

37 ways to deal with 'We won't list until we find a home'

Readers shared how they describe all the downsides of this approach to potential clients, and also mentioned some workarounds

BY [INMAN](#) |

Many people don't appreciate the disadvantages of this approach, and readers shared a laundry list of ways to rectify it. They also suggested a number of workarounds, including special contingencies, [bridge loans](#) and renting.

Here were some of our favorite responses to this common objection. As always, be sure to only use those that accurately apply to a situation and that align with your values.

Then you might sell your home for less

- *If you wait until you find that perfect home, you might have to sell your home for less because you don't want to lose the home you found.*
- *Unless you are able to buy without a home sale contingency, having your home ready for sale is critical to secure your next purchase. Our listing agreement encompasses that prep time, getting photos, staging if necessary. Don't you want to know what you will have to work with in the sell side?*

- *Making an offer contingent on selling your home puts you at the bottom of the heap in the event of multiples buyers. Similarly, you will be in a relatively weak position when negotiating your own sale price as well as when negotiating repairs/appraisal, all due to the pressure you invite by entering into a contingent purchase.*

Consider unconventional contingencies

- *You can list now and require the buyer of your home include a seller condition. The offer will not firm up until you find a home.*
- *Encourage listing their home and assure them if we receive an offer we can counter with a reverse contingency. We can make the contract contingent on the seller finding a suitable property by a certain date that is agreeable to the buyer. If they don't find a home, then we can terminate the contract.*
- *Put a contingency that seller must find an acceptable replacement property and buyer will adjust contract dates accordingly.*
- *Tell the seller they can require a "seller kick-out clause" in any negotiated contract that allows the seller to terminate or extend the agreement if they cannot find a home within X days of agreement date.*
- *Here are some possible strategies to consider: List your home; in the listing we state that "the seller is on the hunt for their replacement home and would like a post-closing occupancy agreement." This allows you to stay in your home up to 60 days while you contract your new home. There are buyers who may be in a similar situation and would be flexible on their move-in date.*
- *Tell your seller, he/she, can list their home and look for a home by putting a Hubbard Clause into the sales and purchase agreement*

when they find a home to offer on. This gives them the time needed to sell the home while holding the home they want to purchase.

Put yourself in your future homeseller's shoes

- Let's look at this from a seller's point of view: We're in a seller's market. Someone puts an offer on your home but needs to sell first and hasn't even put their home on the market. Someone else comes along and already has theirs under contract. Which is the more compelling offer?
- *If you find a property, we will need to put on the contract that the purchase is contingent on the sale and closing of your present property. If the sellers see you haven't listed your property, they will reject your offer.*
- *You need to be a strong buyer; until you get your home sold, you aren't one.*
- *When your home is for sale, what would you say to a buyer with a home to sell?*
- *Most sellers will not entertain an offer from you until you have your home on the market or under contract.*
- *If you find a home that you want to make an offer on, and you need to sell your home to purchase another, most sellers in our market may not accept your offer. In fact, on average, many sellers not only want to know you are listed, but might also insist you are under contract for your own sale to accept your offer, so that it minimizes their own risk.*
- *I would advise you to reject a contingency should we receive one when you list.*

Renting is an option

- Temporary rentals are abundant these days, and there is always the chance they could rent back from the new owner in the interim.
- *Do you have someplace to go temporarily once we sell your home? If so, this would put you in the strongest position when looking for the perfect home.*
- *Most sellers won't take your offer if your home isn't even on the market, and your mortgage requires you to sell. It's better to sell and have your equity available to purchase right away. You can also rent, so you don't go out and purchase the wrong home. You also don't want to hold the buyer of your new home hostage.*

You need to be ready to move quickly

- *The seller of the new home you have in mind won't wait for you to list and go under contract when other ready and able buyers are out there.*
- *If you find your dream home, you should be ready to move quickly and that might mean having your home listed.*
- *By then it will be too late.*
- *I would strongly advise against that. Do you think that a seller will be willing to wait for your home to sell if they are getting other offers? Your best option is to sell first, then buy.*

Sell first, and you'll know exactly how much you can afford

- *How do you plan on buying the home of your dreams without an offer on your home? Wouldn't it be easier to negotiate an agreement knowing exactly how much equity you have in hand from the sale of your current home?*

You may have to consider a bridge loan

- *Let's find a home and see if a seller will accept a contingent offer. If they won't and it's truly your dream home, let's get you pre-approved for a bridge loan as I would not want you to miss out on your dream home.*
- *Our firm offers bridge loans to enable sellers to purchase their next home prior to selling.*
- *I get the seller/buyer pre-approved for a cross-collateral loan, which allows them to buy their next home without having to make a contingent offer on the sale.*

Picture ... losing

- *We can certainly do that. So how will you feel when you find your dream home, and it's now contingent on your home sale and another buyer comes in and buys it out from under you because they don't have a contingency? If you're good with losing a home you love, we'll wait.*
- *You reduce your chances of being able to get that home when you do find it because a seller isn't often willing to wait to sell their home while you get yours listed, marketed and sold. They'll sell to the buyer who is ready. And unless you're going to buy cash, or don't need to sell this house to buy, you're shooting yourself in the foot.*

You can always turn down offers on your home

- *List your home, be aware of what's out there, and the minute you receive an offer, your agent should know if any of the current available*

properties match your criteria; and if there are none, you can decline the offer.

- *You could do that, but what happens if we don't find a buyer right away? Are you prepared to take out a bridge loan to make your down payment and pay your first home mortgage until you close on the sale of your home? The best way to get this to go smoothly is to list your home first, and when we get an accepted offer, then we can hit the pavement on finding your next forever home.*

OK, but that could be expensive

- *If you are comfortable owning two homes at the same time, this is a fine strategy. If not, let's put your home on the market while continuing our search for your next home. As the seller, you have control of terms and timing, and we can negotiate them to fit your needs.*

Will you buy in cash?

- *Do you need the proceeds of the sale of your existing house before you can buy another one?*

Let them learn for themselves

- *If they insist, after counseling, work with them through the process to allow them to really see how it works. Losing out in the home of their dreams can be a tremendous lesson.*
- *Let's find a home and attempt to negotiate to make your contract contingent on the sale of your present home.*
- *If they insist on not listing before finding a home, they need to have their home "listing ready" when they do find a home, so we can move quickly. But I let them know that they may lose out on a home to other*

offers because their home isn't on market already. After losing in a few offer battles, they may change their minds and list.

It can be done, but it will be challenging

- The first question I ask, beyond an open-ended “Why” is: Do you need to sell to buy? Often you get a simple yes/no response, but with modern financial tools available it warrants a deeper engagement with my financial resources. If no, then great; validate that they have the resources they think they have, and go over the risks related to a property selling quickly or not. If yes, then we explore bridge financing options to allow them to buy without a sales contingency in their offer (very difficult in my primary market). If that can be done (and there are significantly more options that are less expensive and minimal risk to buyers — and sellers). If they still need to sell and can not set up bridge financing, then we look at “worst-case scenario” of selling first and how they can be mitigated by delaying closings, staying with family or short-term rental. It's always challenging, but with the right agent and plan, it can all be done with minimal disruption.

Editor's note: *These responses were mostly given anonymously and therefore are not attributed to anyone specifically. Responses were also edited for grammar and clarity.*