

5 Ways Selling Your Home is Like Dating



You're planning a move. Time to part with your old home and start your new adventure.

You may wonder "Where do I start?" You probably feel a sense of overwhelm ...

So many things on the to-do list.

Confusion, panic, dread ... it all sets in.

But what if you think of the process the way you would think about dating?

You would probably put a lot of thought into the way you present yourself to a potential date.

Applying the same amount of care to the preparation of your home for sale can mean the difference between a successful showing appointment or a polite, cursory look by your potential buyer.

These tips can help you "court" a home buyer successfully.

1. Set relationship status to “available”

Make it known that you’re available.

You probably wouldn’t expect to sit at home, waiting for your perfect soulmate to show up at your door.

If there isn’t some indication that you’re available, it’s less likely that you will find the perfect person to date.

And in the same way, if there is no indication that your home is available, it’s pretty unlikely that someone will knock on the door and offer to buy it.

So you’ll need to make a plan - no matter how you intend to share the information, planning is an important first step.

Contact someone who can help you or check out the many online resources for home sellers. An experienced real estate agent or someone who has experience selling homes can be a valuable resource for you.

Check out what others are doing online to draw attention to their properties. See if you can find reviews or articles about the pros and cons of advertising your property for sale.

Once you’ve settled on a method to get the word out, you’ll want to make sure your home is worthy of the attention it’s going to receive.

2. First impressions count

Most people tend to take a little extra care when getting ready for a first date. Maybe you might ask a trusted friend if your outfit looks alright.

Or if your accessories are just ... a little too much.

We may try to learn what our potential date likes. What would make us appealing to the other person. We put great thought into every detail, choosing the right “look” to make a stellar impression.

“Cleanliness is next to Godliness” rings through our mind and we check every detail of a chosen outfit and accessories.

If we’re still feeling a little unsure, we may go back to that trusted friend for a second opinion.

Do I look appealing? Comfortable, but still special? Have I accentuated my best features? Have I done something to make sure I leave a favorable lasting impression?

Now think of your home ... and try to imagine you’ve never seen it before.

Walk outside and check out the curb appeal. Does everything look neat and tidy? Is the entryway welcoming?

Remember that details count here. A beat-up mailbox, dirty paint, dead plants in a flowerpot, or old political campaign signs will create a negative impression.

And more serious issues – like broken windows, torn screens, old cars, or appliances in the yard – can stop a showing before it starts.

Yes, potential dates are shallow ... and so are potential homebuyers.

3. Avoid sensory overload

When in doubt, less is more.

Showing up in a neon orange spandex shirt with lots of gold chains, or wearing heavy, distracting makeup (think Mimi Bobeck from *The Drew Carey Show*) might be a bit off-putting for a date. Your date may not be able to see how appealing you really are if they are busy looking at the flashy packaging.

The same may be said of a dining room with purple walls, or bookshelves crammed full of books and trinkets.

When a buyer walks into an over-crowded space with too much furniture, too many décor items, or too much *anything*, it's hard to imagine their own belongings there.

And when they see wild paint colors or wallpaper, they imagine how much trouble (and expense) it will be to paint make their own taste.

The best way to avoid the issue is to clear out, neutralize and light the space.

A good rule-of-thumb is to remove at least one-third of the items in the home, then take a look around and see if that's enough. Invest in a storage unit or borrow space in a friend's garage to stash your out-of-season clothes, Christmas decorations, and keepsakes while your home is for sale.

Paint walls a neutral color that will appeal to almost any homebuyer. Paint is an inexpensive way to change the look of a home (but buyer's always see it as a huge expense and a lot of work if they will be the ones doing the painting).

And make sure all your light bulbs are working and every inch of the home is well-lit.

After all, the potential buyers are there to see real estate, not *stuff!*

4. Smell nice!

If the first thing a potential date wants to do is hold their nose, the date probably won't go as well as it could. Unpleasant odors are a deal-breaker for some people.

It's a proven fact that many humans don't always realize they have body odor. It's also common for humans with pets to turn a blind nose to pet odors, cooking smells, and smelly closets.

Thanks to a series of commercials, we've coined the phrase "nose blind". Are there any unusual fragrances or odors that we just don't notice any more, but others will?

Check every room, cabinet and closet for pet odors and musty smells.

Check the kitchen appliances (especially the refrigerator) for food odors.

Check the laundry area for offensive aromas.

Check the bathroom for ... well, you know ...

Air everything out, clean what needs to be cleaned, and deodorize everything you can.

5. Baggage

You probably wouldn't want to spend a first date listening to stories about ex and learning that your date is still hung up on the way things used to be.

It's a little hard to picture yourself being happy with that person when they aren't ready to let go of the past.

In the same way, don't let "baggage" be an issue with your home.

It's great that you have pictures of your cats, your extended family members, your high school prom ...

Your bowling trophies are really impressive ...

And the urn with your aunt's ashes on the mantel shows your sweet, sentimental side ...

What about the ratty old recliner that your dad loved so much?

Or the half-knitted sweater tucked neatly in the basket by the sofa?

All of these things are expressions of your unique personality, and potential buyers may even find them interesting ...

But when it looks like *YOUR* home, it will be hard for homebuyers to picture themselves in it.

So clearing away pictures, knick-knacks, mementos, and souvenirs can help to make the space feel a little more neutral for anyone trying to picture a life there with their family.

Detach yourself from the house and begin to see it as your *former home*.

After all, that's really the goal, isn't it?

Try out these tips, and you'll be on your way to "Sold"!

SAMPLE