

# HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOUSE SELL IN A SLOW MARKET



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With nearly three decades of experience in South Florida real estate as an agent, residential appraiser, and investor; I have guided countless clients through the process of selling their homes.

Yet, in 2024, I faced one of the most personal and challenging transactions of my own career: selling my home in the middle of a tough buyer's market.

I purchased my home brand-new in 2002, when prices were relatively affordable compared to today's market. Years later, I married the father of my son, who owned a contracting company. Naturally, everyone assumed our home would be a showcase of design and modern upgrades. Ironically, that was far from the case. Despite his profession, time was always scarce, and improvements never materialized. Though I always kept the home spotless and well cared for, Florida's heat, humidity, and occasional storms eventually left their marks on the property.

After 22 years of ownership, the home that had once felt new was now dated carpeted upstairs, an unfinished loft, and worn finishes that no longer appealed to modern buyers and that made it far from market-ready. Then, it wasn't a decision I planned for, but life simply took an unexpected turn when my son's father abruptly left the household, leaving us with three months behind on bills, and emotionally drained, facing a difficult decision: sell the home we loved but could no longer afford to keep.

Life does not always follow our plans and still, giving up was not an option. These unexpected circumstances forced me to sell my property.

Rather than dwell on the challenge, I focused on what I could control. With the help of my supportive parents, my son and I embarked on a full-scale refresh of the property. We deep-cleaned every surface - washing carpets, cleaning tile grout, pressure-washing the exterior, repainting walls, and giving the landscaping a much needed refresh by adding some color flowers and new mulch. We touched up the paint, repaired roof tiles and patio pavers, serviced the air-conditioning units, replaced the broken pool pump and garage door motor, bought a new washer, replaced door hardware, fixed the garbage disposer, a couple broken kitchen cabinets, and finally completed the unfinished loft with new flooring, fresh paint and new baseboards. We decluttered and depersonalized every space to create a bright, welcoming atmosphere for buyers.

Once everything was complete, I applied my professional expertise to present the home at its absolute best. I coordinated professional photography and video, crafted a compelling listing description, and marketed it across the MLS, social media, and leading real estate platforms to ensure maximum visibility.

Despite the slow and competitive market, within just a couple of months, we received a full-price offer from a well-qualified buyer. The sale allowed my son and me to close that chapter of our lives with dignity and financial relief. Through that journey, I was reminded that with determination, creativity, strategic planning and the right approach, even the most difficult chapters can lead to successful new beginnings.

Selling a home in a buyer's market requires more than experience; it demands strategy, preparation, and heart.

Our home, once a source of stress, became a symbol of resilience; a reminder that experience is not only about what you know but how you apply it when life takes an unexpected turn.

In a challenging real estate environment where buyers have the upper hand, standing out among a growing number of listings is critical to achieving a successful sale. When inventory increases and buyer demand slows, sellers must adopt a strategic, proactive approach to capture attention and secure strong offers.

Below are professional recommendations to help your property distinguish itself in a competitive market:

### **1. Price Strategically and Realistically**

When selling a home in a slow market, pricing is everything. The right price can attract serious buyers quickly, while an unrealistic one can cause your property to sit unsold for months, ultimately forcing price reductions and reducing your negotiating power. Strategic and realistic pricing requires research, objectivity, and a deep understanding of current market conditions.

In a slow market, homes take longer to sell because there are more listings than active buyers. It's important to review local data — such as the average days on market, number of active listings, and recent price reductions — to understand the competition. This helps you identify where your property stands in relation to others.

A Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) is your best starting point. Look at recently sold homes (preferably within the last 3 to 6 months) that are similar in size, location, and condition. Pay attention to what *actually sold for*, not just what homes are listed at. Active listings show competition; sold listings reveal reality.

In addition, in a declining or slow market, pricing slightly below similar listings can attract buyers faster. Remember: homes that are overpriced tend to stay on the market, leading buyers to assume something's wrong. Strategic pricing means anticipating where the market is heading, not where it was months ago.

Adjust the price based on condition, upgrades, and curb appeal. A freshly painted, well-staged, move-in-ready home can justify a higher price than a similar but outdated property. However, emotional attachment shouldn't inflate the price — buyers make decisions based on market value, not sentiment.

Monitor buyer activity and feedback. If your listing isn't getting showings or offers after a few weeks, it may be overpriced for current conditions. A timely, data-driven price adjustment can re-energize interest and prevent your listing from going “stale.”

A skilled agent who understands the local market can provide insight, track competition, and develop a pricing strategy that positions your home competitively. They'll also know how to combine pricing with marketing, presentation, and negotiation tactics to achieve the best outcome.

## **2. Elevate Curb Appeal**

When the real estate market slows down, every detail counts and first impressions can make or break a sale. One of the most effective yet often underestimated strategies to attract buyers is enhancing your home's curb appeal. In a market where buyers have plenty of options, a property that looks

inviting from the outside instantly stands out and draws more attention, both online and in person.

In a slow market, buyers tend to be selective and cautious. The exterior of your home is the first thing they see whether scrolling through photos online or pulling up for a showing. A well-maintained and visually appealing exterior signals that the home has been cared for, setting a positive tone before they even step inside.

Curb appeal directly impacts your marketing results. Eye-catching photos of a beautifully landscaped front yard, fresh paint, and a clean driveway can significantly boost your listing's visibility and click-through rate. The more attention your property receives online, the more showings you'll get and in a slow market, traffic equals opportunity.

You don't have to invest a fortune to make your home shine. Simple upgrades can make a dramatic difference:

- Refresh exterior paint or power wash walls and driveways.
- Keep the lawn trimmed and green.
- Add fresh mulch and colorful flowers.
- Replace worn-out hardware like house numbers, light fixtures, or the mailbox.
- Create a welcoming entry with a new doormat and a few potted plants near the front door.

These small touches create an emotional connection that helps buyers envision themselves living there.

Curb appeal isn't just about looks; it's about selling a lifestyle. In Florida, for example, outdoor living is a major selling point. Highlight patios, porches, or tropical landscaping that evoke relaxation and comfort. The goal is to make the property feel warm, livable, and move-in ready.

On the other hand, while luxury upgrades can be appealing, in a slow market it's essential to stay strategic. Improvements should align with the neighborhood and comparable properties. Over-improving may not yield a

higher selling price, but thoughtful, targeted upgrades will help your home compete effectively.

### **3. Professionally Stage the Interior**

When the real estate market slows down, the competition among sellers increases and presentation becomes one of your most powerful tools. Professionally staging a property can make a world of difference in how fast your home sells and at what price. In a slow market, where buyers take longer to decide and have more options, staging transforms your home from “just another listing” into one that stands out and connects emotionally with buyers.

It is important to remember that most buyers make decisions based on emotion, not just logic. Professional staging helps them see a house not as someone else’s home, but as their future home. By arranging furniture, colors, and décor to highlight the home’s best features, staging creates a warm and inviting atmosphere that makes buyers feel an instant connection.

Every property has unique selling points: natural light, open spaces, or architectural details. A skilled stager knows how to enhance these features while minimizing less desirable aspects. Proper furniture placement, neutral tones, and strategic lighting can make rooms look larger, brighter, and more functional.

In addition, a well-staged property often feels more luxurious and “move-in ready,” encouraging buyers to make higher offers. Even small investments in staging can produce a strong return, reducing time on the market and avoiding costly price reductions. Buyers are more likely to pay top dollar for a home that looks modern, clean, and well cared for.

Professional stagers understand buyer psychology. They tailor design elements to appeal to your area’s specific demographic whether that means creating a sophisticated urban look for young professionals or a cozy, family-friendly layout for suburban buyers.

One of the biggest mistakes sellers make is overcrowding or over-personalizing their space. Staging uses minimal, purposeful décor to create flow and highlight square footage. This helps buyers imagine their own furniture and lifestyle within the home.

#### **4. Refresh with Cost-Effective Updates**

When the real estate market slows down, sellers must work harder to make their property stand out. Fortunately, boosting a home's appeal doesn't always require a major renovation. Strategic, cost-effective updates can make a big difference in how fast your property sells and the price it attracts. The goal is to create a clean, modern, and move-in-ready look that speaks to today's buyers without overspending.

Start with the areas buyers notice first: the entryway, the living room, and the kitchen.

A fresh coat of neutral paint instantly makes a home look newer and brighter. Light shades like soft grays, whites, or beige create a sense of space and make it easier for buyers to imagine their own décor. Updating light fixtures, door handles, and cabinet hardware are small changes that offer a big visual payoff.

Lighting sets the tone for the entire home. Replace outdated fixtures with modern, energy-efficient ones to make rooms feel warm and inviting. Add LED bulbs for better brightness and energy savings. In bathrooms, consider replacing old faucets or mirrors — these are affordable touches that add a fresh, contemporary feel.

Kitchens and bathrooms sell homes, but a full remodel isn't always necessary. Instead:

- Repaint or refinish cabinet doors instead of replacing them.
- Update old knobs and pulls with sleek, modern hardware.
- Replace worn-out countertops with cost-effective materials like laminate or butcher block if needed.
- Deep-clean grout and re-caulk tubs and sinks for a crisp, well-maintained appearance.

#### **5. Offer Value-Added Incentives**

When the real estate market slows down, sellers must go beyond traditional strategies to attract motivated buyers. One of the most effective ways to stand out from the competition is by offering value-added incentives; creative perks that make your home more appealing and help buyers see greater value in

your property. These incentives can tip the scales in your favor, especially when buyers are comparing several similar homes.

In a slow market, buyers have more choices and tend to negotiate harder. Incentives help make your property memorable and show that you're a flexible, motivated seller. Instead of lowering your price, you can offer benefits that make the purchase easier or more affordable for the buyer while maintaining your home's market value.

One of the most attractive incentives is offering closing cost assistance. Covering part or all of a buyer's closing costs can make a big difference, especially for first-time buyers.

Another effective option is to pay for the buyer's agent or a mortgage rate buydown, where you help reduce the buyer's interest rate for the first year or two. This can make monthly payments more manageable and set your home apart from others in the area.

If your home is beautifully staged or equipped with upgraded appliances, consider including select pieces in the sale. A move-in-ready home that comes with high-quality appliances, a mounted TV, or patio furniture can feel like an easy, stress-free purchase, something that appeals strongly in a cautious market.

## **6. Partner with an Experienced Real Estate Professional**

When the housing market slows down, selling a home becomes more than just listing it and waiting for offers; it requires strategy, expertise, and strong market knowledge. This is where partnering with an experienced real estate professional makes all the difference. The right agent brings the skills, resources, and negotiation power needed to help your property stand out and sell faster, even when buyer activity is low.

A real estate professional understands local trends, pricing shifts, and buyer behavior. In a slow market, where homes stay on the market longer, accurate pricing and positioning are essential. An experienced agent can prepare a detailed Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) to determine a realistic yet competitive price that attracts serious buyers without undervaluing your property.

Today's buyers begin their search online, so visibility is everything. Experienced agents use professional photography, compelling listing

descriptions, virtual tours, and targeted social media advertising to reach the right audience. They know how to present your property's best features and tell its story in a way that connects with potential buyers, something that's especially important when there's more inventory on the market.

In a slow market, buyers tend to negotiate more aggressively. A skilled agent knows how to protect your interests, handle objections, and create win-win solutions that keep the deal moving forward. From navigating inspections and appraisals to managing contract terms, their expertise can mean the difference between closing successfully and a deal falling through.

In addition, experienced agents have access to a trusted network of professional photographers, stagers, inspectors, and contractors who can help prepare your home and streamline the selling process. They also have strong relationships with other agents, which increases the chances of bringing qualified buyers through your door faster.

Selling a home can be emotional, especially in a challenging market. A professional agent provides objectivity, keeping your focus on strategy and results. They help you make informed decisions based on market data rather than frustration or pressure, ensuring you stay in control of the outcome.

Ultimately, working with an experienced real estate professional gives you a competitive edge. Their goal is not just to sell your home but to sell it for the best possible price, in the shortest time, with the least stress. In a slow market, that level of expertise and dedication is invaluable.

## **7. Optimize Your Online Presentation**

In today's digital age, your home's first showing happens online long before a buyer ever steps through the front door. In a slow market, when competition is high and buyer activity is low, the way your property looks online can determine whether it gets showings or gets overlooked. That's why optimizing your online presentation is one of the most powerful tools for attracting serious buyers and speeding up your sale.

Buyers decide within seconds whether they want to learn more about your property based on photos and online presentation. A home that looks bright, clean, and well-presented instantly captures attention. In contrast, poor-quality photos, cluttered spaces, or incomplete information can cause buyers to scroll past even if the property is a perfect fit.

High-quality, professional photos are non-negotiable in a slow market. A skilled real estate photographer knows how to capture your home's best angles, lighting, and layout to make it look its absolute best. Every detail counts from adjusting the lighting to staging each room for visual balance. Professional photography makes your listing stand out in online searches and inspires buyers to schedule a showing.

Buyers today expect more than just static photos. Virtual tours, drone footage, and video walkthroughs allow them to experience the property as if they were there in person. This is especially valuable in markets like Florida, where many buyers may be relocating or purchasing from out of state. These tools help generate stronger emotional engagement and serious interest before the first showing even happens.

Furthermore, words matter. A strong property description doesn't just list features; it tells a story. Highlight what makes your home unique, whether it's an open-concept kitchen, a peaceful backyard, or a convenient location near top-rated schools. Use inviting language that helps buyers imagine the lifestyle they could enjoy in your home.

A real estate professional who understands digital marketing can help ensure your listing gets maximum online visibility across MLS, Zillow, Realtor.com, and social media.

## **8. Maintain Impeccable Showing Conditions**

When the real estate market slows down, competition among sellers increases and every detail matters. In a market where buyers have plenty of options, maintaining impeccable showing conditions can make the difference between receiving an offer and being overlooked. The goal is simple: make every potential buyer feel like they're walking into their future home, not just another property on the market.

Buyers often form an opinion about a home within the first 30 seconds of walking in. From the moment they step through the door, your home should look, feel, and smell inviting. Fresh air, pleasant scents, soft lighting, and a clutter-free environment create a positive emotional response that stays with buyers long after the showing ends.

In a slow market, showings may come with little notice. Keeping your home consistently tidy ensures you're always ready to impress.

- Make beds daily.
- Keep counters clear.
- Empty trash cans.
- Keep the house organized.

## **9. The importance of Depersonalization**

Helping buyers envision themselves living in your space can make all the difference. One of the most effective yet often overlooked strategies to achieve this is depersonalization. This process transforms your house from a lived-in home into a neutral, inviting space that appeals to the widest range of potential buyers.

The goal of depersonalization is simple: make it easy for buyers to imagine your home as their home. Personal photos, unique artwork, and bold décor can distract buyers and make it harder for them to connect emotionally with the property. By creating a neutral environment, you allow them to visualize their own furniture, memories, and lifestyle in the space which is key to generating serious offers.

Family portraits, certificates, travel souvenirs, and children's artwork are meaningful to you, but they can unintentionally make buyers feel like guests in someone else's home. Store these items safely before listing or showings. The cleaner and more neutral your walls and surfaces are, the more open the space feels to potential buyers.

Every buyer has different tastes. A home filled with very specific styles like bright wall colors, themed rooms, or unusual furniture, can limit your audience. Opt for neutral paint tones, simple window treatments, and minimal décor. This approach not only makes rooms look larger and brighter but also gives your home a timeless, move-in-ready appeal.

Depersonalizing doesn't mean making your home feel cold or empty. Add small, welcoming touches such as fresh flowers, a neatly folded throw, or neutral wall art. The idea is to create a model-home feel clean, calm, and inviting, yet warm enough to feel livable.

## **10. Minimize Personal Collections and Clutter**

One of the most impactful ways to make your home stand out is through decluttering. A clean, organized, and open space allows buyers to focus on the home itself; its layout, size, and features rather than distractions from personal belongings.

Excess furniture, knickknacks, and personal items can make rooms feel smaller and cramped. Decluttering opens up spaces, creates better flow, and allows natural light to fill each room. Buyers are drawn to homes that feel spacious and airy, making it easier for them to imagine living there.

Whether it's books, collectibles, religious items, or sports memorabilia, too many personal belongings can make the home feel crowded and overly customized. Pack these items early in the selling process; it helps both with decluttering and with your future move. Clean, open surfaces let buyers focus on the home's features, not its contents.

Clutter can distract from your home's best features — whether it's hardwood floors, built-in shelving, or an open kitchen. By removing unnecessary items, you direct attention to the property's strengths. Buyers will notice the space, layout, and functionality more clearly, which increases the perceived value of your home.

Buyers are drawn to homes that feel well-maintained and ready to live in. A decluttered home signals care and attention to detail. Even simple efforts like clearing countertops, organizing closets, and tidying up storage areas can make your home feel move-in ready and more attractive compared to competing listings.

Decluttering not only improves in-person showings but also enhances your online listing. Homes with clean, open spaces photograph better, attracting more buyers and generating more showings which is especially important in a slow market.

A spotless home communicates care, pride, and value three things that immediately appeal to buyers.

## **11. Maximize Light and Space**

One of the most effective strategies is to maximize natural light which has a powerful psychological effect and creates a sense of spaciousness. Homes that feel bright, open, and airy tend to appeal to buyers more quickly, even when inventory is high and buyers have many options.

Rooms filled with sunlight feel warm, cheerful, and inviting, while dark spaces can seem smaller, cramped, or uninviting. In a slow market, a bright, airy home immediately sets a positive first impression, helping buyers connect emotionally with the property.

Bright, open spaces sell homes. Before every showing, open curtains and blinds, turn on lights, and allow as much natural light as possible. Remove heavy drapes that make rooms feel smaller.

## **12. Set the Mood**

When selling a home in a slow market, every detail matters including the subtle atmosphere created during showings. One often overlooked strategy is playing soft background music, which can positively influence buyers' emotions, perception of space, and overall experience.

Soft, instrumental music can make a home feel warm, inviting, and comfortable. It helps reduce tension or awkwardness that buyers might feel while touring a new space, making them more relaxed and open to envisioning themselves living there.

Even in a quiet neighborhood, minor noises like traffic, HVAC systems, or creaky floors can distract buyers. Soft background music helps mask these sounds, keeping the focus on the home rather than minor distractions.

The key is to keep music low and non-intrusive. It should enhance the environment without drawing attention to itself or interfering with conversation between the buyer and agent.

### **13.- Pleasant Smells Help Sell Homes Faster**

Pleasant smells play a surprisingly powerful role when selling a house; they can influence a buyer's emotions, create a sense of comfort, and even make a property feel more valuable.

When a potential buyer walks into a home, their first impression is shaped not only by what they see but also by what they smell. A fresh, clean scent can instantly evoke feelings of warmth, calm, and cleanliness helping the buyer imagine themselves living happily in that space. On the other hand, unpleasant odors (like smoke, pet smells, or mildew) can subconsciously signal neglect or poor maintenance, making even a beautiful home feel uninviting.

### **14. Maintain Temperature and Comfort**

Maintaining a comfortable temperature ensures buyers focus on the home itself, rather than distractions caused by being too hot or cold.

A home that is too cold or too warm can make buyers uncomfortable, reducing their ability to imagine themselves living there. A comfortable temperature immediately makes the space feel inviting and helps buyers feel relaxed as they walk through the home.

Buyers spend more time exploring a home when they feel physically comfortable. Extreme temperatures can create subtle but lasting negative impressions. A cold home may feel uninviting and drafty, while an overly warm home can feel stifling. Longer showings allow them to notice the home's features, layout, and potential, increasing the likelihood of an emotional connection and an eventual offer.

### **15. Highlight Functional and Energy-Efficient Features**

Modern buyers place strong value on energy efficiency and functionality. Emphasize upgrades such as impact windows, newer roofs, energy-efficient appliances, smart thermostats, and security systems. These features not only add long-term value but also reassure buyers about reduced maintenance costs.

## **16. Show Off High-Tech Features to Buyers**

Smart home technology can simplify daily life tasks and ease the move-in process for potential homeowners. When staging for house tours, capture buyer's attention by emphasizing how smart tech amenities can minimize daily stress. Potential buyers are seeking out high-tech properties that incorporate innovative, personalized yet efficient features and designs. Staging a home on the market to emphasize its smart technology will make it stand out to house hunters.

## **17. Stay Flexible and Data-Driven**

Finally, selling in a buyer's market requires patience and adaptability. Monitor feedback from showings, stay informed about competing listings, and be prepared to adjust pricing or marketing strategies as needed. Consistent evaluation and responsiveness can make the difference between a listing that lingers and one that sells.

In a slow market, every showing is an opportunity. Try to accommodate requests, even on short notice. The more accessible your home is to potential buyers, the more chances you have to receive an offer. Flexibility and readiness show that you're serious about selling.

Selling a home in a buyer's market is not impossible—it simply requires the right preparation, presentation, and professional guidance. By pricing strategically, enhancing appeal, and leveraging expert marketing, your property can stand out and attract qualified buyers even in challenging conditions.

If you need my professional services to sell your real estate you can contact me.

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