

Internet Home Buying: Creating a Powerful First Impression



Web appeal is the new curb appeal - 9 out of 10 Buyers search online for their home and spend 12 weeks looking online where as they look at 12 to 16 homes in person before making their final decision.



Cathy Staup is your key to selling fast!

These days the biggest majority of marketing and or selling a home is internet presence. This is true whether you are selling with the help of a Broker or you are a FSBO. It used to be that sellers were trying to sell their homes to Brokers/Agents who would in turn bring their buyers – now sellers are selling to the end buyer.

With access to so many homes from which to choose as a seller or broker you have to grab the buyer's attention right up front or they will just discard your home and move on. Don't just slap up any old photo rather invest in professional photography, virtual tours, staging and include as many photos as possible. Try multiple angles and choose which photos show your home in the most attractive manner.

The preparation of your home is the same as always and especially important prior to the photography. Now with digital photography the details are evident. De-personalize, put away the clutter, pick up stuff, and put belongings away out of sight. I see a lot of messy kitchen and bath pictures and ask myself, "What is that broker thinking??" Those pictures convey a home that is too small or not enough storage. A buyer will think what else does the owner neglect??

What the photos don't show also tells a lot. Missing in a lot of listings is the kitchen and bath pictures suggesting those rooms too small, outdated or not functional. At times I come across listings that all the pictures are of the exterior that indicates a neglected and run down home. It leaves a buyer wondering what is wrong with the interior.

If a room is small and all you see is a piece of the seller's furniture, don't post it. You are not selling furniture, you see this frequently in bedroom pictures where all you see is the bed. Dark, fuzzy pictures are worse than no pictures or rooms listing to the left or right leaving you thinking there is something wrong with the house. Again don't post.



Plan and
Execute your
sales strategy
ahead of
time.

Poorly taken pictures show how little care the broker has for the homes they represent – the same is true for a well written or poorly written description. Leave out 3 bed 2 bath part, that is obvious from the listing detail instead concentrate on giving the “feeling” of a home or property, the setting, the neighborhood and the amenities. I always ask a seller, “What do you love about your home?” or “What would you like to communicate to prospective buyers about living here?” It is important as a seller to review and approve of the marketing remarks before your listing goes live on the internet. Be sure you are comfortable with what is being said.

A little care up front and considerate preparation ultimately sells faster for a higher price.

Be sure your broker has the capability and utilizes listing syndication. In this market especially you have to be out in front of the competition.

You need aggressive marketing – I not only put the home in the MLS, a good place to start but I also create and post a YouTube Video, post to my site, and push the home out to all the popular real estate mega sites Zillow, Trulia, Google Videos, Facebook, Twitter, AOL Videos, Craigslist, Postlet, Backpage and that content in turn is pulled into other sites. It is very powerful and again all about internet presence.

Give a true picture and description of your home if possible – you do not want disappointed buyers.

Curb Appeal or First Impression remains vitally important. When a buyer drives up to your house they get a strong idea of whether the house is right for them or not even before they step in the door. Look at the things you can and cannot change. Walk out and look at your house from the street. You can't change location, road noise, neighbors and all that should be reflected in the asking price. You can change siding, roofing, landscaping and other improvements that rank high in getting a home sold faster.

Buyers are looking for value - now more than ever. The top value home improvement project is a front door upgrade, your return on investment can be up to 130%.



Capture Your Buyers right away by focusing on the curb appeal.

Good landscaping can increase the resale value of a home 14% and may speed up the sale of the home as much as 6 weeks.

Be sure trees, shrubs and planting is in scale with the house and vice versa. If you have been in the home a while it can creep up on you and go unnoticed. Nothing screams neglect more than overgrown landscaping. Be sure to trim shrubbery away from the siding and eaves. Lack of greenery is not desirable either. You want a harmonious marriage between house and landscape.

Improvements don't have to be expensive just use common sense. The basics are still true:

Clean Yard, Walkways, Leaves, Litter, Toys, Roof

Brighten Paint, Color, Accent Colors

Maintain The exterior of the house. Repair broken steps and windows. Replace the house numbers, remove dead plants, and check the siding and foundation. You may even consider having a pre-inspection. A lot of things can go unnoticed but be sure they will turn up in the inspection and too many little things add up to a big turn off.

Add enhancements such as a bird bath, pergola, arbor or tasteful yard decorations.

Shopping online for real estate has become a past-time or hobby for many people.

92% of home buyers start their search on-line. Why not? Save time and avoid looking at the duds. Get a feel for the homes that appeal to you. Study the amenities in a community that are important to your family.

Buyers: Invest your time in educating yourself. There are hundreds of good sites to choose from. Don't limit yourself to one or two sites. Different sites concentrate on different aspects of real estate so find the ones that give you the most useful information.



Know What
you are
Buying Before
you buy it!

By searching online you can decide on location, there are lots of different ways to search including map links, links to schools, links to neighborhood stats. Decide on a price range. Step 1 in your home search is still talk with a mortgage professional. Decide on the property type, the number of bedrooms/bathrooms, the property size, desirable floor plan. Decide what is your preference a townhome, condo or single family residence.

10 Tips you need to have if you take the approach of shopping on-line:

1. Read between the lines – prepare yourself for the reality.

Old Charmer = old, ugly house

Stunning house = the house is not ugly

Meticulously maintained in the original condition = the appliances are 50 years old

Unique = it is weird or has an obsolete floor plan

Build Sweat Equity = the house is un-inhabitable as is

2. Use Caution – pictures lie.

If you have been exclusively shopping online you are in for a surprise when you shop in person. Over and over I hear “I learned a lot today” from buyers on their first time out. Pictures can and do make a house look better than it really is.

3. Don't fall for fake listings or scams.

This especially prevalent when it comes to foreclosures and “deals”. The nature of the internet is anyone can post anything. Call your broker he/she can tell you if that impossible deal is real or not before you spend hours trying to locate an address, phone number or mls number. A lot of companies reputable or not want your contact information.

4. Agency's advertize homes under contract.

Until a home is sold it can still go back to active status for numerous reasons. Again call your broker to see if a home is truly available before you spend hours trying to find out how to see it.



Call Me
Today!
206-276-1070

5. Don't fall in love with a home until you see it in person.

You will set yourself up for disappointment.

6. Don't believe everything you read.

Keep an open mind especially in the lower price ranges.

7. Don't make the mistake of looking too narrowly.

Buyers regularly expand their price, location or whatever once they start looking in person. Be flexible about what you are willing to look at, if not, you may miss the right home.

8. Know when to get off-line and out the door.

The good homes at good prices go fast, this has always been true. New listings get a lot of excitement. Ask yourself if you are a looker or a buyer. Buyers look at homes in person.

9. Don't call the listing broker – always use a buyer's broker.

The listing broker represents the seller in all aspects and will not have your best interest in mind. I cannot stress enough how important it is to have your own representation.

10. Don't assume you can do it all yourself

– unless you are a experienced real estate investor – it is a mistake to assume all you need is the web.

The process of purchasing real estate can be extremely complicated from a legal standpoint and easy to make a mistake without a professional advising you.

Real estate is expensive and those mistakes could cost you thousands of dollars – there are so many things you can miss on a contract. Be sure you are protected.

www.positivepathhome.com



Cathy Staup experienced Broker in Washington State, a member of the Northwest Multiple Listing Service and a prestigious member of the President's Club. She is passionate about going the extra mile for her clients.

She is an approved instructor for the Washington State Housing Finance Commission which provides home buyer education services. Through teaching WSHFC classes she has gained a unique understanding of the challenges either first or third time home buyers face and is dedicated to making the experience as stress-free as possible. Cathy believes in the importance of informed and educated buyers or sellers.

Sellers have benefited from Cathy's marketing experience since 2002. Having lived in the greater Seattle area her entire life Cathy understands the local real estate market. Cathy offers her experience, skills, motivation, attention to detail, follow through track record, and ability to provide the most service with the least amount of hassle for her client.

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Call Me
Today!
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