

— HOME SELLERS —  
**HANDBOOK**  
— 10 STEPS —  
TO SELLING YOUR HOME



ABEL GILBERT GROUP  
LIVE. INVEST. ENJOY.  
REAL ESTATE



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# SO, YOU'RE INTERESTED IN SELLING?

Aside from buying a home, selling a property is one of the biggest tasks many people will undertake in their lifetime. There are many aspects that go into the process of selling a property.

In this detailed Guide, I will provide you with my “10 Simple Steps to Selling your Home”. This Guide will help you determine if you are truly ready to sell. I will give you tips on how to optimize your home before you start showing it to prospective buyers. I will explain what to do when you receive an offer and I will prepare you on what to expect the day of closing.

I will also explain you the advantages that we can offer you to ensure that the process of selling your home goes quickly and smoothly.

## LET'S GET STARTED!

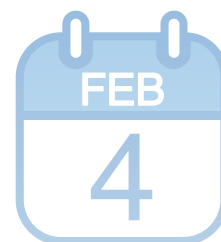
# 1 SHOULD THIS BE THE YEAR YOU SELL YOUR HOME?

Home sellers in 2016 found themselves in an encouraging market. Existing-home sales were 3.3% higher than 2015 - rounding out the best year since 2006. So, what will home sellers find in 2017? Should this be the year you sell your home? No one can predict how the housing market will perform. But the National Association of Realtors expects modest growth for existing homes in 2017. Despite the possibility of rising mortgage rates, home sales in 2017 are forecasted to grow around 2% percent, with the median price increasing 4%. Those are several good reasons to consider when selling your home this year. But remember, your financial situation is unique and what might make sense for others might not be the same for you.

The following are 3 important factors to consider before making the decision to sell your home:

1. DO YOU NEED A BIGGER OR SMALLER HOME?
2. ARE YOU GOING TO MOVE NEARBY OR TO A DIFFERENT AREA?
3. ARE YOU GOING TO SELL AND BUY SIMULTANEOUSLY, OR ARE YOU GOING TO SELL FIRST AND THEN BUY?

Once you've determined what your next move is going to be, it'll be easier for you to decide if this is the year to sell your home!





# 2 I WANT TO MOVE! HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M READY?

Before you take out your checkbook and call the moving company, I suggest you pause. While there might be very good reasons to downsize or move into a larger home, you need to first analyze and then decide.

There might be several reasons why you are considering to sell your home. Your family is growing and need more space, or your children are off to college and you don't want a big house any more. Depending on your case, you should consider the following reasons before you decide.

## **Reasons to move to a smaller home:**

1. Easier to maintain – Anyone who has owned a house knows the amount of time, energy, and effort it takes to maintain it. A smaller home requires less of your time, energy, and effort to accomplish the task.

2. A smaller house saves you money – Typically, smaller homes mean less consumption of water and electricity. Smaller homes are also typically cheaper to insure and depending on the property you should pay less property taxes. If the goal is to spend less money, than a smaller home can definitely help you accomplish this goal.

3. Is it time to buy the water front home you've always wanted!? – If you love the ocean, at some point in time you've dreamed of owning that house where you can have your boat in the back or that ocean view condo. If you are already in that position in life, then this is a great reason to go from that big house to that smaller dream home.

## **Reasons to move to a larger home.**

1. Current home way too small – when looking for your next dream home use your experiences to realize that you need to buy a house that will accommodate your growing family.

2. Current home way too far – Just like living in a cramped space, living in a location far from your job or family can be a problem. Make sure the next area you consider will save you commute time and is close to the people and places you like to visit.

3. Extra costs of new home are irrelevant – If you want a bigger home simply because you want a bigger home and you can pay the higher costs, then it might be ok to do it, however do your numbers sooner rather than later. Higher maintenance costs, higher insurance policies, and higher property taxes can make a huge difference than your current payment comfort zone.

At the end of the day, it's not the size of your house, but what you fill it with. You can be happy in an apartment or you can be happy in a mansion. The house won't create your happiness, it supports it.



# 3

## "FOR SALE BY OWNER" OR WORK WITH A REALTOR?

With the recent appreciation in home prices, this might be a good time to sell your home. But what's the smarter way to do it, hire a real estate agent or list it yourself?

With sites such as Zillow and Trulia, the For Sale by Owner process is much more popular since so much more information is easily available

One major benefit of selling the property by yourself is being able to save the typical 6% commission fee. Technically that can represent a huge saving, but since selling a property is something most people will probably do once or twice in their lifetime, you should ask yourself if you are comfortable going through that process alone.

**On the following page  
you will find...**

**FOR SALE  
BY OWNER**

**?**





## FOR SALE BY OWNER:

### **Pros:**

- Saves you from paying between 3% and 6% in commissions.

### **Cons:**

- You might lose money by not pricing the property right.
- You must do all the marketing yourself.
- You must answer all the phone calls of people and realtors calling to know more.
- You must show the property yourself.
- You will need an attorney to help you review any offers.
- You will need an attorney and handle the negotiations yourself.
- You will have to be present during all inspections.
- You will need an attorney to help you understand the closing disclosures.



## ABEL GILBERT:

### **Pros:**

- We will price your property right maximizing your profit potential!
- We will provide you with optimal conventional and internet marketing.
- We will have a full team working for you answering calls and setting appointments.
- We will have one of our agents showing your property every time!
- We will provide you with a free comprehensive analysis of all offers.
- We will negotiate your offers and help you maximize your return.
- We will be present during all inspections.
- We will explain all closing disclosures prior to the closing day to avoid any surprises.

### **Cons:**

- If you feel all the above is worth at least 6% then you have no cons.

CHOOSING TO SELL A PROPERTY YOURSELF VS. AN EXPERT REAL ESTATE AGENT LIKE ABEL GILBERT, DEPENDS ON YOUR SITUATION AND HOW MOTIVATED YOU ARE TO TAKE ON THE PROCESS YOURSELF.

# 4 HOW MUCH IS MY PROPERTY WORTH AND HOW TO PRICE IT?

The proper way to determine the value of a property is by doing a Comparative Market Analysis also known as CMA. This analysis provides information comparing your property to similar properties in your area that are in the marketplace. A standard CMA report contains the following information:

## - Active Listings

Active Listings are homes currently for sale. These are your competition.

## - Pending Listings

Pending sale homes are formerly active listings that are under contract. They have not yet closed, so they are not yet a comparable sale.

## - Sold Listings

Homes that have closed within the past six to 12 months are your comparable sales. These are the sales an appraiser will use when appraising your home for the buyer, along with the pending sales (which will likely have closed by the time your home is sold).

## - Off-Market / Withdrawn / Canceled

These are properties that were taken off the market for a variety of reasons. Usually, the reason homes are removed from the market is because the prices were too high.

## - Expired Listings

This group will reflect the highest median sales price because they did not sell and were probably unreasonably priced

## Examining Comparable Sales

Comparable sales are those that mostly resemble your home.

### - Similar square footage

Appraisers compare homes based on square footage. Larger square-foot homes are worth less per square foot than smaller square-foot homes.

### - Similar age of construction

Age of the home or the year it was built should be within a few years of other comparable sold homes.

### - Similar amenities, upgrades, and condition

Appraisers will deduct value from your home if other homes have upgrades and yours does not. A home with a swimming pool will have a different value than a home without a pool. A completely remodeled home is worth more than one that needs fixing. Homes with one bath are worth less than homes with two or more baths.

### - Location

Real Estate is valued on location. Homes located on busy streets are worth considerably less than homes on quiet streets. A home with a nice view is worth more than a home facing a cement wall.

The CMA process takes place before your home is listed for sale. This is a good assessment of what your house could potentially sell for. Buyers should consider requesting a CMA to determine whether the asking price is a true reflection of the current market.



# 5 I'VE DECIDED TO HIRE A REALTOR. HERE'S HOW TO INTERVIEW AND CHOOSE THE RIGHT AGENT

Selling your home is probably one of the most important investments you'll ever make. This is why it's essential to go through a detailed interview process before hiring an agent. This professional will be responsible for establishing the sale price, executing the marketing plan, holding open houses, interviewing potential buyers, and cooperating with the negotiation of different offers. They will be helping you throughout the entire sales process, right up until the day of closing.

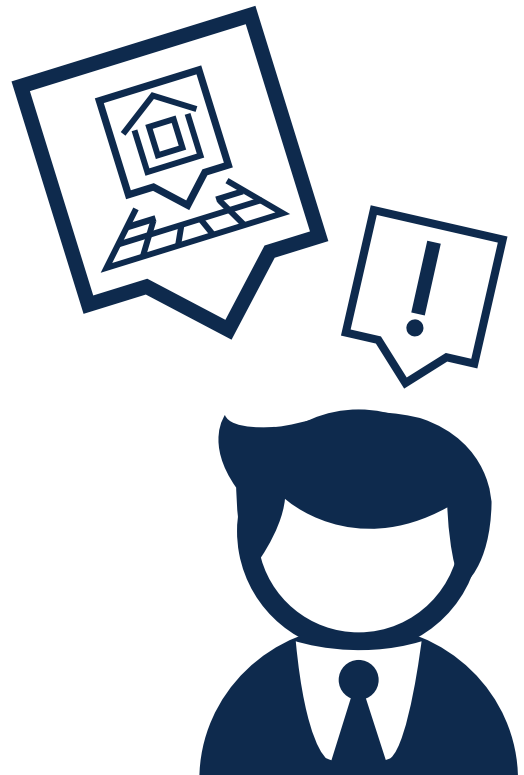
The following is a list of questions you should ask an agent before hiring his or her services:

## KNOWLEDGE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

The agent must be able to answer the following questions about your community

## CURRENT MARKET STATISTICS

- 1- What is the total number of properties currently for sale?
- 2- What is the average price of properties for sale?
- 3- What is the average price per square foot of the available units in my community or building right now?
- 4- What is the most expensive property currently for sale?
- 5- What is the least expensive property for sale?
- 6- On average, how many days are properties taking to sell in my community or building?





### PAST 6 TO 12 MONTHS' MARKET STATISTICS:

- 1- What is the total number of properties sold during the last six and 12 months?
- 2- What is the average price of properties sold in the last six months?
- 3- What is the average price per square foot sold in the last six months?
- 4- What is the most expensive property sold in the last six and 12 months?
- 5- What is the least expensive property sold in the last six and 12 months?
- 6- On average, how many days have properties been in the market before they were sold?

### EXPLAIN YOUR MARKETING PLAN FOR SELLING MY HOME.

Marketing involves more than just listing the property in the MLS. It is important for your agent to have a formal, structured marketing plan for the job of selling your home. Ask for it.

**Where do you live?** The familiarity, knowledge and experience in the area can make the difference between “for sale” and “sold.” Living in the same area usually means the agent is also familiar with the schools, restaurants, and business around the area. This allows him or her to better “sell” the community to potential buyers. In addition, the convenience of working with a real estate agent who lives in the area makes it much easier to show the property and meet with you.

**Do you have a team?** Choose an agent who has a team of members working in the same group. Most Real Estate agents are a “one man show”. Choosing an agent with a team will give you a better probability of them meeting their promises.

**Personal References.** Ask for the names and telephone numbers of their last three clients.

# 6

## IS YOUR HOME READY TO SELL?

HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS READY

It's so important to get your property in its best possible condition before putting it on the market. Everyone wants to sell their home at the best price and in the least amount of time. Homes that are clean, well maintained and that have a nice curb appeal tend to sell faster and for more money rather than homes that are cluttered. It doesn't need to cost you a lot of money.

The following is a list of suggestions that your home may or may not need. Work your way through it to be sure you are giving your home its best possible light.



### Curb Appeal

- Trim all bushes, remove dead branches from trees and replace any dry bushes.
- Make sure your lawn is nice and green. Fill in empty spots in your lawn with grass seed, and eliminate as many weeds as possible.
- Add some fresh flowers to your landscaping and backyard.
- Clean all your outdoor furniture, and touch up paint where needed.
- Keep your front door super clean. A potted plant or two can make a great first impression.
- Clean all windows and screens.
- Keep the driveway and sidewalks clean.
- Check that house numbers, mailbox and exterior lighting are all in good condition.
- Stand back at the street and take a good look at your property. Does the roof look clean?

### Garage

- Get a dumpster and get rid of all the old junk taking up space in your garage. Buyers need to see that their cars will fit in the space. If after getting rid of stuff, you are still left with a lot of stuff, then rent a storage unit for a few months while your home is for sale.
- Clean the walls, shelves and floor, and repaint where necessary. Having a freshly painted garage floor leaves an amazing impression.
- Make sure the garage door opener is working properly.





## **Kitchen**

- Put away any appliances that may clutter up your countertops.
- If your cabinets are old, changing the knobs may make them look so much better. You can find affordable cabinet knobs in your local home stores for a small amount of money.
- Sinks, appliances and counter tops should be in good working order and extra clean.
- If your floors are ceramic tile and look dirty, gently scrub all the grout or stains with a stiff brush for better results.

## **Bathrooms**

- Fix any faucet leaks or drips.
- Check the caulking around the tub and shower and replace with fresh caulking if necessary.
- Clean mirrors, glass and surfaces thoroughly and make sure to scrub away any grout.
- Replace shower curtain and bathroom rug with something new and modern.

## **Closets**

- Pack away everything you are not going to use for the next few months in boxes. You can store them neatly in the basement or rent a storage facility. The least amount of stuff taking up space in your closet, the larger your closet will look.
  - Organize your clothes and shoes neatly on bars and racks.
  - Doors and drawers should open and close easily.
- Don't worry about perfection because what may seem perfect to you may be the total opposite to a buyer.

{ Make sure your realtor evaluates the general condition of your home. Your Realtor should be up-to date with what most buyers like and don't like. Make sure you apply their suggestions and if you disagree, try to find a middle ground. Remember, you are team and have the same goal to sell your property for the highest price in shortest amount of time. }

# 7 THINK LIKE A BUYER WHEN SELLING YOUR HOME!

When selling your home, details are very important. Typically, Buyers want to move into a move-in-ready home. The thought of getting a home ready for sale usually doesn't happen until you are ready to Sell. You can avoid stress by planning early.

Try to think back when you first purchased your home and the reasons why you chose your home. Do you remember what you were thinking? Most people remember how they felt when they first walked into a home and looked around. Now step into the Buyers shoes for a moment. Would you fall in love with the way your house looks now or what would you change to fall in love with it again? It is important that you make their first impressions memorable



It's important that your house meets the expectations of a wide audience. Buyers usually want to know everything about the home and how it can meet their needs. Buyers also look at everything so it's important to see things from their point of view.

Walk through your home and make a list of the things that need to be fixed or replaced. Go through each room and see if they need a touch up of paint. Making small changes to your home can save you money when negotiating a deal. Fewer imperfections seen, means less chances the Buyer will try to negotiate.

Buyers that have an agent will typically tour your home with their guidance before they make an offer on your home. Remember, you were once a picky owner so make sure if something isn't right, correct it before you are ready to sell. It's important that you work with your agent to price your home right. First impressions matter, so make sure your house is well cared for and is clean before introducing it to the real estate market.

## **Here are some of the things you can do to get your home ready for the market.**

- Curb Appeal – It should scream “WELCOME” to potential home buyers.
- Landscaping
- Paint Exterior
- Keep Appliances looking clean and properly working
- Painting – Interior paints should be neutral
- A clean house sells faster

# 8

90% OF HOME BUYERS  
ARE SEARCHING ONLINE.  
THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW  
ON HOW TO IMPRESS THEM!



Marketing is the most important factor when selling your home. Quality marketing will give your home the exposure it needs to sell. However, if your home is not priced properly, not even the best marketing strategy will sell your home.

If you did not know, the internet has changed the real estate industry and the ways homes are sold. The internet allows potential home buyers to view pictures, videos, and information about homes that are for sale.

As a seller, it's crucial that your home is easy to find on the internet. Not only on websites like Zillow, Trulia, or the local real estate brokerages website, but it needs to be found in dozens of other places. It's important for your real estate agent to use as many real estate marketing techniques to help sell your home.





# 9

## RECEIVING AN OFFER. HOW TO DECIDE WHICH OFFER IS BEST FOR YOU

Everyone wants to sell their home for top dollar. When evaluating an offer to buy your home, there are other factors to consider other than the price. You may get lucky and have many offers to think about. Don't pass on the first offer just because it's the first. There is still room to negotiate on the first offer. If you reject your first offer, you might find yourself waiting a couple of weeks with no other offers.

The key is negotiation. Most buyers expect a counteroffer. Don't let pride or your ego stop you from negotiating just because they sent a low offer.

### LOOK BEYOND THE ASKING PRICE. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME VALUES TO CONSIDER:

- Cash Deal
- Buyer being pre-approved for a Mortgage
- Buyer willing to waive a home inspection contingency
- Putting up a reasonable amount of earnest deposit

**WORK CLOSELY WITH YOUR REAL ESTATE AGENT  
TO REVIEW DETAILS OF ANY OFFER SO THERE ARE NO SURPRISES.**



Some scenarios to consider:

### THE IMPORTANCE OF A SOLID EARNEST DEPOSIT

How much earnest money is the buyer willing to put down? The larger the earnest money deposit, the more likely that the buyer is serious. Someone putting down a minimal amount of earnest money, may walk away and leave the small deposit behind.



## MULTIPLE OFFERS

A Seller's dream is to have a bidding war on your home. If you are in a multiple-offer situation, all interested buyers should be told upfront to come in with their highest and best offer and given a date when you will consider them all. Once you have reviewed all your offers, ask your second-best offer if they are willing to be placed as a backup just in case the first offer falls through.

## CONTINGENCIES

Contingencies give buyers a way out of the deal if they change their minds or something unforeseen comes up.

The first avoidable contingency is one that says the buyer will purchase your home if and when they sell their existing home. If this happens, make sure it's only for thirty (30) days.

The next is an inspection contingency. This basically says the buyer has a set amount of time to inspect the home and ask you to repair any problems they find. This may result in re-negotiations about what you are willing to replace and repair. It's normal for buyers to do this and will include it to protect themselves in the deal. Sometimes in a multiple-offer situation, some buyers will skip the inspection contingency which means you won't have any repairs to pay for.

In the contingency, the hardest time avoiding is the financing appraisal contingency. Whatever institution is loaning your buyer the money to buy the house, they will hire an appraiser to come inspect it and put a value on it. They want to make sure the home is worth that value.

## FINANCING VERSUS CASH

Cash is Cash. If you have a cash buyer, make sure to document that the cash is available. If there is no financing, you have saved yourself some headaches, an appraisal for example.

Sellers should focus on buyers who have been pre-approved for a loan. Pre-approved means the buyer has met lender criteria for getting a mortgage. As a seller, you only want to deal with buyers who are pre-approved.

MOST OF THE TIME, HOMES WILL APPRAISE AT OR SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE SALES PRICE BUT IF THERE'S BEEN A BIDDING WAR, THE APPRAISAL MIGHT COME IN LOW. HERE ARE SOME CHOICES YOU HAVE:

- Lower the price
- Dispute the appraisal and hope to get a higher one
- Hope the buyer has cash reserves and can make up the difference
- Let the deal die

## CLOSING COSTS

The seller has a lot of closing costs, including real estate commissions. So do buyers and sometimes they will ask for Sellers to pay upfront some of those costs. Consider these costs when evaluating an offer. In a multiple offer situation, the buyer may be willing to pay some of your closing costs.

It's common for buyers to write you a sincere letter including family pictures about why they want to buy your home. Chances are, you will feel emotional about it (especially if they add kids and pets in the picture). If all the other conditions of the offer work for you, price, financial ability to close the deal, timing and contingencies, go ahead and let them tug on your heartstrings. You want to feel good about selling your home to a family who will love your home as much as you did.





# CLEAR TO CLOSE!

## HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT ON CLOSING DAY & WHAT TO DO NEXT

The closing day is the most important day for you as a home seller. This is the day you will transfer the property to the buyer, fully pay any mortgages, and receive your sale proceeds! If you are using those funds for a new home purchase on the same day or shortly thereafter, it is particularly important that your closing runs smoothly.

### WHAT'S A CLOSING?

Closing is when the house buyer and seller fulfill all the agreements made in the sales contract. In more literal terms, it is about the transfer of money and documents so that you, the seller, can transfer ownership and possession of the property free and clear to the buyer.

A closing is often called “Settlement” because the seller, together with the buyer, the buyer’s lender, the sales agents, and the seller’s lender, are “settling up” among yourselves and all the other parties who have provided services or documents to the transaction.

### Where will your closing happen?

Typically, your closing will happen at the company that insures the buyer’s title to the property. In many cases, you as the seller may upon request sign at your attorney’s office.

### What happens after the closing?

The closing is complete when the escrowee pays off your lender and other lien holders and service providers, pays your sale proceeds to you, places the deed (and the buyer’s mortgage if any) for recording with the county recorder of deeds, and gives all other transfer documents to the buyer.

After a completed closing, you are no longer the owner of the property. Unless the contract or another side agreement states otherwise, you must relinquish possession of the home by giving the buyer all keys, garage door openers, and all other devices that control the home’s systems and appliances.

You are expected to have completely moved your household and your possessions out by this time as well, and left the place broom-clean, at a minimum. If you believe you may not be able to move out on or before the closing date, you should negotiate a post-closing possession agreement with the buyer.

Shortly after receiving full payment of your outstanding mortgage loan, your lender should prepare and deliver a release of mortgage to you. Sometimes, the lender will send the original release to the escrowee or directly to the county recorder of deeds for recording, but it is important that you make sure the release is recorded and returned to you.



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Most of the time, homes will appraise at or slightly above the sales price. But if there's been a bidding war, the appraisal might come in low.

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# THE BOTTOM LINE

Make sure you are honest with yourself and weigh out the pros and cons of selling by yourself vs. selling with the assistance of a Realtor that's an expert in your area. Remember all the right marketing in the world won't help sell your home if it isn't priced right.



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