

# Be a Successful Seller



## What I've Learned it Takes to be a Successful Seller

It isn't all doom and gloom out there; homes are selling and we are getting multiple offers again yes, multiple offers. Be sure you get a piece of the action by following a few guidelines.

In today's buyer's market it takes more than careful preparation to sell a home. Successful sellers create a welcoming, hospitable showing so a buyer will consider purchasing their home. They know they get one opportunity to catch buyer's interest.

Ease of showing is as important as how the showing goes. You only get one chance to be a new listing and you don't want to miss that new listing excitement. A successful seller is committed to lessen the time on market and reduce the disruption to the family by an active listing. Flexibility and willingness to be accommodating are really important.

Price, of course, is the first place to start. This market is competitive and corporate owned homes are driving prices lower. Starting out with the hopes to price a little high knowing your buyer will probably make you a low offer anyway will backfire. In a declining market you will only chase prices down and end up accepting an offer considerably lower than if you had priced well. Successful sellers know their competition and price just below market value.

Showing agents and buyers need to be able to find your home easily. Not all homes are accessible by mapping programs and software. Today's buyers like to drive by and preview homes and the neighborhood before they go to see them. It is a good idea to have visible house numbers, proper signage and accurate directions.

Make it easy for the showing agent and the buyers to access your home. If you have a key made, double check it to be sure it works the lock. The last thing you want is potential buyers standing out in the cold and rain wondering what else is problematic with your home. Is the door sticky or hard to open? Does the door need to be sharply pulled in order to relock it properly? Is there a gate code needed? Gated communities change the gate codes frequently. These types of instructions should be communicated via the listing detail, be sure your agent has made a note of it.

When making an appointment to show a home agents call the phone to show number and either speak directly with the seller or leave a message. Most agents call an hour or more, usually longer, in advance of the showing time. If we don't hear back it is customary to go ahead and show the home. You want to be sure your home is ready every time. I know this sounds silly but answer your phone, play your messages, carry your phone with you and be sure every family member knows of the showings. You can only imagine how uncomfortable it is for a buyer to show up to see a home only to be greeted at the door by someone who does not know they are coming.



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Are you a serious seller or are you just “playing the field?”

I've shown homes with unrestrained vicious dogs on the other side of the door and we can't get in, security alarms that go off within minutes sometimes seconds after entering a home, teenagers “entertaining”, people sleeping in bedrooms, unbelievably messy houses all because someone didn't check their messages. Needless to say those homes do not impress buyers. In some cases I have spoken with the occupant the night before, made an appointment and still run into these types of situations when showing. If your home is occupied by tenants I suggest you have a conversation explaining what will be expected of them to ensure you have successful market time. If you have a security system it is really best not to arm it for the listing period. For security reasons you do not want the alarm code published somewhere and if you can't get home or don't know to get home and turn it off not only are the buyers but your neighbors are not going to be happy.

You do not want to miss a single potential buyer, make your home available. I know this sounds simple but selling a home can be an inconvenience which is why you want stay mindful of “short market time”. It is very difficult to pinpoint exactly what time you will arrive at a home when you may be showing 5 to 6 maybe more homes in a day. Traffic conditions, weather, family members coming from different locations, out of town buyers arriving to meet you, unexpected conditions at a previous home all affect scheduling. Showing agents are going to request a range of time to show your home in. Try to be accommodating. You may get a call and an agent wants to show in a hour or when you least expect it so be prepared to make your home available.

Another aspect of making your home available is to be sure all family members are not home. Don't be there and ask your tenants to give a buyer the same courtesy. Buyers want to imagine themselves living in the home not feel like they are intruding in your home. Many times I have had buyers who won't even go in if the seller is home. I have had to knock on the door (out of courtesy – I've made an appointment) hand the occupant my card and leave.

While selling your home the family member who is going to feel the stress the most is your pet. They are not used to strangers in their home when you are not there. You don't really know how they are going to react in your absence. Make arrangements from the get-go for your pets. Most successful sellers not only remove their pets from the property for a showing but their beds, bowls, toys, leashes and crates. Some of the better showings I have had if a pet is going to be in the home is when making the appointment the seller has forewarned me of what to expect so I can communicate to the buyer - there is a large dog here but he is friendly – don't be alarmed. A lot of people are afraid of dogs or allergic to cats or petrified of snakes, the best you can do is communicate the situation.

Lastly, have the willingness to negotiate. Even a low offer is a place to start talking. I've seen transactions that look hopeless at first and in the end everyone is thrilled. Selling a home does not have to be painful or difficult. All it takes is a little forethought and keeping the buyers experience of viewing your home in mind and you will hear “SOLD”.

**Buyers & Sellers**

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**Cathy Staup**

Your Puget Sound Real Estate Expert

Preview Properties



Cathy Staup is an experienced Broker in Washington State, a member of the Northwest Multiple Listing Service and a prestigious member of the President's Club. Experienced in all phases of sales and marketing single family, multi-family, condominium properties, manufactured homes, improved and unimproved land, new construction and presales.

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She is an approved instructor for the Washington State Housing Finance Commission which provides home buyer education services and down payment assistance for first time home buyers. 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 has lived in many neighborhoods and understands the local real estate market very well. This differentiates her from a lot of agents in the Northwest Multiple Listing Service. 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 clients. Contact Cathy for [homes in Bothell](#), Woodinville and anywhere on the Eastside.

Learn More at: <http://www.positivepathhome.com>

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