

Selling Your Home

Tips for Success



Paul Rich

About Paul Rich

Paul grew up aspiring to be a pilot or doctor. Never in a million years did he think he would stumble into the real estate industry, but you can't always predict where or when you will discover what you were meant to do in life.

Paul learned early in life that you have to work for what you want in life. He worked his way from fast food employee to public school teacher.

Paul got into real estate in 2013 after going through the process of selling a home. He set out to use his 20 years as a teacher to help others understand the home buying and selling process and deliver the best service possible to his clients. Paul has earned 16 real estate designations and certifications in addition to previously earning a master's degree in education. Having this advanced education benefits prospective and current clients to ensure they are getting the best experience possible.

Paul is regularly a top producing agent in his market, consistently earning recognition in his office for sales volume and is top 1-5% of his entire market in overall sales. He received the 2022 Las Vegas Realtors Ronn Reiss Education Award and was the 2023 Residential Faculty Instructor of the Year.

Paul is happily married with 4 daughters, 1 grandson (to date), and enjoys travel, reading, and motorcycling.

Chapter 1: Preparing Your Home for Showings and Marketing

Before listing your home, preparation is key. First impressions count, and buyers need to envision themselves living in your space. This would be a good time to visit new home models, as they typically stage their models in a manner that attracts the greatest number of potential buyers.

Here are steps to ensure your home is show-ready:

1. **Declutter:** Clear out personal items, excess furniture, and knick-knacks. A tidy home appears more spacious and inviting. While some personal or family photos on walls may be appropriate, having framed photos on shelves or all over the refrigerator may be a distraction.
2. **Deep Clean:** Clean every corner, from baseboards to windows. Consider professional cleaning for a spotless result. A few items that are often overlooked are the windows (you will want to have all window coverings open during showings, so clean windows are a must), dust on ceiling fans and on high ledges in the home, smudges on light switches, baseboards and around doors, and more (use a critical eye). Also pay attention to smells. You may be used to the way your home smells so having someone that has not been to your home stop in and lend a nose may be helpful.
3. **Repairs:** Address minor repairs like leaky faucets or broken fixtures. Freshen up paint if needed. A few common

items that are overlooked that make a difference are light bulbs that are burned out and air filters that need to be replaced. These seem like small things but the little items like this that are overlooked may cause a prospective buyer to wonder what else has been overlooked over the years.

4. **Curb Appeal:** Enhance the exterior with landscaping, fresh paint, and a welcoming front entrance. First impressions start at the curb. Overgrown or dead plants and trees are distracting and may be a turn off. Depending on the season, a splash of color for plants such as bright flowers may be welcoming and inviting.

5. **Stage Your Home:** Professional staging or arranging furniture strategically can make rooms appear larger and more appealing. Your REALTOR can make suggestions about placement of furniture and ways to make each room flow well and feel larger and allow buyers to 'picture themselves' living in the house.

Once your home is in tip-top shape, professional photos are essential to capture its best angles for marketing purposes. This step will set the stage for attracting buyers. The photographer will want to take photos without vehicles in the driveway, and will want to have window coverings opened up to ensure there is plenty of light in each picture.

It is always a good idea to pick a time for the photos that will have the fewest people and pets in the home, so the photographer can take their time and get the best shots possible.

Chapter 2: What to Look for in a Real Estate Agent

A great real estate agent can make all the difference in a smooth and profitable sale. Here's what to look for when selecting an agent:

1. **Experience:** Look for an agent with experience in your local market. They should have a proven track record of selling homes in your area. You should ask whether they are a full time agent, or they sell a few homes a year on the side and have another full time job.
2. **Marketing Skills:** A savvy agent will have a strong marketing plan that includes online listings, social media, and traditional advertising. Ask for examples of the types of marketing they have done, such as dedicated websites for your property (called a landing page), professional photos (possibly including drones), video, and print media samples.
3. **Communication:** Choose someone who is responsive and keeps you informed at every stage. The best agents serve as the navigator for the seller, and they are an expert in the process. For example, one thing you can expect from me is a video from me for each step of the escrow process, which I provide BEFORE that stage of the process.
4. **Negotiation Skills:** Selling your home often comes down to negotiations. Make sure your agent is skilled at getting the best possible price. An agent that is a certified negotiation expert will do the research necessary to get the best price and terms possible for your home sale.

5. **References:** Ask for testimonials from previous clients and see how their experiences were working with the agent.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHEN LOOKING FOR AN AGENT

EDUCATION- Getting a real estate license has a relatively low threshold. There is pre-license education, a state mandated test, a background check, and an application. Ask the prospective agents about any additional training they have had, such as earning designations and certifications from the National Association of Realtors.

DO THEY HAVE A TEAM OR ARE THEY A SOLO AGENT? While working as a solo agent is not necessarily a negative, an agent with administrative help can focus on the process and not get mired in just the paperwork side of a transaction.

LISTENING SKILLS- Great agents will truly listen to you and keep your needs, goals, and aspirations in mind to get you the best results.

PRICING- The best agents are able to show you how they determined the market value of your property. Ultimately, the market determines the price (what a buyer will buy a property for and what a seller is willing to sell it for).

VALUE VS. PRICE- We are all looking for a good price, which includes the fee for professional services. A great agent should be able to demonstrate their value to you.

RECOMMENDED PROFESSIONALS- Does the agent have a list of professionals their previous clients have used in the past to address any issues throughout the process?

Chapter 3: The Steps to Selling a Home

Selling a home involves several steps, each requiring careful attention:

1. **List Your Home:** After selecting an agent and preparing your home, the listing goes live on Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and other platforms. Part of the preparation process is to complete the Seller's Real Property Disclosure form (more on this later), and, if applicable, gather information for a Smart Home Disclosure form and Solar/Photo voltaic Disclosure form.

2. **Showings:** Your home will be shown to potential buyers. Be flexible with showings to accommodate as many people as possible. A good rule of thumb is to be out of the home during these showings. A good buyer's agent will listen carefully to anything you may say, and without realizing it, you may give them information that they can later use during the negotiation process (remind me to share the story of a seller that was present for a showing years ago that literally 'gave away the farm' when it came to information about them and their circumstances). Keep expensive belongings such as jewelry out of sight and locked up if possible. Avoid items that can be distracting during a showing.

3. **Offers:** Once offers come in, your agent will present them to you. You can accept, reject, or negotiate until terms are agreed upon. Keep in mind that sometimes the terms of an offer may make one offer more favorable over another, so don't always focus on price. It is also important to remember

that due to fair housing issues, you want to avoid making decisions based on a prospective buyer's family, race, national origin, sex, familial status, ancestry, religion, or sexual orientation. The factors you should consider are the price, terms, time line, and the buyer's ability to qualify for the loan.

4. Inspection and Appraisal: After accepting an offer, the buyer typically requests an inspection and appraisal. This can lead to further negotiations if issues arise. It is important to remember that while you may not 'like' their request, you will still need to respond to the requests in a timely manner. In contracts, there is a concept called 'time is of the essence'. Examples of responses to repair requests include accepting their request and completing the repairs, rejecting their request entirely, agreeing to some repairs and not others, offering a credit in lieu of any repairs, or a combination of these responses.

5. Escrow Process: Once both parties agree, the escrow process begins, during which finances and paperwork are managed before the sale is finalized. We will review these steps in greater detail later.

Each step requires patience and organization, but with the right approach, the process can be seamless.

Chapter 4: The Importance of Pricing Your Home Correctly

Pricing your home correctly is crucial for attracting the right buyers. Here are key factors to consider when setting a price:

1. **Market Value:** Use a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) from your agent to evaluate the prices of similar homes in your area. It is important to remember that recent sales are used, so what a neighbor's home sold for many years ago will not be considered by the appraiser. The factors used to assess the market value as well as an appraisal include the gross living area, proximity of the comparable property to the subject property (your house), the features of the home, and the condition of the property. Keep in mind that typically a property will have "some" type of flooring, cabinetry, etc, so while updating a property does increase the value, it does not necessarily mean dollar for dollar in terms of the price you paid for the upgrades. A good agent can give you an estimated depreciated value of any upgrades.

2. **Location:** Homes in desirable neighborhoods or with special features can command higher prices. Conversely, proximity to a busy street, commercial shopping center, railroad tracks, or busy freeway 'may' negatively impact the value of a property.

3. **Condition:** A well-maintained and updated home will sell for more than one needing repairs. If you have deferred

maintenance, consider taking care of as many of those issues as you can prior to listing the property. Your agent can provide a list of recommended professionals to assist you with this.

4. **Market Trends:** Keep in mind that the price, days on market, and number of potential offers are affected by the overall market. In a seller's market, you may have more flexibility with pricing. In an extremely tight market with low inventory and many prospective buyers, it is possible to see multiple offers and far fewer days on market. In a more balanced market or a buyer's market you may see fewer offers and more aggressive buyer offers, asking for a reduced price and favorable terms for the buyer.

Overpricing can deter buyers, while underpricing may leave money on the table. Striking the right balance is essential for a fast and profitable sale. While sellers may be tempted to 'test the market' with a price that is well above the market, it has been proven time and time again that this ultimately leads to higher days on market, few (if any) offers, and ultimately low ball offers when buyers perceive that the property is a 'stale listing.'

Chapter 5: The Escrow Process

The escrow process ensures a smooth transfer of ownership and finances between buyer and seller. Here's a breakdown of what happens during escrow:

1. **Opening Escrow:** After an offer is accepted, the buyer deposits earnest money, and escrow is officially opened.

2. **Home Inspection:** Typically one of the first things the buyer will do is schedule a home inspection. It is a good idea to not be present for the inspection. A typical inspection can last 1-3 hours, so be prepared to be away for an extended period. While issues that arise that are cosmetic in nature may not be something you negotiate, if an issue with a major system of the house arises, such as electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc. you will need to address this with any prospective buyer (even if you choose to sell as-is, if the inspection reveals a defect, and that sale does not go through, that defect will need to be disclosed to any new prospective buyers).

3. **Title Search:** The escrow company conducts a title search to ensure there are no liens or legal claims on the property. One contingency a seller has is to convey a clear and marketable title, so having a title search completed prior to listing the property can avoid any surprises during escrow.

3. **Loan Processing:** The buyer's lender will finalize the loan, and an appraisal may take place to confirm the value of the home. Should there be an issue with the appraised

value of the property, the agent will review the appraisal report to see if there was something that may have been missed by the appraisal for a potential dispute. The lender will not loan more than the appraised value, so there may need to be a negotiation about the price at that time. Options include lowering the contract price to reflect the appraised value, requesting the buyer pay the difference out of pocket, doing a combination of both options, or canceling the contract.

4. **Closing Documents:** Both parties will sign all necessary documents, including the deed, loan paperwork, and closing statements. A seller can typically sign paperwork before the buyer, as Nevada does not have all parties gather at once to sign the paperwork.

5. **Final Walk Through:** Typically once a buyer has a clear to close from their lender, their agent will schedule the final walk through. The purpose of the final walk through is to confirm any negotiated repairs were completed and that the property is in the same condition as during the inspection period. All utilities will need to be on for this walk through.

5. **Closing Day:** Once all documents are signed and the funds have been transferred, escrow will close, and the sale is completed. In Nevada, the recordation of the deed and other documents is the official close of escrow, which means that transfer of ownership usually occurs once the county recorder's office confirms that everything is recorded. A good rule of thumb is to be completely out of the property by first thing in the morning on closing day.

6. **Funds Distribution:** The escrow company typically disburses proceeds one business day after the close of escrow date.

Chapter 6: Negotiation Tips

DO's and DONT's

DO review all of the information you can about the market conditions, the value of any upgrades, and recommendations your agent makes.

DON'T rely solely on what your friends, family, and neighbors tell you about the value of your home. What THEY sold their home for may not match what the current market environment is.

NEGOTIATING THE PRICE

The goal of any buyer is to get a home for the best price possible, while the goal of a seller is to sell the home for the highest price possible. Depending on the market environment, the strategies for negotiation will vary.

In a buyer's market, the buyer may offer below (sometimes well below) the asking price and ask for other terms that are favorable to them. In a seller's market, you may see multiple offers and a contract price and terms much more favorable to you as the seller.

It is important to remember that both sides want the same result—the sale of the home. With that in mind, here are some tips for this process:

- *Be nice. No one likes rude, offensive people.
- *Be calm. Do not let emotions get the better of you.
- *Think like a buyer. Both sides should put themselves in the other person's shoes to understand their perspective.
- *Sign cautiously. Be sure you read and understand what you are signing.

What if there are multiple offers? If you are fortunate enough to receive multiple offers on your home, you should review each offer carefully to ensure you understand exactly what the buyers are offering you. Keep in mind that the price and terms should all be looked at. A great agent will provide a summary or synopsis of each offer, but it is worth looking through each offer carefully, one page at a time.

You have many options when negotiating. One option is to accept an offer and reject any other offers. Another option is to counter one or more offers. A third option is to reject any and all offers. You should weigh each option carefully.

Agents will often pre-negotiate so that there is a higher chance of success. If a particular term of an offer is especially important, it is advisable to let your agent know that. One example would be the close of escrow date.

One last thought on emotions. There are a lot of decisions that have to be made when selling a home, and sometimes things can get heated if you are not careful. Take a breather and look at the big picture when the stress level starts to build up. It is important to remember that there may be several stages along the way where negotiations are necessary even after an offer is accepted.

Years ago, I had a seller that did not want to budge on a requested repair. They were willing to let the sale fall out of escrow over a minor plumbing issue in the primary bathroom shower. While it was a small repair, it did affect the function of the shower so it was important to the buyer.

After getting an estimate, I was able to show them that an \$85 repair was not worth starting all over again! Cooler heads prevailed, and we successfully closed escrow.

Having emotions take over the negotiations is not uncommon, even when a corporation or bank is one of the parties to the transaction. When an appraisal report listed required repairs for a bank owned property (called appraisal conditions) the bank was ready to allow the transaction to be canceled over a couple of extremely minor issues in the house! It took some convincing, but I was again able to negotiate to ensure these repairs were taken care of so my buyer could close on the home.

Chapter 7: Tips for Success

As you near the finish line of selling your home, keep these final tips in mind:

1. **Stay Organized:** Keep all documents, inspections, and communications easily accessible to avoid any last-minute complications. Try to locate as many important documents, appliance warranties, etc for the home as possible to convey to the buyer. This is especially important towards the end of the escrow process. Having to dig through boxes you packed to find a missing document can be extremely frustrating when you are getting ready to move.
2. **Remain Flexible:** Be prepared for negotiations, last-minute changes, or buyer requests. Flexibility can keep the process moving. This is especially important as it gets closer to the end of the escrow process. It is always a good idea to schedule utilities to be shut off on or the day after the close date, and it is best to call about this towards the end of the escrow, as things happen at the last minute that may cause a delay. The last thing you want is to have an issue with the final walk through because the utilities were shut off early!
3. **Emotions:** Selling a home can be emotional, but try to focus on the practical aspects of the transaction.
4. **Learn from the Experience:** Whether this is your first home sale or one of many, each experience offers lessons for future transactions.
5. Avoid the Thought Process of "What if A Better Offer

Comes Later?": The best offer or offers is/are the ones you have in your hand. When it comes to any contract, time is of the essence, so waiting out the clock may lead to having no offers on the table.

6. **Don't Count Your Chickens Before They Hatch:** As many as 20% of transactions fall out of escrow, for many different reasons. The buyer will have several contingency periods, so it is best to make plans for the next step while being mindful of this reality.

7. **Disclose, Disclose, Disclose:** When in doubt, if there was a prior issue or defect to the home, you should disclose it. This is ESPECIALLY true for any previous water damage. A real estate agent is required to disclose any material facts they are aware of or should reasonably be aware of, and if a defect is discovered later a buyer may question what else a seller is not disclosing.

By staying focused and informed, you'll maximize your success in selling your home.

Chapter 8: Cleaning and Maintenance

Checklist

You can use this as a guide for getting your home ready for the market:

1. De clutter all rooms. Depersonalize the walls, cabinets, counter tops, etc.
2. Deep clean all surfaces (consider hiring a professional cleaning service)
3. Thoroughly clean all appliances, including the refrigerator, stove, and microwave (even if the refrigerator does not convey with the sale people may look inside during a showing!)
4. Wipe down all cabinets inside and out.
5. Shampoo carpets.
6. Clean all windows inside and out.
7. Sanitize bathrooms and check mirrors.
8. Check that all light bulbs are working.
9. Replace the HVAC filter.
10. Address any minor repairs.
11. Check that all landscaping is trimmed.
12. Pick everything up off the floors (including the closets).
13. Remove excess clothing and belongings in closets.
14. Make sure your kitchen cabinet drawers are neat and organized.
15. De clutter all counters- store extra items such as perfumes, brushes, etc in a basket under the sink.
16. Stage bookcases.
17. Arrange furniture so that traffic flows well. Use your agent's (or stager's) recommendations for what should remain in each room and what should be pared down.

Chapter 9: Tips for Successful Showings

The reality of selling a house is that how you prepare your home for the market is not the same as how you live in your home from day to day. As you prepare for a showing, keep these tips in mind:

1. Open window coverings and turn on all lights.
2. Tidy up all counters, floors, etc. Store valuables out of sight and ideally lock them up.
3. Check outside for any landscaping issues, animal waste, and other clutter or unsightly issues.
4. Make sure pets are kenneled or bring them with you when a showing occurs.
5. Ideally, you should not be home during a showing. Have a place you can go- either a nearby park, friend or family member to visit, shopping or other errands, etc.
6. Bring your keys with you. Occasionally, an agent will find the garage door leading into the house unlocked and lock it at the end of the showing. If you don't have your house keys, you may be locked out when you get home.
7. Having an air freshener (not too powerful) is never a bad idea as well.

Other safety tips:

Having your home on the market generally means that it is seen by the public online, possibly in print media, a yard sign, and more. If someone knocks on your door and asks to see the house right then and there, you should refer them to your agent. It is always best to have prospective buyers vetted by a real estate agent and accompanied at any showings.

Chapter 10: What Sellers Wish They Knew

While this is a repeat of what you have read, it is always good to see what previous sellers have said after selling their home:

Pricing is crucial:

Overpricing can lead to a long market time and deter buyers, so accurate pricing based on comparable sales is essential.

Preparation is key:

De clutter, deep clean, and address any minor repairs to make the house look its best for showings.

Professional photos matter:

High-quality listing photos are crucial for attracting potential buyers.

Be open to negotiations:

Understand that buyers will likely negotiate on price and other terms, so be prepared to compromise.

Trust your agent:

Listen to your real estate agent's advice regarding pricing, marketing strategy, and potential buyers.

Emotional detachment:

Selling a house can be emotional, but try to stay objective when making decisions.

Understand the market:

Be aware of current market conditions, including the selling time frame in your area.

Final Thoughts

I hope this book has been helpful to you as you navigate the process of selling a home. I have had the privilege of serving hundred of clients throughout the years, and I hope I can serve you as well.

If you have any additional questions, be sure to reach out to me. I can be contacted at #702-769-1495 or email paul@paulrich.realtor.

Paul Rich, REALTOR, Broker-Salesperson
The Rich Team
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Paul was always available and knew what he was talking about. I appreciated that he made sure we knew what was expected next. He made our transition pretty seamless and we put our worries in his hands. Paul did not disappoint.

- Kent N -

We just purchased our new home with Paul once again serving as our agent (he helped us sell our previous house-an equally pleasant experience). As always, Paul was incredibly helpful and went way above and beyond what would normally be considered the role of a real estate agent. I'm especially grateful for his assistance in contracting services to repair and upgrade the house. I highly recommend Paul and will work with him again in the future as will members of my family.

-Phillip H-

Paul is an excellent realtor. He is a patient listener and great at explaining the complex process of house buying. His resources are extremely helpful to guide through the entire home buying process. He knows the area inside and out. He is comfortable to be around, respectful, and never makes you feel pressured. He will take exactly what you ask and put it into action. Thank you Paul!

-Allison W-

For more information and references, visit my website:

therichteamlasvegas.com

Glossary

Addendum

If a buyer or seller want to change an existing contract, they might add an addendum outlining the specific part of the contract they'd like to adjust and the parameters of that change. The rest of the contract stays the same, regardless of the addendum.

Appraisal

An appraisal on your home is an unbiased estimate of how much a home is worth. When buying a home, the lender requires an appraisal by a third party (the appraiser) to make sure the loan amount requested is accurate. If the home's appraised value is below what the buyer has offered, the lender may request the buyer pay the difference in cost.

Appreciation

Appreciation is the amount a home increases in value over time. To calculate a home's likely appreciation rate, add one to the annual appreciation rate, raise this to a power equal to the number of years you'd like to estimate, then multiply that by the current value of the property.

Clear title

A clear title doesn't have any kind of lien or levy from creditor's. There is no question of legal ownership.

Closing costs

These costs include escrow fees, recording fees, lender fees, title insurance, and other costs associated with the sale of the property.

Contingency

Certain events must transpire or the transaction can be considered null. Common contingencies are a due diligence period, appraisal contingency, and a loan contingency. A buyer may also have a home that must sell in order to close on the sale of the seller's property.

Deed

A legal document that transfers title from the seller to the buyer.

Down payment

The amount of cash a home buyer pays at the time of closing.

Earnest money deposit

A deposit made by a home buyer at the time they enter into a contract with the seller. This demonstrates the buyer's interest in the property and goes towards the balance owed.

Escrow company/escrow

A third party company that follows the instructions in the contract and ensures that all funds are collected and paid.

Lien

A lien is unpaid debt on a property. Liens can come from unpaid taxes or other debtor's that have pursued legal action.

Pre-approval

A lender stating that a buyer has been pre-approved for a certain purchase price, after checking their credit, verified their information, and often completed a desktop underwriting check on the buyer.

Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA)

This act requires lenders to provide disclosures to borrowers informing them of real estate transactions, settlement services, and consumer protection laws. This law regulates settlement costs and prohibits certain practices.