

To market, to market

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(Photo: denizbayram, Getty Images/iStockphoto)

If you follow central Indiana real estate trends, you know that sales soared in 2016, and the frenzy continues. High demand for homes and low interest rates are fueling a robust market.

In this environment, you have great potential to sell your home quickly for top dollar. A reputable real estate agent can work with you to develop a marketing plan that attracts the highest number of prospective buyers.

To determine what a good marketing plan looks like, we asked the experts at Carpenter Realtors to share their best advice for home sellers.

The first showing

“Internet marketing is critical,” said Claire-Anne Aikman, SRES, CRS, of Carpenter’s Avon East office. “It used to be a novelty to find a home online, and now it’s almost always the launching pad for buyers. Given that, online presence is how one will reach the largest multigenerational group of prospective buyers.”

Online listings have in fact become a “first showing” for buyers. More than 92 percent of buyers use the internet for home searches, and 63 percent of buyers first see their new home online.

For these reasons, said Brandon Warfield, of Carpenter’s Martinsville office, “We provide maximum exposure for all our listings on the most-visited local and national websites. The sellers get higher visibility and more exposure, and that creates more showings.”

Carpenter’s own website, www.callcarpenter.com, includes color photos and vital details of Indiana homes for sale. Prospective buyers and sellers also can visit the site to connect with local Realtors.

Jeremy Page, assistant manager of the Carpenter branch in Zionsville, said, “Most buyers go to the internet to search for their next home. This is why the presentation online and professional photography are so important. Online marketing can spur a buyer to action or do the opposite and have them mark it off the list.”

Social media is playing an increasing role, too.

“We’re seeing a lot of activity with Facebook and Snapchat,” said Debb Cramer, of Carpenter’s Monrovia office. “The upside of the internet is that you can so easily reach an entirely new market. First-time homebuyers are more accessible through social media than through any other platform. For millennials, it’s what most of them know; it’s how they’ve been raised.”

Home searchers not only can find listings online, they also can get a full tour of their favorite properties without ever leaving their own. Carpenter now offers a feature called the 360° tour.

“It’s a high-def 360-degree tour of every room in the seller’s home,” Warfield said. “Cutting-edge technology allows online visitors to ‘walk’ through the home with 360-degree views in every room.”

Running the blitz

As easy as internet searches and online tours are, not every buyer will use them. Some still prefer to do their searching in three-dimensional flyers, postcards and ads.

"We like to run a 'promotional blitz,'" Stephanie Cirbo, a broker associate in the Plainfield branch. "We start with professional pictures. We turn those pictures into colorful flyers for our outdoor flyer boxes and send out postcards to the surrounding homes, just in case they know someone who may want to move into the neighborhood."

Newspaper ads – a marketing mainstay – remain an effective service for buyers and sellers.

"Many, many people like the ads in the Indy Star and other local papers," Aikman said. "If there was one magic avenue to reach the perfect buyer, everyone would use it. It takes skill and experience to know what to do in a changing market."

Those newspaper and magazine ads, combined with direct mail, can create much more exposure for sellers.

"You are limiting the potential buyers if the home is only advertised on a few websites," Cirbo said.

Out in the open

An open house, marketed properly, invites buyers in to see the home's very best assets.

"I love open houses," Aikman said. "There is a split camp for and against their effectiveness, but I challenge you to think of a better way to window shop – and roof, kitchen, floor, garage, yard"

'Showcase' your home

Carpenter Realtors hosts a TV show on Sunday mornings called "Showcase of Homes" to feature clients' properties.

"We're able to reach out to more buyers this way," Cirbo said. "This is unique compared to any other local real estate companies."

According to Page, the show has even reached consumers who weren't even planning to buy. It simply points out that the key to successful home marketing is to combine a variety of tactics.

"It's true that a large percentage of people start their shopping online, but it's just as true that information online gets stale and stagnant," Cramer said. "If it is not updated continually, it is very easy for homebuyers to write off a property. We've become experts at filtering out things we have previously seen online."

The difference maker, she concludes, is having "a continual presence – different formats for keeping a property looking fresh to that potential homebuyer. You can't do that using one format of media."

Have a question for a real estate professional? Submit your question (https://indystar.formstack.com/forms/ask_a_realtor) and the answer could be featured in the next article!



The key is to work with a knowledgeable real estate professional who can execute an effective marketing strategy – one that goes beyond simply placing a sign in the yard and listing the property online. *(Photo: AndreyPopov, Getty Images/iStockphoto)*

12 questions every seller should ask

When listing your home, you want to sell it as quickly and cleanly as possible for the highest price. The key is to work with a knowledgeable real estate professional who can execute an effective marketing strategy – one that goes beyond simply placing a sign in the yard and listing the property online.

“Exposing the listing in many different facets to reach as many buyers is critical,” said Kim Nash of Carpenter Realtors in Brownsburg.

She recommends asking these 12 questions of prospective agents:

1. Will you hold open houses at my property? How often, and how will you advertise them to reach buyers?
2. Will you advertise my home in the newspaper? Which papers and how frequently?
3. Do you provide onsite marketing with information flyers?
4. Can you advertise my property on TV?
5. Will my home be published in local magazines?
6. Which websites will feature my home?
7. Do you create a virtual tour of my property?
8. How will online buyers find my home?
9. How will you let me know what you're doing to market my home?
10. How do you attract other agents to my home?
11. Can you provide references and/or testimonials from past clients?
12. Do you send out mailers to notify neighbors of the listing and attract buyers from other neighborhoods?