
Caitlyn Thomas

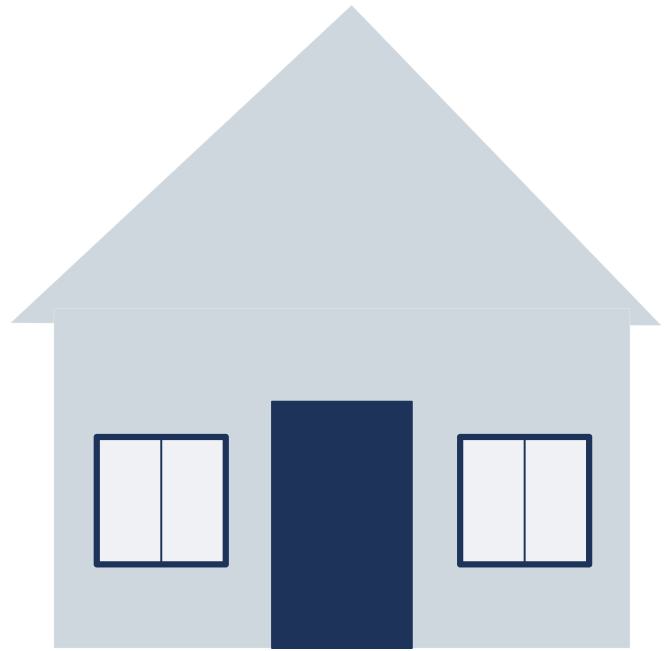
TN REALTOR®



home sellers guide

A complete guide to selling your home, gaining equity, and understanding every step of the process

Selling
doesn't
have to
be *hard*



I understand that selling your home in today's market can be challenging. The market can fluctuate daily but hundreds of homes are sold weekly in our area, likewise you are bound to gain equity in your home here in our growing city.

I appreciate you thinking of me to assist in the process of buying and/or selling your home. I commit myself to ensuring that ALL of your real estate needs are met. I have put together this guide for your convenience and I hope that it serves you well as a valuable resource.

The entire process will be outlined throughout this guide and you are welcome to refer back to it but please know that I am always here to answer any questions and shed some light on any specific topic. Your experience will be unique and I will adjust my service according to your wants and needs. It is always my highest goal to make sure you successfully sell and/or buy your home without conflict, stress, and to consistently keep you educated and up to date.

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4 stages of selling your home

01 Pre-Listing

- Schedule a walk through
- Discuss the best strategy for selling
- Executed listing agreement
- Property evaluation
- Complete market analysis
- Establish sales price

02 Prep for the Market

- Marketing campaign started
- Professional photography taken
- Sign(s) installed
- Submitted to the multiple listing service (MLS)
- Ideal showing times selected
- Social media advertising begins

03 Active on the Market

- Showings begin
- Curb appeal kept up
- House is kept ready to show
- Showing feedback shared

04 Offer & Closing

- Offer(s) received
- Offer(s) negotiated
- Offer accepted
- Termite inspection complete
- Inspections & disclosures complete
- Appraisal completed
- Contingencies removed
- Property closes
- Refer your friends & family to us!



8 strategies to getting your home *Sold*

The following bulleted items list off some of the most notable techniques and strategies that I use to sell a home. With countless local and country-wide partners, know that you are not just listing your home with me, but also getting many other services to successfully sell your home

- Market Preparation
- Staging
- Photography
- Online Marketing Blast
- Social Media
- MLS Listing
- Agent Campaign
- Active Phone Work

There are also other options that you can opt for. For instance, Real 3D Space is a local company that does full home photography, drone footage, virtual tours, and customizes a full home website to drive buyer activity!



Preparing your home

leaving a good first impression

Think about a time you were meeting someone and wanted to leave a good first impression. People tend to remember those first initial interactions and the same goes for seeing houses. A potential buyer's first time seeing a home will make or break that sale. When they walk into the home they will immediately begin to evaluate everything & try to picture themselves in your home. What they take away from that first encounter with your home will ultimately determine how much they will offer on the property and if they are even interested in the property at all.

cleanliness

Imagine your in-laws or parents are coming to the house, you would want everything to be spotless, wouldn't you? Keep that same mindset when it comes to potential buyers coming to the home.

Buyers have a tendency to get distracted and focus on the negatives during a showing rather than the positives, even if they outweigh the negatives. They notice the small things like dust bunnies in the corner, dusty ceiling fans, dirty laundry out and about, or dishes left in the sink. All of these distractions will detract from the perceived value of the home, which will ultimately mean lower offers and longer time on the market.

repairs

There are many reasons why you should consider doing repairs prior to putting your home on the market. The biggest reason is due to the fact that buyers will be more inclined to pay more and faster for a home that needs little to no work.

Additionally, any money put into the work prior to listing the property will usually be far less than what an inspector will quote and what the buyer will request in concessions if they are left with a lot of repairs to do.

Thankfully, most repairs will usually be cosmetic and relatively inexpensive. Think of the things on your to-do list, maybe there is a leaky faucet or cracked tile, these small defects that may have bothered you while living in the home will bother the new owners as well, if not more.

Interior & Exterior

Preparations

Decluttering, depersonalizing, and performing any repairs/alterations will all help you gain that well deserved equity from your home. Being able to consistently show the home in its best possible condition will pay off immensely. Remember; first impressions last a lifetime. Another good tip is to store any unnecessary pieces of furniture to allow for easy movement throughout the home (this also makes the house appear more spacious).

Interior

- Wash all windows, mirrors, doors, and baseboards
- Remove any clutter or unnecessary appliances from kitchen counters/islands
- Take down any personal items from the walls
- Laundry either put away or hidden but not in the washer or dryer as some buyers may look inside
- Take out all trash
- Put all sensitive documents in a secure place

Exterior

- Wash all windows and clean the screens
- Touch up paint
- Move unnecessary vehicles from driveway
- Display seasonally appropriate flowers & landscaping
- Weed flower beds
- Clean/stage front porch & secure any loose handrails



Professional *Photography*



Over 95% of home buyers will begin their search online, so having professional photography done will be imperative! I personally hire professionals who take the best pictures and even set up a webpage specifically dedicated to your home and all of it's information. They will ensure that everything is edited and shown perfectly.

those who get professional photography done. . .

- Will receive an average of 87% more views than their peers across all price ranges
- Have a 47% higher asking price per square foot
- Will usually sell faster than a home with one picture.
Typically homes that have very few pictures will average 70+ days on the market while a home with 15+ professional photos will spend an average of 32 days on the market



showing/open house checklist

- Secure valuables (tech devices, bills, spare keys to the house, & any prescription drugs)
- Take out the trash and consider hiding garbage cans
- Have all countertops cleared off including bulky appliances such as toasters & coffee makers
- Minimize family photos
- Keys and personal items stored away
- Do a thorough cleaning - even if you have to hire a cleaning service
- Declutter/put away everyday items such as toys, dishes, mail, shoes, coats, sporting equipment, etc.
- Improve curb appeal - mow the lawn and trim back any overgrown shrubbery
- Purge/organize your fridge - a buyer WILL look
- Make the bathroom shine - put all toilet seats down, clean mirrors and countertops
- Set thermostat to a comfortable & appropriate temperature for showings
- Dress up the dining room table with a runner or fresh/faux flowers
- Play soft music if you have an available speaker or on the TV
- Offer snacks and water
- Turn on all the lights
- Take magnets and pictures off of the fridge
- Organize toys or store them away while house is on the market
- Open the windows if nice outside or open curtains to let in lots of natural light (buyers love this)
- Less is more. Remove any excess furniture if possible
- Replace any dimming or burnt out lightbulbs
- Clear all walkways to and from the house
- Do a quick sweeping, dusting, and vacuuming through the house shortly before the showing
- Make all the beds
- Hide feeding bowls, water bowls, dog beds, toys, etc.

showing your home

01

Showing Requested

02

Approve or Decline Request

03

Prepare House for Showing

04

Leave Home Until
Showing is Complete

05

Feedback or Offer Received

06

Review Feedback or Offer

common showing mistakes. . .

Showings can absolutely be a burden and can pop up at the very last minute, but it is in your best interest to be as flexible as possible and accommodate to your potential buyers' schedule. Usually, when buyers and their agent(s) are out for showings, they will do multiple in one day so they may not circle back to see yours if it is not available when they ask to see it.

It is also considered a "turn-off" if the seller is present during a showing at their home because it can be uncomfortable. If you decide to sell your home without an agent (FSBO), I would strongly consider using a lockbox for showings. Likewise, if you are selling on your own without the assistance of a professional and prefer to be present during showings, don't hover. The best practice is to stay out of their way and allow them to explore while also being available for any and all questions.

It can be difficult to hear people critique your home following a showing, but it can be helpful. For example, if a buyer left feedback stating that they noticed the carpet was dirty, you know to have them cleaned before the next showing.

Showing feedback

If you are selling your home and have taken the time to clean, pick up, and clear out any and all clutter or debris in and outside of the home so a buyer can tour it, you would want to know what they thought of it, right? Actually, a better outcome would probably be an offer but if they do not come back with an offer, you still would want to know why. . .

The "why" is called buyer feedback. Sometimes it can be confusing trying to interpret the buyer's feedback. It's common practice for me to go directly to the buyer's agent and ask them personally what their client(s) thought of your home. I do pass this information on to you as a way to provide some clarity and interpret it for you.

Here are a few helpful examples of interpreting buyer feedback. . .

what they said

what they mean

"The furnace (or insert any large mechanical appliance) is old and they're just not sure"

The buyer is afraid of major expenses down the road. Essentially, with the price your home is listed at, they fear that it will cost them too much money later and not be worth it.

"They were hoping for an open floor plan"

"The floor plan wasn't right for them"

"They thought the rooms would be bigger"

"The rooms are smaller than they thought"

"It was our first time out and they are just getting started in their search"

Is it possible that the pictures may not have fully captured the essence of your home? Maybe they are a bit deceiving and make the rooms look bigger than they are. You are always able to get the pictures done again. Sometimes, pictures don't depict how truly amazing a home is and sometimes the buyer just doesn't look at the pictures close enough and expects something different when they arrive to the showing. Either way, they seem to not be happy with the reality of the home and will not be submitting an offer.

"It had a weird smell"

"There was a strong pet odor"

Pet odor can be the biggest deterrent for any potential buyer. Some people are just overly sensitive to smells. I'd suggest doing a deep clean and throwing out any old air fresheners. It is amazing how smell alone can make or break a sale, even if it happens to be just the home they are in search of.

"where do my fur-babies go during a *showing*?"



Most people are animal lovers and treat their fur-babies like family (as you should), but like everything, there is a time and place. Unfortunately, having pets out and about during a showing is not exactly ideal. It can not only be a distraction but can cause problems and effect your bottom line.

why do my pets need to go?

Whether you are having an open house or have a showing coming up, the following key points will touch on why it is best practice to remove them from the property during these events. . .

fears & nerves

It may seem hard to believe but there are people who have a fear of dogs and/or cats. It is actually one of the more common fears. While not everyone may classify it as fear, there is a level of discomfort they may have about being around cats and/or dogs. We have seen clients refuse to enter some homes that had pets in them. When selling your home, the biggest goal is to get enough feet in the door to broaden the scope of interest.

unpredictability

More often than not you will hear people say that their cat is "so welcoming and nice" or that their dog is "the sweetest pup ever", but we have also seen that same cat or dog scratch and draw blood or get territorial and growl, bark, and scare the potential buyers and their agent. I have no doubt that your dogs and/or cats are the sweetest pets one could ever have but when a stranger enters their home without you present, it can cause the dog or cat to panic and go into defensive mode.

so where do they go?

There are a few options for you when it comes to removing your pet from the property and it is completely up to you and your comfortability with each option. While there are more options than what I have written, you can leave them with a family member or friend for the duration of the showing or open house or board them for a specific time. You could also hire a dog walker to come during the time of the showing or open house, ask a neighbor to watch them for a short while, or if you are completely moving out of the house while it is on the market then you (hopefully) will be taking them with you!



negotiating an offer

Negotiation takes place on three separate occasions within the purchase & sale contract. The first occasion is when an offer is initially submitted where we can modify the purchase price and terms. The second occasion will take place during the buyers inspection contingency. The final occasion to negotiate is during the buyers appraisal contingency. Not only myself but the agents whom I partner with are negotiation experts and fight for you and your interests. It is essential to have a professional on your side during these negotiations to ensure you are not losing money and the contract works in both your favor and the buyers, respectably. Who you have representing you matters greatly.

Once an offer is received, there are still some things that need to be handled properly. Ensuring that you properly disclosure everything known to you and obey all the terms in the contract are just a few of the most important matters. Once you accept an offer, we will move right into the "escrow period" and we will help with every step of the process moving forward.

key aspects of an offer/contract to review

Disclosures

In the state of Tennessee, the law requires the seller to disclose certain information to a prospective buyer. The disclosures are to help the buyer make informed decisions about purchasing the property. If a seller fails to do so, it can result in severe penalties. We will make sure to cross all of our T's and dot all of our I's when disclosing information.

Inspections

It is important to understand the contingencies in each offer that is received. In Tennessee, the buyer is given an inspection period of 17 days to complete all inspections. It is important that you understand what your obligations and options are during this period and that you and your agent stay on top of deadlines during this time.

Financing/Appraisals

It is essential that your agent is skilled in helping you review any and all offers received. Moreover, is it important that they assist in making sure that the offer received has been fully underwritten and fully approved to avoid any potential disturbances during this period.

Closing

My goal is to help coach you through the entire transaction start to finish. I understand that this is a process you may only experience a few times in your life so I am here to help guide you through each step of the process. Furthermore, my goal is to earn the title of your go-to real estate agent FOR LIFE, not just a single transaction.

the offer *process*

After you receive an offer, we will meet and review the offer(s) together. Once we have thoroughly read over and reviewed the offer(s), you will have three options. . .



01 accept the offer in it's entirety

02 decline the offer

If you feel that the offer is not within your expectations & do not want to further negotiate

03 counter-offer

If you agree to most of the offer but wish to make changes to a few details, we can counter the buyers original offer with new terms

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away

once an offer is accepted by both parties; you are officially under contract!!

final *steps*



order the inspections

During the inspection period, we will schedule an inspection with a reputable home inspector to do a thorough investigation of the home. Once this is complete, the inspector will provide the buyer with a detailed list of their findings.

order the appraisal

The buyer's lender will arrange for a third-party appraiser to provide an independent estimate of the value of the house. The appraisal let's all parties involved know that the price is fair. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter.

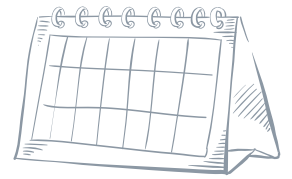
negotiate the final offer

Issues could arise after the home inspection, and those issues tend to result in another round of negotiations for credits or fixes

- 01 The buyer could ask for a credit for the work that needs to be done
- 02 Think "big picture" and don't sweat the small stuff. A leaky faucet or tiling that needs some caulking are easy fixes. We have a great list of local reputable vendors that can assist with any repairs that need to be done.
- 03 Keep your poker face on. The buyer's agent will be present during inspections & revealing your emotions or getting defensive could result in more difficult negotiations.



scheduling your move



After Signing

Declutter! Sort through your belongings and determine what you wish to keep and bring with you. You can toss, donate, or hold a yard sale for the items you won't be bringing with you.

Make sure you gather all of your essential records. This includes medical records, vet records, etc. and store them with your other important documents.

Put together a detailed inventory of everything you are planning to bring with you in case anything is lost during the move.

Get estimates from moving companies.

4 Weeks to Move

Schedule movers/moving truck

Buy/find packing materials

START PACKING

3 Weeks to Move

Buyer's lender will order appraisal

Title work will be completed

Keep packing

2 Weeks to Move

We will schedule a time to close and sign all necessary documents.

Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable, etc.)

Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.

Minimize grocery shopping

Keep packing

1 Week to Move

Buyer will complete their final walk through

Finish packing

Clean the entire home or hire a cleaning company to come in and do a deep move-out clean.

Pack essentials for the first few nights in the new home.

Confirm delivery date/time with moving company. Write down directions and your phone number in case anything occurs during transport.

Closing Day!

closing day



It's finally closing day!! Congratulations!

Closing is when you sign ownership paperwork and you hand over your house keys!

Final Walk Through

Buyers will do a final walk through of your home within 24 hours of closing typically. During this, they will evaluate and check on the properties condition. Remember, the buyers probably haven't seen the home again since they initially saw the house with their agent. The final inspection will usually take an hour and during this hour they will make sure that any repairs they requested have been completed.

They will. . .

- Make sure all appliances work properly
- Run the water of all faucets and check for any leaks
- Open and close the garage with the opener (if applicable)
- Flush toilets
- Run garbage disposal and exhaust fans

Closing Table

Who will be there:

- Your agent (me)
- You
- Closing officer

What to bring:

- Government-Issued ID
- Any funds needed for closing

Congrats!! It's been a long hard road but we are finally here, you have officially closed and sold your home!

RESOURCES *Resources* for you

Curbio

Curbio is a resource that my brokerage partners with that offers pre-listing upgrades, repairs, and improvements. These are entirely dictated by you. From fast fix-ups to full renovations, there is NOTHING due until the home sells!

Express Offers

My brokerage built a proprietary iBuying software program, ExpressOffers®, which allows agents like myself to submit my seller client's properties to institutional buyers who buy in cash and in a much shorter timeframe than your traditional transaction. Rather than getting one offer, you would be connected with buyer's across the country and can hand pick your highest and best offer!

EyeSpy360

EyeSpy360, another amazing partnership with my brokerage, offers 360 home-tours with video-chat integration. EyeSpy360 offers the total package with photography services, virtual staging, virtual renovation and full CGI. This is great for giving out-of-state buyers and immersive tour!

Utility Connect

Utility Connect is an awesome resource we offer to home buyers. It does the leg work for you, finding the best home service providers in your area and makes sure it fits your budget.

Personalize your utility companies, easily have them connected/switched into your name, and settle into your new home!

And More!

Thanks to my wonderful brokerage and partnerships with local businesses, I am happy to say I have a number of resources to offer my clients, buyer or seller! I have found these take a lot of stress off of the table and provide just another sense of ease when making such a large transition. Ask me what other resources I have for you and your family!

Final Thoughts

This is an exciting time for you! Whether you're ready to jump in now and put your home on the market or need some time prior to doing so, know that I am here for you no matter what stage you are at.

I am here to not only offer my knowledge, expertise, and advice, but I am here for support as well. Selling your home is not always an seamless and conflict-free feat so having professionals on your side who have seen it all gives you that extra layer of comfort knowing that no matter what happens, one way or another it will be taken care of.

Please keep this guide, hold on to it for future reference, or pass it on to a friend or family member. More than fulfilling your real estate needs, we want to be a beacon of education so that you, the client, are never blindsided or uninformed of what is actually happening.

I thank you for taking the time to review this guide and I look forward to working with you!

Stay in Contact



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Call, text, or email me with any questions or if you are ready to begin your home buying journey, reach out and we can talk about how we may begin working together! Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide and I hope it serves you well navigating this exciting transition!