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Step 10: Show Your Home

Showing your home means different things depending upon who is showing it. If you are selling your home yourself, there is more work involved than if an agent is doing the selling.

FSBO Showing

After you have advertised your property, if the description and price are reasonable, you will begin to get telephone calls. Plan what you will say ahead of time. Plan an alternate message for your answering machine or voice box if you are not able to answer the phone. As you speak with each person, consider writing their name and contact information down in order to keep track of who has called about the property. Refer to your fact sheet as they ask additional questions about the home.

Be aware that buyers who have seen your ad in the paper are calling to obtain information, but it does not necessarily mean they will come to see the property. They are still, consciously or not, looking for a reason to reject the home.

You are likely to have at least a few agents call; some of them will ask you to list your property with them. You might hear that your property is priced too low and the agent could help you get a better price. You might hear that the agent has a buyer ready to buy a home like yours. Thank them for the opportunity and explain that you would like to try to sell the home yourself first. Take down their contact information if you like and offer to call if you need their services. Unless you are leaning toward listing with an agent, do not agree to meet, and do not allow an agent to bring a buyer to your home. You do not want to run the risk of creating an oral open listing agreement (a listing in which anyone who brings a qualified buyer to you is entitled to a commission).

If you listed your property on the Internet, the people that call are more likely to be serious buyers. They have already seen pictures of the interior and exterior of the home, they have seen pictures of the neighborhood, and they know all about the home's features and expenses. They want to see the inside up close. For them, a visit constitutes a "second showing."

You might suggest to anyone who calls that, if they have not seen the property, they should drive by it and/or check your Internet listing, and call back if they are still interested. This may not be convenient for some people, so some may decline your offer. However, this approach minimizes the number of not-so-serious buyers who might call, schedule an appointment, and then never show up. People who have seen your Internet listing probably do not require a drive by; they will see the neighborhood when they see the home.

For those who want to see the home, arrange a convenient time for an appointment. Daytime is probably better; those who see the home at night generally want to see it again during the day anyway. Obtain a name and telephone number so that you can call back and confirm the appointment if necessary.

Have a map handy so that you can provide good directions to your home. Your directions should also give your prospects a chance to see the nicest features of your neighborhood.





Therefore, their route to you should be the simplest, most direct, and **most attractive** available. They should pass whatever neighborhood amenities you think will help sell your home, such as shopping, parks, schools, etc. If you ask about what features interest them, it might help you choose the best route.

You should discourage people driving by from seeing the home without an appointment. An appointment suggests a serious buyer; a drive by is more likely to be a window shopper. If someone rings the doorbell, you are allowed to say that the home is unavailable at the moment but you would be glad to schedule an appointment to see it. Or, if you feel comfortable doing it, you can show it at that moment.

Some sellers choose to have open houses. This is a Saturday and/or Sunday ritual performed by every real estate agent primarily to get people thinking about the neighborhood and the homes in it. Many agents acknowledge that most of their sales do not come from open houses, but they do generate leads. The success of an open house seems to depend on the time of year and the quality of the home. An open house seems to work best in a seller's market when the home is in good shape. If the home is in good condition, many people looking at it at once will probably generate at least a few good offers. If the market is slow or your home needs some work, an open house may be less effective. You decide whether or not it is worth the effort. Typically agents run a three hour open house as it is just as much a lead generating technique as it is a marketing technique.

If you are selling the home yourself, an open house is an efficient method of generating interest in the property. You clean the house one time, show it over a weekend, and, hopefully, you're done. If you are able, do a Saturday and Sunday open house to attract all possible buyers. Since you intend to sell your home, you'll probably want to have longer hours than that of a typical agent's open house. People who have many open houses to attend will appreciate still being able to see your home after 4:00 PM on Saturday or Sunday.

If you have an open house, recognize that everyone you know and many people you don't will visit your home. Neighbors are notorious for visiting open houses just to see what everyone else in the neighborhood has in their homes. Other people will drop in because they are in the neighborhood and are "window shopping." Window shoppers may be just looking around, or they might be serious buyers. They are not close to making a decision, and you probably cannot expect a purchase offer any time soon. You should not be too disappointed if 100 people come through on a Sunday and you do not get a prompt, positive response from any of them.

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