

THE HOME SELLER'S GUIDE
TO SELLING A HOUSE IN

10 STEPS



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HELLO, I'M JOSUE "JOSH" RUIZ!

I very much appreciate your time and invite you to allow us in helping you perform highly on your next real estate move.

My goal over the past 12+ years has been to create a better real estate experience for all – homeowners, consumers, and homebuyers alike. It all started in 2006 being mentored by my father in Real Estate, and that objective has been the drive behind Ruiz Realty Group.

I can tell you what fuels my fire more is working directly with current and future homeowners looking to maximize on their first or next real estate home/investment, meeting and exceeding expectations, saving them money, getting the deal done, and educating our clients to make the best decision available

I strive everyday to help all of my clients make the most amount of money in buying or selling their home – doing it in the easiest and fastest time possible – while simultaneously balancing their personal lives.

I'm humbled to be considered a Top Producer in my industry, as well as a multiple 5 Star Premier Agent on Zillow.

Join us and together we will maximize on one of your next biggest investments.



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TESTIMONIALS

Josue is an exceptional realtor. He really takes the time to get to know you and educate you about purchasing a home and the whole process that entails. As a first time homebuyers, Josue made the process easy and stressless with his great communication, friendly personality and passion about real estate. He even goes the extra step to keep in touch after we purchased our first home. He always answered our calls and questions. He even suggested refinancing and provided a great recommendation. We are now saving hundreds on our mortgage thanks to Josue. I would recommend him to everyone!

Olga Oleynik

Josue provided calm, expert guidance that made it possible for us to sell our home - the first day it was on the market - for thousands more than the listing price. His insights, sense of the market, and ability to negotiate with the buyer was irreplaceable. His marketing talent was unique, innovative, and impressive, making full use of today's technologies to ensure the widest possible distribution of information about our home. He led a team that staged our home so enticingly that we almost regretted putting in on the market! We've left the area, but if we ever return to Metro DC there's only one realtor we'll call - and he's the one you should call as well.

Bruce Mackay





TESTIMONIALS

I enjoyed very much working with Josue to sell my house. He is very knowledgeable and professional and guided us, step by step, through the process to make sure we get the best price possible. Josue's advice on how to prepare the house before putting it in the market was outstanding. He showed integrity and was always looking to do everything the right way. We signed the settlement and everything went smoothly. Josue represented us very well and can be 100% trusted as he looked for the best options. I highly recommend him.

Eddy Valda

Josue was excellent to work with. From helping us get our town home ready to sell, to buying our new home. He was with us 100%. Our town home sold in less than a weekend. He advised us to help us get the best for our family. We loved working with Josue and would recommend him to anyone.

Mary Premont



WHAT MAKES YOUR PROPERTY LEGIBLE FOR SELLING?

- **Location:** Properties in desirable neighborhoods or areas with good schools, low crime rates, and convenient access to amenities like shopping, parks, and public transportation tend to be more sellable.
- **Price:** Pricing your property competitively is crucial. If your property is overpriced, it may sit on the market for a long time, while underpricing it could result in a quick sale but at a lower price than its market value.
- **Condition:** A well-maintained property is more likely to attract buyers.



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WHAT MAKES YOUR PROPERTY LEGIBLE FOR SELLING?

- **Curb Appeal:** A well-kept exterior, landscaping, and an attractive facade can make your property more appealing to potential buyers.
- **Home Staging:** Staging involves arranging and decorating your property to make it more attractive to buyers. Proper staging can help potential buyers visualize themselves living in the space.
- **Market Trends:** The real estate market is influenced by trends, such as the demand for specific types of properties and architectural styles. Being aware of and adapting to these trends can affect your property's salability.



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WHAT MAKES YOUR PROPERTY LEGIBLE FOR SELLING?

- **Marketing and Exposure:** Effective marketing strategies may include professional photography, online listings, open houses, and working with a skilled real estate agent.
- **Competition:** In a buyer's market (with more properties available than buyers), it may take longer to sell, while a seller's market (with more buyers than properties) can lead to quicker sales.
- **Financing Options:** The availability of financing options for potential buyers, such as mortgage interest rates, can impact their ability to purchase your property.



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WHAT MAKES YOUR PROPERTY LEGIBLE FOR SELLING?

- **Legal and Disclosure Requirements:** Complying with all legal and disclosure requirements is crucial. Failure to do so can lead to delays or complications in the selling process.
- **Timing:** Some seasons or months may be more favorable for selling, depending on your location and target market.
- **Home Inspection and Appraisal:** Addressing any issues identified in these assessments can improve salability.
- **Flexibility:** Being flexible with your selling terms can make your property more attractive to potential buyers.



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THE PROCESS OF SELLING A HOUSE TYPICALLY GOES LIKE THIS:



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1. DETERMINE HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE YOU TO SELL

Understanding how long it takes to sell a house is the best place to start the process. Not only does it make it easier to formulate your home selling plan from the get-go, but it can also help you:

- Determine when you should **reach out to an agent**
- **Time your sale** if you're buying and selling a home at the same time
- **Prepare to sell** a house by owner if you're going that route
- **Pinpoint the best time** to sell

Start by **researching the current real estate market** in your area. Look at recent sales data, trends, and local market conditions. Pay attention to factors like inventory levels, buyer demand, and economic indicators.



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1. DETERMINE HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE YOU TO SELL

Several pre-listing factors impact the time it will take from when you start the process to when you put your home on the market, such as agent hiring, home prep, home inspection, and pre-listing marketing.

How long your home will take to sell after it has been listed will depend on various aspects, like market time and conditions, property condition, and asking price. You'll have control over some of these, and some will be out of your hands.

Use the factors above to determine your timeline to sell, then be ready to implement the right strategy.



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2. UNDERSTAND THE COSTS OF SELLING

Knowing how much you'll pay when selling can help you avoid any surprises when you're knee-deep in the process.

The amount a seller pays to prepare their home depends on the property's condition and what they ultimately choose to do. You could save on some of these by taking a DIY approach.

Moving out of your area will cost you more than if you're buying in your local market. But you'll still encounter some expenses if you plan on moving close to your current home. These can include hiring movers and/or storing your belongings in a shipping container or storage facility. One of the biggest factors in the cost of moving is whether you box everything up, or have the moving company do it.



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3. HIRE THE RIGHT LISTING AGENT

The listing agent you hire to sell your home will be responsible for numerous tasks, such as negotiation and marketing. But not all real estate agents are good at executing most listing tasks. Some home sellers end up hiring the wrong person because they don't know what makes a good agent, and base their decision on an agent's personality and likeability. Instead, you need to ensure you know how to find a listing agent who is best qualified to sell your home.

For best results, look for an agent with **relevant selling experience, low dual agency rate, an option to cancel your contract, and a stellar reputation!**



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4. PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SALE

Preparing your home can be an emotional part of the process of selling a home, so start thinking about this as a business transaction as you begin to get your home ready to sell.

- **Decluttering:** This one will pay off when selling your home. It helps prospective buyers visualize themselves living in your house.
- **Home Inspection:** A home inspection before selling is a great investment: It boosts buyers' confidence and reduces the chances of repair requests once an offer is accepted.
- **Home Upgrades:** Ask your agent which upgrades will boost your sale price and make you the most money, then determine whether the amount they add to your home's equity is worth the time and investment.



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4. PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SALE

- **Cleanup:** Prospective buyers will notice things that you probably haven't noticed in years – so don't forget to thoroughly clean before listing!
- **Exterior:** Enhance the curb appeal of your property by ensuring that the front yard is well-maintained. Power wash the exterior of your home, fix and/or replace any visible exterior issues, and consider painting any peeling surfaces. Ensure that gates, fences, and handrails are secure. Depending on the time of year, consider seasonal touches to make the exterior more inviting.



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4. PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SALE

- **Interiors:** Address all and any visible issues found during inspection, from leaky faucets, to broken tiles, to chipped paint, and ensure that all fixtures, switches, and outlets are in working order. If your rooms have bold or personalized colors, consider repainting in neutral, light tones to appeal to a broader range of buyers.
- **Pre-showing:** For showings, you need to ensure all light fixtures have working bulbs and provide adequate illumination. If you are struggling with bad odor, use air fresheners or natural methods like baking soda or fresh flowers. Lastly, compile all records of maintenance and repairs to demonstrate that the property has been cared for... and if you have any furry friends, get them to keep their distance during showings!



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5. COMPLETE PRE-LISTING MARKETING TASKS

An effective marketing plan will attract more buyers to your property. That's why having the right marketing strategy is a key component of selling a house. Rely on your agent to implement the right strategy and prioritize home staging, taking high-quality photos, and setting the best listing prices.

Don't think twice about staging your home if it will be vacant when selling. Online photos of a vacant home make a bad first impression, and a bad first impression can negatively impact your home's sale price. You should also consider hiring a professional stager if you plan on living in your house while it's on the market. Many stagers will provide a free consultation and suggestions about which furniture can stay and which should go.



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5. COMPLETE PRE-LISTING MARKETING TASKS

According to the National Association of Realtors, **90% of home buyers search online**, so your home's photos (and asking price) will be the first thing homebuyers see. Professional photos that maximize your home's appeal will interest more of those buyers. If you have any negative property features (e.g. high-voltage lines, a cramped stall shower, a shoddy backyard), have the photographer omit these.

How you price your home can attract more buyers AND maximize your selling price. The "asking price" isn't how much you can sell your house for. If done right, your asking price can be the bait that "lures" more buyers to fetch you a higher number. You can do this by getting a comparative market analysis from your agent, which compares your home to recently sold properties, properties for sale, and pending home sales.



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6. FILL OUT YOUR SELLING DISCLOSURES

Homeowners must disclose certain information about their property when selling. These disclosure documents are meant to provide details about the property's condition that a potential buyer might find problematic. Here are some **examples of things you'll be required to disclose** when selling your home:

- Water damage
- Neighborhood noise
- Environmental contamination
- Potential risks from natural disasters
- Repairs

Never intentionally hide anything. Doing so could result in a lawsuit. It's always better to over-disclose than under-disclose when selling. Your agent will guide you and provide you with necessary documents.



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7. SHOW YOUR HOME TO PROSPECTIVE BUYERS

Showing your home to prospective buyers will start after your agent lists your home on the **multiple listing service (MLS)**. This is a key step in the selling process because at this point you'll start to see how much demand there is for your home. Be flexible and make it easy for buyers to tour your property. It will increase your odds of getting an offer in the shortest time frame.

Open houses are typically scheduled for 2-4 hours on weekends. On any showing day, aim to keep your house looking like it does in the photos. **Private showings** can be arranged for buyers who can't attend an open house or want to view your home before others. Your real estate agent can work around your schedule if you're living in the property while it's on the market, but keep in mind that it's never a good idea to be at your home while potential buyers are viewing it.



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8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

A buyer will put an offer in writing via a **purchase agreement** as soon as they're committed to buying your home. Your agent will receive the offer from the buyer's agent and discuss the details with you.

A buyer's offer should be accompanied by a **pre-approval letter and proof of funds**. A pre-approval letter doesn't guarantee the buyer's financing, but it's the biggest hurdle they'll need to clear before obtaining a mortgage.

The buyer must state how much they'll provide as a deposit. The "standard" amount varies but is usually 1-3% of the purchase price. As a seller, you want to see the deposit made within 72 hours after the contract is ratified.



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8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

- **Offer Price:** Compare the offer price to your asking price and the current market value of your property. Higher offers are generally more attractive, but other factors also matter.
- **Financing:** Evaluate the buyer's financing method. Cash offers are typically faster and more reliable than offers contingent on mortgage approval. Consider the strength of the buyer's pre-approval or pre-qualification.
- **Contingencies:** Review the contingencies outlined in the offer. Common contingencies include inspection, appraisal, and financing. Fewer and less restrictive contingencies can make an offer more appealing.



8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

- **Closing Timeline:** Depending on your own plans and timelines, you may prefer a faster or more extended closing period. Ensure it aligns with your needs.
- **Earnest Money:** The amount of earnest money the buyer is willing to deposit as a sign of commitment can indicate their seriousness about the purchase. A larger earnest money deposit can be reassuring.
- **Seller Concessions:** Evaluate any requests for seller concessions, such as covering closing costs or making repairs. These concessions can affect your net proceeds from the sale.



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8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

- **Buyer's Financial Situation:** A buyer with a strong credit history and financial backing is less likely to encounter funding issues.
- **Appraisal Contingency:** If the offer is contingent on the home appraising at or above the sale price, consider the likelihood of the property appraising at the specified value.
- **Inspection Results:** Review any inspection reports and repair requests. Consider whether you are willing to address the requested repairs or offer a credit to the buyer.
- **Backup Offers:** If you receive multiple offers, evaluate whether you have strong backup offers in case the primary offer falls through.



8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

- **Personal Factors:** Consider any personal factors, such as the buyer's story, their timeline, and whether the offer aligns with your own plans and needs.
- **Negotiation Ability:** A cooperative and communicative buyer can make the process smoother.
- **Your Realtor's Advice:** Consult with your real estate agent for their professional advice and insights into the strength and risks associated with each offer.



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8. REVIEW AND ACCEPT AN OFFER

You have the option to accept, decline, or make a counter-offer. The latter one is when you offer different offers to the buyer and meet halfway. The buyer, in return, can accept your counter-offer, decline it, or make another counter-offer to meet halfway with yours.

Once both parties have agreed to an offer, you can sign the purchase agreement! By signing the purchase agreement, you've entered into an **official contract**, marking the beginning of the contingency period.



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9. START THE CLOSING PROCESS

Here are a few things you'll want to do **before the sale is final:**

- Remove all personal property from your home
- Take utilities out of your name and close accounts
- Cancel your homeowner's insurance and policies
- Update your mailing address
- Turn everything off
- Secure all contract and closing documents
- Gather all home paperwork
- Clean up and clear out personal belongings
- Leave all incidentals (eg. keys)
- Lock up



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10. CLOSE THE SALE

The final step to selling your house starts after the buyer releases their contingencies. For many sellers, this happens about **two weeks** before the sale is final.

The buyer will conduct a final walkthrough of your property with their real estate agent **several days** before closing. So you'll want to make sure that your house is in the same condition as when the buyer first saw it.

Typically, it takes **two to five days** from the time a seller signs their closing documents to when the home sale is official. You'll need **a government ID, banking information, and a real estate attorney.**

The sale of your home becomes official **once the deed is recorded and ownership is transferred.** Expect to receive your proceeds shortly after.



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