

# Negotiating the Highest Price for Your Home

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*Buyers are far more discriminating and better informed than ever before. It is more critical than ever to learn what you need to know to avoid costly seller mistakes in order to sell your home fast and for the most amount of money.*

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Once you've finally decided to sell your home, every seller agrees that the next biggest issue is to achieve the highest sale price. Because we don't enter such transactions often enough to gain experience, most homeowners are disadvantaged and ill-equipped to know exactly how to go about getting top dollar when they sell. Not only can market conditions create considerable swings affecting price, but the skill of the person responsible for negotiating can also determine the ultimate price your home will sell for.

However, negotiating effectively doesn't have to be as difficult or intimidating as you might expect. Like anything else, if you have a planned, step-by-step strategy and know the signals and the language that reveal the position of your buyer - you are more likely to be satisfied with the outcome and feel that the best deal for you has been negotiated.

## 4 Common Negotiating Mistakes Most Homesellers Make

Following are 4 common mistakes most homesellers make at the negotiating table:

### 1. Thinking out loud ...

When negotiating, it is important to understand clearly that there are facts that you are legally required to disclose, and those you are not. Don't say anything more than what is required of you in front of someone who is not representing your interests exclusively. Thinking through each point you are going to make is best done in private with your agent so that you may feel free to ask any questions or explore your options without saying something that you later wish you hadn't. What you say can and will be used by the buyer's agent, so once you've made your decisions, allow your agent to speak on your behalf. When you are reviewing an offer, do so between you and your agent only. Once you've made the mistake of "thinking out loud" or reminding your agent of your "bottom line", you can bet that the buyer's agent will use this information if disclosed in their presence. They are representing the buyer's needs, not yours. It is quite acceptable to ask other parties to leave before you discuss any details of the offer with your agent.

### 2. Take the time you need with your counter-offer ...

There is a reason that offers often are presented with a small window of time to counter. Rushing your decision rarely results in the best outcome for you. If you have a buyer who is serious about purchasing your home, that interest does not generally die within hours – unless they are looking for a "steal". Don't feel pressured to respond immediately to a presented offer. Look to your agent to understand if the time-frame offered is reasonable and allows you to discuss the issues the two of you need to talk about to make the best counter-offer. Consulting with your agent privately, away from the buyer's agent, is an absolute must. Even more than that you may want to consult with your legal counsel as well. If this is the case, ask for time to meet with, or fax the offer to your lawyer. A little bit of space and time to discuss your next steps will certainly lead to clearer thinking and a more comfortable decision.

### **3. Playing all your cards up front ...**

You don't need to include home fixtures such as appliances, lighting, drapery etc. in the list price of your home. In fact, it is in your best interest to hold these articles out of the equation as items to bargain with, if you are prepared to offer them as such. Unless these items are specifically detailed in your listing, you are not obliged to give them up. Used this way, these often sought-after items can become effective bargaining tools in your favour. Given away too early, you may lose any potential leverage that they may afford you. And keep in mind that there is nothing indicating that these items need to be in the negotiating process at all, unless specifically itemized in your listing. This is something you'll want to discuss with your agent at the time of listing your home. You can treat them entirely outside your home sale if you chose, or use them as bargaining tools in your counter-offer.

### **4. Not understanding the issue of "Dual Agency"**

Dual Agency exists when the offer made on your home comes from the same real estate company that you listed your home with - i.e. when both you and the buyer are represented by agents who work for the same brokerage. When dual agency exists, both your agent and the buyer's agent are legally required to tell each other everything that their clients say. Therefore if, you don't want your buyer to know the lowest price you will accept, or that you'll toss in the appliances if push comes to shove (and you certainly don't want the buyer to know these things), then you should not be divulging this information to your agent - because he or she must then pass this information on to the buyer's agent who works for the same company. Your agent should make you aware of the implications of dual agency when it occurs so you can take away a clear understanding of this important issue.

**By being aware of these and other issues and by seeking the advice of an experienced real estate professional and lawyer, your negotiating skills can be more effective in your home-selling process.**