



Selling Tips for Home Buyers

By: Bruce Riedle with RLP Development, President

Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois



There are incredible opportunities to buy a home in today's market. Interest rates are near historic lows, prices are more competitive than they've been in years, and there is a large selection of homes available for sale to choose from. Whether you would like more space to accommodate a growing family or less to better suit an empty-nester lifestyle, the current buyer's market makes it an ideal time to make a change.

But what if you have to sell your current home before you buy a new one? While the buyer's market means when you buy your new house you will be able to get more for your money than a few years ago, it also means you will have to make sure your existing home is presented in its most attractive light in order to attract bids from potential buyers.

Here are some tips to help you improve your chances of attracting a buyer:

- Start with a realistic price. Thoroughly research what homes comparable to yours have sold for in the past year, as well as what the asking price is for the homes that are currently for sale. If you are working with a Realtor, they can do this for you. A price that's too high may keep your home on the market so long that buyers will assume there are problems.
- Curb appeal is critical. Some prospective buyers never get out of the car before deciding that a run-down house is not for them. Keep your lawn neatly mowed and seed bare spots, mulch all the garden beds and plant colorful annuals, and paint or touch up fences, trim and the house itself, if it needs it. Fix anything sub-par that's visible from the street.
- Clean, clean, clean. From the minute buyers arrive at your front door, make sure that everything they see is super clean. Put out a new welcome mat. Thoroughly clean carpets, floors, baseboards, curtains, windows, and especially all the surfaces and appliances in your bathrooms and kitchens. Repaint the walls if they are scuffed or stained.
- Don't forget odor. The home should both look and smell clean and welcoming. Open windows in good weather to encourage fresh air to circulate. Use scented cleaners or air fresheners. Some sellers even pop a batch of cookies into the oven or simmer spiced cider on the stove if they know a potential buyer is coming.
- Make sure everything works. Fix everything from the merely cosmetic such as burned-out light bulbs, to things that could raise red flags with buyers such as broken sink disposals and leaky faucets. If you don't fix it, their home inspector will find it.
- Clutter kills sales. Make sure beds are made, toys are put away, bookshelves are neatly organized, and counters are cleared of personal items. If your house is too full—and that includes attics and basements—prospective buyers will have trouble visualizing their furnishings and possessions fitting in the space. Consider temporarily moving some furniture or boxes to the homes of friends or family, rent a storage facility, or even have a yard sale.

Prospective buyers can see that buying a house that's already attractive and in good working order will make their lives easier—and could help you get into the home of your dreams that much sooner.

Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois can help you learn more about homes for sale in the Metro East by visiting www.hbaswil.org or call us at 618-343-6331.