

# Ohio Broker Direct Guide to Selling Your Home

**Y**ou are a savvy Seller and have chosen [Ohio Broker Direct](#) to help you facilitate the sale of your home! Regardless of the For Sale By Owner Flat Fee MLS [Listing option](#) you have selected, you must be fully prepared to ensure you receive the highest and best offer possible for the sale of your home! If you have not already done so, please start with purchasing the Flat Fee MLS Listing package specific to your location and download the paperwork. Please take your time filling it out and know that your listing does not begin until the specific date you have designated for it to start. To ensure your listing begins on your preferred date, we will need you to submit the completed paperwork and pictures a minimum of 24 hours prior to your preferred listing date). Meanwhile, let's begin our task list:



# Pictures

Stage your home prior to taking the pictures! Get a start on packing by decluttering and depersonalizing your home. It is imperative the Buyer be able to visualize themselves living in the home as soon as they walk in the door. This is nearly impossible if the home features personalized décor.

Next, store any valuable items to keep them safe and CLEAN EVERYTHING. Touch up scuff marks on the walls, clean the kitchen, bathrooms and floors. Ensure closets are only 1/2 full to give the illusion of space. Turn on ALL of the lights prior to taking pictures as this adds the feeling of warmth and ambience. If the home features a fireplace, consider lighting it. When staging landscaped areas, a deck or patio, some Hors D'oeuvres and red wine add a nice touch.

When you take the pictures, ensure that they are taken horizontally. Ideally, take interior pictures with all lights on while it is cloudy outside. Take exterior pictures on a sunny day being aware of shadows. #1 rule of home photography... DO NOT look at what you are taking a picture of... LOOK at the picture you are taking in your camera to see if it is a good picture.

Alternatively, professional pictures are always a great option! Feel free to reach out to us for recommendations of companies that specialize in home photography in your area. While you will still need to stage and clean prior to the photo shoot, the photographer can recast lighting and enhance the quality of pictures via Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Some photographers offer additional services such as Virtual Staging, Drone Photography, and Virtual Tours.

# Pricing

Research the market before setting the price!

Intelligently setting a list price is a crucial part of the process, whether you are selling as a For Sale By Owner, Listing with a Flat fee MLS Listing Service or retaining a Full Service Real Estate Agent. If the property is priced too low, the risk of attracting low quality Buyers or investors who are likely to submit low ball offers greatly increases and you are less likely to receive an offer at or above market value. If the property is over-priced, the risk of scaring away prospective Buyers increases due to the implication that you have no flexibility and may be difficult to work with. Additionally, over-pricing the home may lead to your property sitting on market until you drop the price to the point where it becomes stale on market and you are less likely to receive an offer at or above market value.

Sellers who retain a licensed Real Estate Appraiser have additional leverage when negotiating. While the Buyer's lender will not be able to use the same appraisal, the Seller can list it just under appraised value and reflect in their remarks "Priced below appraised value" as a strategy to increase activity and offers. The average cost of an appraisal in Ohio is \$500. Real Estate professionals can provide Realist Reports or a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) as well. Realist reports include properties that have sold inside and outside the MLS system, whereas a traditional CMA only includes properties that were listed in the MLS. Online estimates such as Zillow's "Z estimate" may offer additional insight for your consideration.

In reviewing comparable sales, it is imperative that you focus on homes that are similar to your home and incorporate the following criteria:

**Distance.** Start looking for properties that are within a half mile of your home and branch out as needed.

**Subdivision/Neighborhood.** Appraisers are required to look at comparable sales in the same neighborhood. If you try to use properties from newer developments outside your own, you are likely to have appraisal issues down the road. If your property is a condo or townhouse, be sure to utilize comparable sales within the same community.

**Recent Sales.** While comparable sales within the past 6 months are preferred, an appraiser may find it necessary to look within the past 12 months if there are not enough supporting comps available.

**Finished Living Space.** Finished living space above grade is given additional value over finished living space below grade.

**Age.** It is important to facilitate research with like kind properties built within the same time period. For example, an appraiser will not use the comp of a home build in 2023 when appraising a home build in 2000. Additional latitude is given when comparing centurion homes.

**Lot Size.** Select comparable properties with a similar lot size.

**Bedrooms/Bathrooms.** Count the number of bedrooms and bathrooms above grade. An appraiser is unable to consider a room below grade as a bedroom if it does two points of egress (a separate bedroom door and an egress window), as those are crucial bedroom requirements.

**Renovations and Upgrades.** Homes that have been renovated or upgraded tend to sell faster and for a higher price.

**Amenities.** Additional value is given to homes with certain amenities, so be sure to focus on like kind properties.

While active listings are a helpful indicator, homes that have already sold will provide you with guidance as to setting a listing price and determining whether you need to be negotiating appraisal gap language into your purchase agreement. In markets where there are an abundance of homes on market – consider pricing a little lower to attract Buyers. In markets where there is little inventory and homes are selling very quickly, consider pricing to capture rapidly appreciating value.

## Remarks

Intrigue your Buyer! Think about why you bought your house and create remarks that entice the potential Buyer to schedule a showing. Your description should be concise, every MLS allows a different description length... please review your paperwork to determine the character count permitted including spaces and punctuation. An easy way to check this in Microsoft Word - go to Tools, go to Word Count, then look at “character count including spaces”.

It is always helpful to include the style of home, total finished square footage, unique features and upgrades as well as defining the number of bedrooms, bathrooms in all of your marketing. If your home is situated near a metro park or other desirable venues, it would be appropriate to highlight this in the remarks as an additional selling point.

## Marketing

Listing in the MLS is your Best asset! Your listing will “roll” out to numerous websites including Real Estate Brokerages such as Redfin plus Realtor.com, Zillow and more. Ensuring that you have a complete listing with tasteful pictures and remarks will enhance your marketing exposure.

Ohio Broker Direct will have a Real Estate sign sent to you as part of your listing package. Once listed in the MLS, you CANNOT have a "For Sale By Owner" sign in the yard as that violates MLS regulations and is a finable offense. Please remember, any fines incurred are the financial responsibility of the Seller. When you stop into your local hardware store to pick up a sign frame, consider purchasing an "info box" and a lockbox. Once the listing is activated, you will receive a PDF of the Agent MLS Page. Sellers often print this color flyer, highlighting their name and phone number so that people driving by can get information about the home and call you directly! The Agent MLS Page reflect your MLS # which you can add to the real estate sign with an indelible marker or numerical stickers if preferred. The MLS # enables the Buyer to look up the listing with apps on their smart phones.

Open Houses are a great way to market your home! You are the most knowledgeable about the benefits and features of your home! An open house may generate an unrepresented Buyer, saving you thousands of dollars in additional commissions. If you wish to host an open house, we recommend a 2-3 hour time period as you want the Buyer to make your open house a priority on their schedule... there is no need to sacrifice your whole day. Prior to the open house, be sure to put away all valuables and medications. Create a sign in sheet or download one from our website so you can follow up with all potential Buyers afterwards to gather feedback and determine if they will be submitting an offer. During the open house, make sure that there are at least two people hosting at all times, one to meet and greet and one or more to answer questions. The best safety is in numbers. After the open house, make sure to check ALL windows and doors to ensure that they are locked.

## Showings and Follow-up

All leads are directed to you. Agents will be able to access your preferred contact information via the listing in the MLS and will reach out to you directly with questions and to schedule showings. Buyers that reach out to Ohio Broker Direct via electronic communication will be redirected to you via text or email. Buyers that reach out via phone will be provided with your phone number so they can call you directly.

You are welcome to remain at your home while there is a showing. If there is an agent involved, then it is recommended that you advise them of any specific highlights as they enter and then make yourself scarce. Let them know that you will be out on the porch or in your office, etc., and are available to answer questions, should any arise. If a second showing is scheduled, you may want to leave so that the Agent can really sell the Buyer on the visualization of how your home would best suit their needs. If a Buyer is unrepresented, then you will personally give take them on a tour of your home.

Lockboxes are convenient! However, there are risks associated with the use of a lockbox. Some Sellers prefer not to be present to provide access for each showing and the use of a lockbox, garage door code or front door code can provide easy access. If you choose to provide access via a code or lockbox, we encourage you to change the code frequently - especially if you have a period of high showing volume.

It is your responsibility to follow up after any showing to see if the Buyer has any questions and to gain feedback. Always be kind! If the home is not perfect for that customer, the Buyer's Agent may have another client for which the home is well suited.

## Offers and Contract Negotiations

Your home selling experience will differ based upon the package that you purchased. If you have opted to conduct your own negotiations, all offers will be sent directly to you. You will then have the opportunity to accept, negotiate or refuse offers that come to you at your own discretion. Should you come to an agreement, you will need to provide us with a copy of the fully executed documents within 24 hours of acceptance to ensure compliance with regulations and avoid any potential fines!

If you have selected a listing package in which we are assisting with negotiations or simply reviewing your contract, we will require the Buyer to provide a pre-approval letter or verification of funds with their offer as we need to know that the Buyer is financially qualified to purchase the home. If appraisal gap language is negotiated into the contract, the Buyer should demonstrate additional funds are available to bridge the gap above and beyond the estimated downpayment and closing costs. We will ensure all documents are completed correctly, evaluate and explain any potential "red flags."

If you have selected our platinum package in which we assist with all negotiations, we will schedule a time with you to review all offers in their entirety. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of any offers, including the vetting of both the Buyer qualifications as well as that of their lender if it is not a cash transaction. Together we will determine evaluate negotiation strategies and prepare any counter offers as deemed appropriate! With over a Billion Dollars in Real Estate sold, our extensive knowledge and skillset will prove to be your greatest negotiating asset. We will assist with facilitating all aspects of the sale from negotiations through closing.

## Title / Paperwork—link to our other blogs

CONGRATULATIONS – YOU ARE IN CONTRACT! The first order of business will be to gather all appropriate paperwork for the title company! If you have owned the home for less than 10 years, with proper documentation we may be able to get you a generous discount on the title insurance premium itself! In certain parts of the state, it may be customary for either the Buyer or the Seller to choose the title company, however this is always negotiable. It is important to note that while the state regulates the cost of title insurance itself, settlement and search fees vary. Some title companies offer additional services such as mobile closings at no charge, whereas others may charge substantial fees. Additionally, some title companies are more receptive to working with For Sale By Owner clientele where as others are not. While both parties must agree as to which company will facilitate the transaction, the choice of title company is an important factor as the goal is to ensure a smooth and successful closing with no 'hiccups' per se'.

The title company will double check to ensure all necessary paperwork has been received, properly executed and will coordinate all of the financials for the entire transaction. The Seller may wish to negotiate into the purchase agreement a requirement for the title company to escrow the earnest money (as a neutral third party). The title company will facilitate a title search to ensure there are no clouds on title, order the survey if required, and communicate directly with each party involved. The title company will also coordinate Seller expenditure and payoffs, Buyer financials as deemed necessary, and disperse funds at the close of the transaction. It is very important to ensure that the title company receives a copy of ALL contract addendums immediately upon signing.

## Inspections / Request to Remedies

If you agreed to an inspection period, it is important that you make the property available for the duration of the agreed upon period. The Buyer may schedule a general home inspection, and then add additional inspections to estimate cost and/or need for work to be done. The Seller has every right to be present for ALL inspections, otherwise the inspector(s) and possibly the Buyer will be in your home for 3-4 hours unattended. Additionally, should the inspector have a question you will be available to answer it, rather than having a statement added to the report recommending the need for another licensed contractor to evaluate something due to their lack of knowledge on the front end.

If Request to Remedy period is delineated in the contract, the Buyer will either submit a formal Request to Remedy along with the inspection report prior to the end of the inspection period, they will waive the Request to Remedy or terminate the contract due to findings during the inspection period. A request to remedy may include a request that certain items be fixed prior to closing, a credit towards Buyer prepaids and closing costs to offset remedies which will then be addressed at Buyer expense after closing or a purchase price reduction to offset said costs. If you purchased the platinum listing option, together we will evaluate all options and scenarios and facilitate negotiations on your behalf.

If you have agreed to facilitate remedies to the property, you will want to ensure they are complete prior closing, or final walkthrough if this has been negotiated into the contract. The final walkthrough is a commonly incorporated into purchase agreements in which the Buyer has an opportunity to walk through the property within 24-48 hours prior to closing. The purpose of this walkthrough is simply to make sure that everything is still there (that was agreed upon) and that the property has not incurred any damage.

Certain areas throughout the state require Point of Sale inspections and the Seller is responsible for reaching out to their local authority to facilitate such arrangements. The title company may require a copy of the final Point of Inspection certificate prior to closing.

# Closing & Final Tips

## Let's bring it all together!

1. Make sure you prepare to vacate the property in accordance with contract timelines / transfer of possession.
2. Give the title company your forwarding address AND submit a mail forwarding request with the post office.
3. Update your address with your banks, credit cards, friends and family, and any clubs or organizations where you are involved.
4. Schedule final utility payments and cancel utilities as of date of transfer of possession (this will enable the Buyer to schedule to have utilities turned on in their name for the date of transfer of possession).
5. TALK WITH THE TITLE COMPANY DIRECTLY. There are many scammers out there. The ONLY person that you want to talk with is the specific escrow officer you have been assigned to work with at the title company. Any financial details should be sent securely AND followed up on with a phone call made by you. If somebody calls you do not give them any information over the phone as it could be a trap. NEVER email or verbally change/provide wiring instructions and know that NO ONE AT OHIO BROKER DIRECT WILL EVER ASK FOR YOUR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION!!!
6. The title company will coordinate a closing date / time with you directly. Be sure to coordinate turning over of keys with the Buyer or their Agent directly. Often, the Seller will pre-sign closing documents and the Buyer will sign separately. Should this occur, you can provide a set of house keys to the title company with instructions to transfer to the Buyer once funds disbursed. Leave any extra keys, garage door openers, owners' manuals in a drawer or on a counter at the property for the new owner.
7. GET PAID!!! You have done an Excellent job throughout this process! The title company, per your instruction, will hand you a check, or wire proceeds directly to your bank. Should you prefer the wiring option, the Title company may request you to bring a voided check to closing. Talk with the title company about your preferences and utilize safe practices. CONGRATULATIONS! We hope to work with you again down the road!

To our shared success,

Your team at [Ohio Broker Direct](#)

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**OVER A BILLION DOLLARS OF REAL ESTATE SOLD!**