Home Seller's Survival Handbook

How To Survive The Home Selling Process

"WHAT TO EXPECT"



THE BITTINGER TEAM

Reliability. Service. Results!

734-459-2600

team@bittinger.com

thebittingerteam.com

Each Office Independently Owned & Operated

Dear Home Seller,

Thank you for listing your property with us. We look forward to working with you. We obviously have the same goal – "to get you the best possible price in the shortest amount of time with the least amount of inconvenience to you."

THIS HANDBOOK IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Communication is the key to a satisfactory business relationship. To assist with communication, we've developed a team to assist and to ensure you get the best service possible! We find it helps to give you a detailed overview of ***"what to expect"*** while your home is on the market. If you have concerns about any of the items in here, please, please express them - call us! Nothing is carved in stone and we work very diligently at working with every seller in the way that is best for you. We want to exceed your expectations.

We have been through this process and know it can be difficult; by working together; we can hopefully get your home sold quickly!

Please keep in mind that we always need your referrals. If you know of someone planning to buy or sell and you want him or her to receive this same level of service, please have them call us.

Yours to count on,

Lee & Noel Bittinger
ABR, e-pro, CRP, CRS, GRI
Team Leaders

1. HOW SOON WILL I BE "ON THE MARKET"?

Your home will be entered into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) computer within 48 hours after we complete the paperwork. This means the information on your home will be immediately available to any agent that is in our MLS. If an agent is actively searching for a new listing with special features that your home has, then it is conceivable that your home will be shown within a few days after it has been listed or even the first day it's on the market. However, sometimes things get started slowly; so, if you become concerned initially, please give us a call.

2. WHEN WILL MY HOME BE PHOTOGRAPHED?

As soon as weather permits our team photographer will be taking photos of the INTERIOR and EXTERIOR of the house for our marketing material. Please make sure everything is tidied up and ready for photographing - remove garbage cans from the curb, cut the grass, shovel the drive, pick up toys, remove magazines and newspapers, clear the sink of dishes and make the beds.



3. WILL A BROCHURE ON MY HOUSE BE PREPARED?

Yes, most definitely. The brochures on your home will be prepared shortly after the photos are taken. Please trust that we have done market studies and know what works best as

far as what buyers are looking for in our marketing material. This includes both the "Remarks" section of the listing and the choice of photos we use. The marketing material is usually reviewed thoroughly by our staff but if you find any glaring errors please let us know as soon as possible. You will have color brochures for the inside brochure stand, please leave these readily available for each agent who comes through your home. We may also install a brochure box in your lawn that will contain black and white brochures. We are finding that in most cases we are getting more inquiries on our properties if there is no exterior brochure box. We will determine whether or not we will install a box on a case-by-case situation.

IMPORTANT: Our Listing Manager will contact you every Wednesday to check on your supply of brochures. This way we will have time to deliver them to you before the weekend. Please keep us advised if your supply becomes low before her call. Please call before they run out.

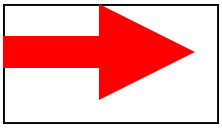
4. WHAT ARE THE SPECIAL FEATURES ABOUT THE YARD SIGN?

A sign that has several unique features that benefit the seller will be placed at the home within a week. The Bittinger Team sign is a state of the art "reflective" sign that glows in the dark when light hits it giving your home maximum exposure day or night. Additional riders regarding our special programs may be placed on your sign as well. Most condo associations do not allow a real estate sign; therefore, the above will not apply.



5. **WHAT ABOUT DIRECTIONAL SIGNS?**

Directional signs are signs that are placed on intersections or corners leading buyers to the house. We would love to be able to place these out there but most Realtors don't put them up because the municipalities do not allow them when they are placed in "right-of-ways". The ordinance officers usually end up removing them when spotted.



6. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN A REALTOR SHOWS THE HOUSE?

Appointments for any and all showings are made through our office. If a Realtor wishes to show your property, they simply call our office. We then record their information and set up the showing based on your instructions.

Unfortunately, having your home on the market means there will also be agents who may give very short notice to show. They may spot your home just by driving through your neighborhood with a customer. If at all possible, try to accommodate them - just ask them to give you five minutes while you "tidy up". A little clutter or preparation of a meal in the kitchen will not prevent your home from selling. Take the five minutes to turn on the lights and put away anything that could be extremely distracting. Upon showing the property, the agent should leave a business card at the house; unfortunately, there are times when they will forget to do so. Make sure the house is spotless and in tip-top shape.



7. CAN I REFUSE A SHOWING?

Absolutely! You're the boss! Any time you have a special event at the house that would make you unable to show the house, contact our office to let them know the restricted time frames for the property.

8. WHAT "ISSUES" CAN I EXPECT TO COME UP DURING A SHOWING?

Realtor is Late or is a "No Show"

It is important to understand sometimes why agents can't be at your home in the time they have stated. Sometimes, their customer is late for the appointment, or they encounter traffic or there were chatty sellers at the house before or they stay longer at one house throwing the agent's schedule off. Some people look at a home five minutes, some look for 20 minutes. We have no way of knowing this, so it can throw their schedule off. Sometimes a buyer changes direction in midstream with what they want to look at, so an agent has to go to entirely different areas or subdivisions. Most Realtors do the courteous thing and call, some unfortunately do not. Sometimes they might try to call the office after hours. If a Realtor arrives significantly past the scheduled showing time, you do have the option of refusing the showing. If you seem to have a large number of late showings or "no shows", please let us know so we can try to figure out the reason why.

Realtor left lights on, or door unlocked

The majority of the Realtors are very professional and are sure to respect everything in and around your house. Once in a while we do encounter careless Realtors who do

not do their job. Other than letting these Realtors know how upset you are and we are, there is little we can do after the fact. This is an uncommon occurrence, but does happen from time to time. However, there are times when you want a door left ajar (for a pet) or a light on for some reason. If this is the case then please post an appropriate notice.

Realtor left door locked between house and garage
This is a common occurrence. Sometimes the Realtor or the buyer does not remember whether the door between the house and the garage was locked or unlocked before they opened it. Please be sure to have a key at all times for that door. Another suggestion would be to put some tape on the inside to prevent anyone from locking it.

Realtor did not leave a business card
We do ask all the Realtors to leave a business card, however sometimes they forget. Also some MLS rules prohibit them from doing so. Since our listings get posted on multiple MLS boards your home may be shown by Realtors in other MLS boards. However, we DO know of each and every Realtor entering your home.

Children accompanying a showing



Sometimes there are extenuating circumstances where small children have to accompany a showing. For the most part we have no idea who the Realtor is going to be bringing to the house. Usually the most harm small children will do is perhaps to move or play with toys or stuffed animals. If there is anything more serious than that then please let us know. Please understand that these things are beyond our control

and should you encounter any of the above we apologize on the behalf of those Realtors in advance.

9. SHOULD I BE HOME DURING A SHOWING?

In most cases it is preferred by the buyer to view the home without the homeowners presence. When they arrive, try to take a walk outside, or if the weather will not permit, go to one "corner of the house or basement" out of "earshot" so the buyer feels comfortable making comments about your home to his/her agent. Also, the buyer tends to spend more time in the house when the homeowner is not home and they feel more relaxed.

Be cautious in talking to the customer - the one thing you may want pointed out about your home may be the one thing the buyer isn't too keen about. Casual remarks that you feel are harmless could possibly cause the buyer to eliminate your home.

10. **HELP US MERCHANDISE YOUR HOME**.

Just like any other showroom, your home needs to appear in "perfect" condition EVERY DAY! This is difficult and we understand, especially when you have children. But, a home remaining unsold on the market is more trouble than keeping it tidy. Remember, if buyers aren't drawn to the image created by the front of your house, they will never see the inside! Fresh paint on your front door, touch up trim, colorful flowers in the front - all these factors communicate "I care" attitude to buyers. Now is the time to keep the front yard well trimmed and green in the summer and snow plowed and shoveled in the winter. Setting the stage and mood really do help a house to sell. If you have

a dark room, leave a light on all the time. When you know someone is coming, turn on lights, music, simmer potpourri or cinnamon on the cook top. Pets and children can be very distracting and cause a house to be eliminated, so if weather permits, please have them outside and the pets secured.

11. **WILL YOU HOLD OUR HOUSE OPEN?**



An open house is one of the most obvious marketing tools but it is one of the least effective in selling your home. We want to do everything we can so you feel we are using every tool to get your home sold. But, less than 1% of homes are sold through an open house. Open houses attract nosey neighbors, people who just "love" to look at houses, and usually buyers that are not in that price range. Most agents use open houses to generate new buyers and rarely does it result in getting your home sold. There are also issues of safety that should be considered. **We do not hold houses open simply because open houses seldom result in sales.** If a buyer is serious about viewing the inside of your home they will call us to schedule an appointment or they will go online to view the interior photos anytime of day.

12. WILL YOU HAVE A REALTOR OPEN HOUSE?

We have done hundreds of Realtor Open Houses throughout the years with none ever resulting in a sale. We have found similar results in polling other Realtors as well. They are a great way for Realtors to gather for lunch and socialize but quite ineffective in selling a house.

"What to Expect' Timetable

	Week 1	Week 2
Listing Date:		
Put in MLS	**X**	
Install FOR SALE Sign	**X**	
Install Lockbox	**X**	
Take Photos of House—Interior & Exterior	**X**	
Prepare Brochures	**X**	
Deliver Brochures	**X**	
Install Brochure Box	**X**	
Install Sign Riders	**X**	
Prepare Virtual Tour	**X**	
Upload Listing on all Internet Sites		**X**
Call to Homeowner by Team Member		**X**
Virtual Tour Up & Running		**X**
Home appears on all Internet Sites		**X**
Distribute Just Listed cards to target areas		**X**
Brochure Supply Check Up Call		**X**
Update Report Received		
Prepare Ad Campaign	**X**	
Make Relocation Contacts		**X**
Search Bitt Team Database for Buyer Matches		**X**
Price Adjustment Schedule		

"What to Expect' Timetable

Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X		X		X	
	X				X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
		X				X

13. WILL MY HOME BE ADVERTISED?



You bet! But, not in the newspaper and not in homes magazines. Just like an open house, if print advertising sold houses you would not need us. Advertising studies show that less than 3% of buyers purchased their home from a newspaper or homes magazine ad. Instead we advertise your home very heavily on the Internet at the nations #1 real estate site www.realtor.com, www.remax.com, on our personal websites at www.thebittingerteam.com, www.bittinger.com, and among many others. Most of these sites will either have a virtual tour of your home or multiple photos – which is like having an open house 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also, another unique marketing tool that we do is to place your virtual tour on the MLS listing. Many Realtors email these listings to their buyers and this allows them to view the inside of your home. 1 out of 100 listings offer a virtual tour on their MLS listing, which makes your home stand out.

IMPORTANT: Please recognize that our Bittinger Team Realtor Partners are very good at fielding the calls that come in. So, if a buyer is calling on a house on one of the internet sites that is similar to yours our Realtors will immediately direct them to your home as well.

Also, keep in mind that The Bittinger Team promotes its image very well. Promoting our image allows more Buyers to call us, which in turn allows us to sell more of our own listings.

14. **HOW OFTEN WILL WE PERSONALLY SHOW YOUR HOME?**

Many homeowners use this as a barometer to judge whether an agent is doing a good job or not. Most of our buyers come from three sources: the sign, advertising and referrals. Most of the time, people who call off the sign are not in that price range. When we get a call off an ad, it may not be at the right location, or there may be a neighborhood requirement your home doesn't have which prevents us from being able to show it. The Bittinger Team sells more real estate than nearly all the agents in this area do, and we sell a very high percentage of our own listings, but it is possible that we could go through a listing period without having the right buyer for your home. Once again, if you have concerns about that, we need you to discuss it with us. We can't make corrections in our marketing if we don't have your input...it is highly crucial. The Bittinger Team may not be the agents who sell your home, but with our marketing we will be the reason it sells!

IMPORTANT: Keep in mind that The Bittinger Team Realtor Partners represent Lee and Noel. Therefore, when they are showing your home it is to one of our buyers.

15. **HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT THE BUYER'S FEEDBACK WAS OF MY HOME?**

Once your home is shown we immediately contact the agent who showed it for feedback. Usually they won't get back with us for a couple of days. This feedback is very valuable, as it helps us position your home in the market at its best appearance and the best price. We will attempt to contact them at least four times. We designed a very simple email template that asks them for their feedback, that feedback will be emailed directly to you so you can see exactly what the buyer or agent's comments are. We send a second

request if the first is not responded to then we make two phone calls. If they do not respond, we must assume that there is no interest in your home and that the agent did not want to take the time to return our call**.**

IMPORTANT: Most agents place returning feedback calls very low on their priority list, so be prepared that only 50% will call us back. **We have no control over whether Realtors return our calls or not.** One thing we are certain of is that they will call us back if their buyer is interested. You will also be mailed copies of feedback forms and advertising featuring your home on a regular basis. This way you are kept up-to-date on the marketing of your home and are not kept in the dark.

16. **WHEN SHOULD I CONSIDER MAKING A PRICE ADJUSTMENT?**



Many times there will be little or no activity on your home. You may go through a "busy" spell, and then nothing, there is no way to predict it. If your home goes for a while without activity, it will seem like eternity to you, we ask for your patience. However, if we continue to get little or no response from the marketplace within the first few weeks of "testing the market", this is usually an indication that the market will not bear the price we felt was marketable.

Most buyers comparison shop before making purchases. When buying a car, they compare the same model with several dealers. Homebuyers are no different - they view many homes and narrow their choice to two or three which most closely meet their objectives. By pricing your home

at "fair market value" from the beginning, and offering it in "model home" condition, you play a major role in influencing buyers to choose your home. Buyers use overpriced homes as a benchmark against which they measure—and **BUY** other more favorably priced homes. Chances are your home will sell at its fair market value. Pricing it realistically at the outset simply increases the likelihood for a timely sale with less inconveniences and greater monetary return.

Eighty-five percent of the marketing of your home happens right at the moment when we set the price. It doesn't matter what an agent does to market a home if the price is too high. In the first 2 or 3 weeks, the market will speak to us in two different ways. If there are little or no showings, it means the agents will think our price is too high for the neighborhood. If there are showings, but no offers, it means the buyers are finding homes that are a better value to them. According to the National Association of REALTORS, if your home is priced correctly, we should get one offer for every 10 to 12 showings. We will review the activity in approximately the fourth week of marketing.

17. ONCE I DECIDE TO CHANGE THE PRICE OF MY HOME HOW LONG BEFORE IT WILL TAKE EFFECT?

It will take effect immediately in the MLS System because we input that information in ourselves.

18. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR ANY CHANGES TO OCCUR ON THE WEBSITES?

Please, please be patient in this area. Because we don't control many of the websites we advertise you on, changes of any nature; price, photos, remarks can take up to 3 days to be changed. Another issue that may come up is that sometimes one of these sites has a temporarily glitch and your listing may not come up properly. Again, we ask for your patience in this matter. But, please keep this in mind; we advertise your property on numerous websites so for one to be down does not mean that your house is off the market.

19. SHOULD I CONSIDER THE FIRST OFFER THAT COMES ALONG?

Absolutely! The first offer may be your best offer or better yet it may be the only offer that you will receive for a while. The best position we can be in is to negotiate from strength and that means working with an offer while you are fresh on the market.

20. SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT SAFETY ISSUES?

One final area I would like to bring to your attention is that of valuable articles, jewelry, cash, guns, etc. RE/MAX Classic is not responsible for any losses during the listing period, and while the risk is minimal (I have never had anything stolen in 25 years), I strongly urge you to lock away all items of value in a safe place. Also, do not leave check books in a drawer where they can be seen.



21. ABOUT THE BITTINGER TEAM.

We are all available to you to assure you the best service possible. We all do have fairly specific duties, and we have numerous systems set up so we can make sure we stay on top of all the details involved with marketing a home, and then following up with the contract once we have a buyer. Please understand that I will always be available for you, but also that in speaking with our Listing Manager, you are communicating with me. Whenever possible, let her handle whatever she can. It is very helpful if you relay your need to her since she is communicating with me throughout the day. There are few problems that she won't be able to address, but the few she can't, will be passed along to me.

My job description is to talk to buyers and agents in order to get a contract for you as quickly as possible. If I am handling the phone calls that could have been handled by someone else, I may miss the one call from the right buyer for your home. I ALWAYS RETURN MY CALLS, usually within a few hours and certainly no later than 24 hours.

If you do not get a response from me, please call again. On rare occasions, a message may get deleted or misplaced, or the voice mail could malfunction.

"WHAT TO EXPECT" IN COMMUNICATION

Listing Manager will call you every Wednesday.

Will review feedback
Will check brochure supply

Listing Realtor will call you every other Thursday.

Will review Market Evaluation
Will review Market Conditions
Will review Marketing Strategy
Will review Price Corrections

Listing Service Report to be sent out every 30 days.



Always On The Move!



Bug Us!



Compliments of:

The Bittinger Team

Lee & Noel Bittinger, Team Leaders
Jane Mancha, Business Manager
Kelly Adkins, Realtor Partner
Diane Lijewski, Realtor Partner
Diane Klemmer, Listing Manager
Susan Sutton, Closing Manager
Don Kearney, Client Care Manager
Louise Brekke, Website Coordinator

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