don't assume every dollar you spent on personal lifestyle choices will equate to a higher sales price - no matter how high-end the improvements and renovations, or how much you personally enjoyed the home theater.

Additionally, Sellers often assume that if the first offer is X, the second offer will be Y or Z. That's rarely the way it plays out. Time and again, the first offer IS generally the best offer. These Buyers tend to want the house more, are often the most committed, have stepped up in good time, and have declared their desire by presenting a well-intentioned purchase agreement. The

longer your house sits on the open market, the less desirable it becomes. In contrast, bargain hunters will wait out the marketplace. They're hoping your house twists in the wind

Finally, Sellers believe it only takes one qualified Buyer to sell their house. While that is undoubtedly true, it typically requires two or more Buyers to produce a bidding war. In our experience, more Buyers create greater leverage in which to negotiate, and usually, a much higher price as a result. Our goal is to try and capture as many Buyers as possible - not to wait for the needle in the haystack; needles tend to prick.

What are the best investments to increase our home's value?

Kitchen and bathroom remodels, primary suites, open floor plans, natural lighting, dual-pane windows, b-fold/Nano doors, indoor/outdoor living, landscaping, fresh paint, hardwood floors, usable yards, AC, and permitted ADUs. (Please note, remodeling projects over 10 years old may not be considered current, so choose timeless design whenever possible.)

What are some of the worst investments?

Swimming pools, outrageously-expensive fixtures/lighting/finishes/appliances, billiard rooms, home gyms, spas, bars, and overly-complicated anything.

Will "green technology" increase the value of my home?

Potentially, but depending on how much you spend on green technology, you may not recoup your costs. A Tesla roof is a fantastic selling feature, but it's not going to translate into significantly more come time to sell than will a composition-shingle roof of the same age, and while everyone likes the idea of solar panels, Buyers may not reimburse you for them. Buyers tend to pay for improvements they can see as opposed to those that provide more comfort. Insulation is advisable but it isn't sexy. Sexy sells. Green technology will increase the comfort in your home and reduce your energy bills, but it might not increase the overall value of your home (although we hope that changes soon).

What can Sellers do to help achieve their outcome?

In a perfect world, a Seller would move out, turn over the keys, let go entirely, and move quickly into faith and trust. They would set realistic expectations and negotiate in good faith when an offer arrives. Given that we are only human and that a home carries a great deal of expectations, memories, and touchstones, and that the journey is often fraught with anxiety, we'd ask our Sellers to avoid micro-managing the process, to not judge the work until it's complete, and to remain open to suggestions. When Sellers stay flexible and coachable as we progress, when they can move forward with good intentions, and when they truly trust the process, the results can be miraculous.

What differentiates your team from other teams?

Sarah, Jill, and I are fully committed to bringing your home to market in it's best light and working whole-heartedly and diligently to procure the greatest result. We are NOT a gigantic team that travels with an entourage. We do NOT offload the process to others. We do not act unethically. We do NOT sugar-coat our opinions. We do NOT phone it in. We are not interested in the optics or in smoke and mirrors. We are not "transactional," AND we are NOT a discount brokerage service.

We ARE highly experienced, dedicated COMPASS professionals who value honesty and integrity, who bring a deep and abiding respect for one another, for our vendors, for your home, and for the struggle to the transaction. We know this market intimately, and have sold hundreds of homes with excellent results. We take pride in the work we do, and we strive to make this a less-stressful time in your lives. Above all, we believe in cultivating laughter and joy along the way.

Does it matter who you work with?

Absolutely! If you believe your house has a finite value, then it wouldn't matter whom you hire, but as houses tend to be unique commodities with widely varying value propositions, maximizing your home's value has a direct correlation with the representation you choose. Selling a home is an intense, highly charged, and expensive proposition; therefore, you should select the Agents that you feel will hold you, guide you, advise you, cheer you on, and celebrate your success. In other words, your choice of Agent(s) matters a great deal TO YOU!

How can we help you?

Real Life, Real Solutions, Real Results . . . Real Estate!