

# Seven Biggest Mistakes

When Selling Your Property

**domain&co.**

Your Property People

# Hi, I'm Mel.

Selling your home is one of the biggest financial decisions you will ever make. Most people do it a handful of times in their life. That doesn't leave much room to learn on the job.

I've been doing this for decades. As a Vendor Advocate, my whole job is to sit alongside sellers, keep their selling agent accountable, and make sure every decision gets made in their interest. What that means in practice is that I see the same mistakes, over and over. Not because people are careless. Because selling property is genuinely hard, and most of the traps are invisible until you're already in them.

This guide walks you through the seven biggest ones. What they look like, why they happen, and what to do instead.

If anything here raises a question, or if you'd like to talk through your own situation, I'm always happy to have that conversation.

**Mel Dennis, Director, Domain & Co.**

## WHAT IS IN OUR DNA?

STRAIGHT

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FRANK

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CONSIDERED

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GROUNDED

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LONG GAME

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## 01

## Choosing the wrong agent

### THE AGENT YOU CHOOSE CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOUR RESULT

Pick the wrong one and you are looking at bad pricing advice, a thin marketing campaign, and a lot of wasted time with buyers who were never serious. In the worst cases, it costs you tens of thousands of dollars and months of your life.

Most sellers choose the agent who drops the nicest brochure in their letterbox, sends them a birthday card each year or the one they've heard of from a sign down the road. Those things do not tell you whether that agent is actually right for your property, your price range, or your suburb.

### HERE IS WHAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

- Recent local sales. Not sales from three years ago and not sales two suburbs over. Look at what they have actually sold in your street, your suburb, your price bracket in the last six to twelve months.
- Honest pricing advice. If an agent quotes you a number that sounds too good, it probably is. Some agents deliberately quote high to win the listing, then manage your expectations down once you're locked in. It's called buying the listing. Steer clear.
- A clear marketing plan. Where will your property be advertised? How many opens? What photography? What's the digital strategy? Vague answers here are a red flag.
- Someone you can work with. You will be in regular contact with this person for weeks. If you don't trust them in the first conversation, don't assume that changes.
- No conflicts of interest. The best agents work for you. They're not trying to steer a buyer from their own office through your front door to double-end the commission.

**The right agent has local runs on the board and your best interests, not their commission, as the priority.**

Meet at least two or three before you decide. Ask the same hard questions of each one. The differences in how they answer will tell you a lot.

# 02

## Not fixing easy repairs

### BUYERS NOTICE EVERYTHING

### AND WHEN THEY SPOT SMALL PROBLEMS, THEY ASSUME BIGGER ONES.

A squeaky hinge. A stained patch of carpet. A bit of paint peeling around the window frame. Individually, none of these cost much to fix. Together, left alone, they chip away at buyer confidence and hand people reasons to offer less for your property.

Most buyers today are not looking for a project. They want to move in. If your home looks like it needs work, a lot of them will just move on to the next one. The ones who stay will use everything they've spotted to justify a lower offer.

The general rule: if a buyer can see it and it looks like neglect, fix it. If fixing it costs you \$200 and it stops a buyer knocking \$5,000 off their offer, that's a straightforward calculation.

### COMMON THINGS WORTH ADDRESSING

- Peeling or scuffed paint on walls, doors, and skirting boards
- Worn carpet or visible stains (professional cleaning is often enough, replacement sometimes necessary)
- Dripping taps, running toilets, stiff door handles, or latches that don't catch
- Cracked tiles or grout that looks tired
- Light fittings that don't work or globes that need replacing
- Weatherboards, fencing, or gutters that look overdue for attention
- Anything in the garden that looks overgrown, dead, or neglected

**Small, visible problems signal larger hidden ones. Buyers discount far more than the cost of the repair.**

You don't need to renovate. You need to make sure nothing catches a buyer's eye for the wrong reason.

# 03

## Overcapitalising when preparing for sale

### THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SMART PREPARATION AND OVERCAPITALISING.

We see it constantly. A seller decides to put in a brand new kitchen before going to market because they think it will add value. The buyer walks through, falls in love with the property, and six months later tears the kitchen out to put in something they actually wanted. That renovation didn't add a dollar to the sale price. It just came off the seller's profit.

Or the bathroom gets a full renovation. Or the paving gets redone. Or a new deck goes in. Big spends that feel logical but don't necessarily move the needle at sale.

Different markets reward different things. What buyers value in one suburb they'll rip out in the next. Before you spend anything significant, have that conversation with someone who actually knows the market.

### THE SMART APPROACH

- Talk to your selling agent before you commit to any major spend. Ask them directly what buyers in your suburb are looking for and what they'll pay more for.
- Talk to us. As Vendor Advocates, we've seen enough campaigns to know what works and what doesn't, and we're not benefiting from a renovation referral fee.
- Focus on what buyers can see and feel, not on infrastructure they won't notice.
- Fresh paint, clean carpets, and good lighting will almost always do more for buyer perception than a full room renovation.

**Seek advice before spending a cent. Informed decisions here can save, or make, tens of thousands.**

Preparation is about removing objections, not transforming the property. Keep that framing and you'll spend where it counts.

# 04

## Making the home too personal

### **YOUR HOME IS PERSONAL TO YOU. THAT'S EXACTLY WHY IT NEEDS TO STOP BEING PERSONAL BEFORE YOU SELL IT.**

When buyers walk through a property, they need to be able to picture themselves living there. That's a psychological thing, not just an aesthetic one. If every wall tells your story, it's harder for someone else to project their own life onto the space.

Family portraits down every hallway. Bold wallpaper in every room. A collection of something covering every available surface. Statement furniture that polarises rather than welcomes. None of this is wrong in a home you're living in. But it becomes a problem when you're trying to sell to a broad buyer pool.

This doesn't mean stripping the place bare or spending a fortune on styling. It means creating enough neutrality that buyers can mentally move in.

### **WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE**

- Pack away excessive personal photos, collections, and anything highly specific to your taste
- Tone down very bold paint colours where possible, particularly in main living areas
- Store large or dominating furniture that makes rooms feel smaller or more cluttered
- Keep surfaces clear, especially kitchens and bathrooms
- Remove anything that communicates a strong lifestyle or value set that might alienate buyers

**Buyers need to see themselves in your home. Make it easy for them by making it neutral.**

The goal is simple. Buyers should walk through and think this could be ours, not this is definitely theirs.

## 05

## Not Presenting the home properly

**YOU'RE COMPETING AGAINST EVERY OTHER PROPERTY IN YOUR PRICE RANGE. PRESENTATION IS HOW YOU STAND OUT.**

A poorly presented home loses buyers before they even make it through the front door. Photography is the first thing people see on the listing. Opens are where they decide whether to bid or walk away. Every element of how your home is presented either builds a buyer's confidence or erodes it.

The good news is that strong presentation doesn't have to cost a lot. The basics work.

### FOUR THINGS THAT GET RESULTS

- Declutter. Less is more. Clear the shelves, clear the benchtops, clear the wardrobes. When a space feels open, buyers feel optimistic. When it feels crowded, they start looking for reasons to leave.
- Light it up. Light sells homes. Open every blind, turn on every light, add lamps where rooms feel flat. Buyers respond to bright, warm spaces. Dark homes feel smaller and sadder than they are.
- Keep it neutral. Bold colours and strong personal style narrow your buyer pool. Neutrals, white, warm grey, greige, work for everyone and make rooms photograph better.
- Make it spotless. A dirty kitchen or a scuffed bathroom floor is the fastest way to lose a buyer. Professional cleaning before the campaign starts is worth every cent.

**None of this costs a fortune. All of it makes a difference to how buyers feel about your home.**

Photography matters too. Most buyers decide whether to attend an open based on photos alone. Poor photography from a low-angle, dimly lit phone camera will kill your enquiry numbers before you've even started. Good photography adds next to nothing as a percentage of your sale price but affects everything.

# 06

## Pricing the property too high

### THE MARKET DOESN'T PAY FOR SENTIMENT. IT PAYS FOR COMPARABLE SALES.

We understand. Your home means a great deal to you. Every decision you made on it, every improvement, every memory, it all adds up in your mind to a number that feels right. But the market doesn't pay for any of that. It pays for what comparable properties in your area have recently sold for, what buyers can afford in that bracket, and how much competition your campaign generates.

Price it too high and you lose buyers before they even walk through the door. The ones who do come through are already comparing you to better-priced properties. Your campaign goes quiet. Days on market start ticking up. And when a property has been sitting for a while, buyers start wondering what's wrong with it, even when the only problem is the price.

The research backs what we see in practice. Overpriced properties that are later reduced typically sell below what they would have achieved with a well-set price from day one. The reduction signals weakness. The silence before the reduction loses you buyers who would have been in the room early.

### WHAT A WELL-SET PRICE DOES

- Creates genuine competition between buyers, which is what pushes your result higher.
- Keeps your campaign momentum strong, with strong enquiry and strong open attendance.
- Signals to buyers that you are serious, which brings out serious bidders.
- Reduces days on market, which reduces the cost and stress of a prolonged campaign.

**In a seller's market, a well-priced property creates competition. Competition creates a higher final result.**

Trust the comparable sales. Trust the data. Set a price that gets people in the room.

## 07

## Not using a Vendor Advocate

**MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW A VENDOR ADVOCATE IS EVEN AN OPTION. THOSE WHO DO OFTEN ASSUME IT COSTS EXTRA. IT DOESN'T.**

A Vendor Advocate, sometimes called a Seller's Advocate, sits alongside you through the entire sale process. Not as the selling agent, but as your independent advisor. We work for you and only you.

### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE

We help you choose the right selling agent from the start. We know which agents genuinely perform in your area and which ones just talk a good game. That first decision, getting the agent selection right, is often the most valuable thing we do.

We then sit across the whole campaign. We review the marketing strategy, attend opens when needed, stay in contact with the selling agent, and keep them accountable to what they promised you. Sellers often feel reluctant to push back on their agent or ask hard questions. We do it without hesitation, because that's our job.

We review the paperwork. We flag anything that doesn't look right. We advise on offers and negotiate where it's in your interest. We keep across every detail from the first appraisal to settlement.

### WHAT A VENDOR ADVOCATE DOES FOR YOU

- Helps prepare your property and select the right selling agent, with no conflicts of interest.
- Reviews and pushes back on the marketing and pricing strategy.
- Keeps the selling agent accountable through the campaign.
- Answers the questions you don't know to ask.
- Advises on offers and helps you navigate negotiation.
- Stays across every detail from the start of the campaign through to settlement.

**You only sell a home a handful of times. Having someone in your corner who does this every day changes the outcome.**

We've spent decades helping Melbourne sellers get a better result. We'd be glad to do the same for you.



### Ready to get started?

If any of this raised a question about your own situation, we would love to talk. We offer a free, no-obligation market appraisal of your property, with no pressure and no hard sell. Just a straight conversation about where you're at and what your options look like.

**Call us on 1300 808 917 | [hello@domainandco.com.au](mailto:hello@domainandco.com.au)**

[www.domainandco.com.au](http://www.domainandco.com.au)