



Common Mistakes Home Sellers Make

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California Real Estate Quick Facts:

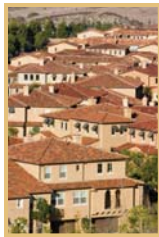
- Existing, single-family home sales increased 49.2 percent in April.
- The statewide median price of an existing single-family home increased 1.4 percent in April.
- Unsold Inventory fell to 4.6 months in April 2009, compared with 9.8 months in April 2008
- The number of days it took to sell a single-family home declined to 48.7 days in April '09, compared with 51.8 days in April '08

With housing prices lower than they were a year ago, historic lows in interest prices and tax incentives for first-time homebuyers, we are very clearly in a buyer's market. Savvy sellers can still do well by knowing how to stand out in the market and how to appeal to buyers.

Avoid these mistakes that sellers often make and you're well ahead of the game:

Failing to hire a real estate agent with experience in the area. When shopping for real estate agents, ask for references, as well as their track record with homes in your price range and local area. Their experience, knowledge, and marketing plan will have an enormous impact on your success. Without an experienced agent who is familiar with the ins and outs of the sale process, your home may languish on the market.

Improper Pricing. Make sure your home is priced correctly from the beginning by finding out what comparable homes in the area sold for and how long they stayed on the market. Beware of real estate search engine sites that give you only a general estimated valuation of your property.



Failing to offer effective incentives to buyers. Lowering your asking price isn't the only way to grab a prospective buyer's attention. Extra perks like paying for a year's worth of homeowner association fees or adding a home warranty may give them that extra little nudge to commit.

Refusing to prepare the home for sale. Failure to make minor improvements will set the homeowner back thousands of dollars during negotiations. A leaky faucet, a cracked tile or other minor repairs may make the difference between a closed sale and a home that just sits on the market for months on end.



False advertising. Don't allow your house to be misrepresented - either through the description or by retouching photos. Touching up a photo to add shrubbery to the front yard or to remove powerlines that run through the backyard won't fool anyone.

Mistaking Lookers for Buyers. Buyers should be pre-approved for a mortgage big enough to purchase your home before you work with them. The fall-through rate on transactions is around twice what it was just two years ago, and it's usually because of a financing problem.

Skimping on Marketing. The days of putting a sign in the yard and placing your property on the mls to get your home sold are long gone. Today, agents need to design specific marketing plans that will maximize the odds of your home being seen by that one special buyer. The Internet is now the first stop for many home shoppers. Sellers should include as many pictures as allowed. Be sure to highlight what home shoppers care about most: kitchen, bathrooms and outdoor space.

Not Providing Easy Access. Make it easy for buyers to arrange to see your home. In today's competitive market, buyers who can't get a viewing will go on to other homes, and purchase elsewhere. A lock-box allows buyers to see your home when accompanied by an agent at a minute's notice.



Not taking the first offer seriously. Now more than ever, buyers are testing the waters to see how low they can go. Rather than turning your nose at what you think is a low bid, present a realistic counter offer. That way, you can spark a real negotiation.

Not Understanding the Market. Forecasts predict that the housing market will start a slow recovery in the first half of 2010. That doesn't mean you should wait to sell your home because it could cost you thousands of dollars in home value. If your home is worth \$500,000 now, but area prices sink another 10% by the end of the year, that's \$50,000 you missed out on by postponing the sale.