

## Your House Didn't Sell – Now What?

"... The first thing to do is take a step back and analyze the situation..."

You put your home up for sale and it simply didn't sell. Undoubtedly, this has created a lot of stress, inconvenience and anxiety for you and your family. Perhaps you already bought another home. Maybe you needed this home sold because of a job change. Regardless of the reason, it's certainly a burden! What Should You Do?

The first thing to do is to take a step back and analyze the situation. Try to assess what factors led to your home not selling. Below are the top four reasons why homes tend to languish on the market:

### Is The Property Overpriced?

Overpricing your property is usually the number one reason it did not sell. Assuming your neighborhood or area has homes with similar features (number of bedrooms and baths, lot size, etc.) on the market for a lower price, buyers will naturally buy those properties first. The price of your property should be competitively priced with these other homes. That means if you want to sell your home, price the home at or slightly below the comparables. Your real estate agent will help you establish the best price based on the competition. Again, pricing your property above comparable properties can easily cause it to languish.

Another problem with pricing higher than competitive properties is the price reductions. Most homeowners will reduce the price once they realize their home is priced higher than the competition. When your real estate agent enters the price reduction in the MLS, the property is probably at or near where it should have been priced in the first place. The problem now is you missed a lot of the buyers the first round that bought comparable homes for the same price you have just reduced your home to.

To overcome this situation, you are going to have to make sure your new, reduced price is extremely competitive. If your price reduction still leaves the asking price of your home higher than any comparables, your home will probably continue to languish. Your real estate agent will help you assess the competition and help you establish an asking price that will get the home sold.

### Condition Of The Property

All of the cosmetic things, such as paint, landscaping, window coverings and flooring should be in good shape. The house should be spotlessly clean inside and out! It's amazing how most buyers refuse to see "through" superficial, cosmetic shortcomings. To illustrate this point, most buyers can walk into a "perfect" home that is priced below market. However, if the house is cluttered, the carpet is worn, or the house has a strong pet odor, they move on to look at the next house. And making these cosmetic improvements costs little... mostly your time! To get the house sold, make a small investment in:

- Landscaping: Make sure lawn is in good shape and trees and shrubs neat and trimmed. Make sure gutters are clear. If you don't have the time to do it, pay someone.
- Exterior of home: Make sure there is no chipping paint, dirty windows, or clutter in the yard. Most importantly, remember that most buyers will notice the condition of the front door when they walk in.
- Interior: Make sure the carpets are clean and attractive, the walls painted (if it needs it) and clean (no smudges!), the kitchen clutter-free and the windows are spotless. Also, remove excess furniture (rule of thumb is put half the furniture in storage or the basement). Excess furniture makes rooms appear much smaller. Make sure all clothes are off the floor and organized in closets. And finally, make sure the smell of the home is appealing. Vanilla scent works very well with most buyers.

### Was Your Property Aggressively Marketed?

Another primary reason for homes languishing on the market is a simple lack of exposure. In a very hot market, a listing in the Multiple Listing Service alone should generate an adequate number of buyers. However, if your market is anything less than red-hot, the amount of inventory will increase and your home needs aggressive marketing.

Most buyers work with real estate agents. A good real estate agent will make sure your property is exposed to the active real estate agents in your areas by presenting your property to many of the area offices. Also, most active real estate agents have a strong network of other agents, and they're usually on the phone pushing the property to the other agent's buyers.

Make sure your property is advertised in home magazines. Many buyers pull these off the racks of grocery, convenience and drug stores when they are actively looking to buy a home. Most importantly, make sure your property is advertised in heavily trafficked web sites like MLS.ca. Well over 80% of buyers use the Internet to look for homes!

## **Finally, and Most Importantly, Did You Hire The “Right” Real Estate Agent?**

Like any profession, there are very effective and ineffective agents. Many agents work hard and employ strong marketing techniques. Many agents have a strong network and access to buyers. Many agents work hard to get your home sold. However, many do not. Did your agent simply place the house in the Multiple Listing Service? Or, did she or he inform their network of buyers about your property? How about presenting your property at sales meetings both at her or his office and other company offices? Did she or he promote your property at the local real estate board meeting, where many agents gather to share inventory? Did she or he use aggressive advertising, including real estate magazines and heavily trafficked Internet web sites?

Ask yourself, was your agent passionate about selling your property? If not, now is the time to find the agent who will get your home sold.