**7 questions sellers should be asking at appointments in 2022**

With education and empowerment, agents will help sellers be more comfortable with making good decisions. Here are a few questions they should be asking you and how to expertly answer them.

## **We want to sell, but where do we go?**

The million-dollar question sellers have, if we sell where are we moving to? If the seller knows for certainty where they would move to, they will have their home on the market tomorrow. However, the challenge sellers have today is with prices climbing and very little choices in many markets they are hesitate to seller their home. As soon as the seller reaches out to talk about selling their home, the agent should start getting them familiar with what choices may look like for both finding something to buy or rent. Agents may have to do a lot of digging in the dirt and looking far and wide to find homes. This includes working your agent network to find options that aren’t officially for sale yet.

When it comes to rentals, it doesn’t mean just diving into existing homes. It also means understanding apartment complexes and what options may be possible there. Also keeping contacts that manage short-term rentals will be valuable. Newer apartments are luxurious and a lot of amenities, which could make the seller comfortable in a temporary situation.

It is important for the agent to explain the options available as far as negotiating a timeframe whereby the seller can occupy their property past closing with a post-closing, short-term occupancy agreement or lease for a certain amount of time, but also explain how that could impact the buyer audience for their property. For example, A property may be viewed as an investment property if the price point is likely to attract buyers getting mortgages, post-closing occupancy by a seller longer than 60 days.

## **Will be prices be comparable to 2021?**

What you are competing with and when you will be coming into the mark factors into the price. Inventory is projected to remain low, so today’s buyers still want turnkey, and given the prices they are paying and likely stretching themselves, they don’t have the financial bandwidth or the time to take on major renovation projects. If the property needs maintenance, prep for sale or isn’t updated sellers may not get as much as they could last year. If the seller is shown bad home after bad home, they may put the brakes on because they aren’t going to buy just anything.

## **Should I do any prep for sale?**

Because the buyer may be making decisions from afar, because they can’t come into fast enough, they base their decisions on how a property looks from online or a virtual showing.

So, with that, this isn’t the time to skimp on taking the time to properly prepare a home for sale. Improvements and upgrades may be necessary like new countertops or appliances. The time you spend preparing your home will translate into a better appearance online as well as in person and help to justify your asking price.

## **If I do prepare my home for sale, can I just sell ‘as is’?**

In some markets expect for health or safety issues, the property is presumed to be sold “as is”. But to fully answer this question, your agent should know what is being done in your market and what expectations documents create. Of course, the seller can always negotiate to sell as is, however with the way the inspection and repair paragraphs read, it is inviting the buyer to create a repair list. If the seller’s home has structural components that are near the end of their life, it is more difficult to sell as it. If your home has an old roof or AC system, it will be more difficult to get top dollar for your home. To make the transaction much smoother, the seller should consider replacing the structural components. The seller can always get estimates to make repairs after finding a buyer, however with vendor schedule and timelines it could delay the closing.

## **What about iBuyers?**

There are companies out there promoting that they will buy the sellers home without it going on the market. Agents should that their time and educate themselves on the companies to able to the seller about any hitches or “gotchas”. Without the leverage sellers could end up paying more or leave money on the table. If the seller wants to go this route, it may be helpful to do a walk-through exercise, so the seller knows what to expect.

1. **What about selling ‘off market’?**

Sellers may ask if there is a way to sell without having to list. Because of the uncertainty of where to go, along with the pressure of having to uproot and potentially commit to another living arrangement they may be less than thrilled about, coupled with the unknown of how long it might take to find something they would want to buy, that’s why sellers are looking to sell without listing.

While selling off market has its benefits, it is the topic of a tremendous amount of controversy. Promoting of off market sells by private networks is in violation of the National Association of Realtors’ clear cooperation policy. With the plethora of changes over the last two years, agents are having to get back into learning the rules and regulations of selling off the market. Since sellers don’t know the rules of selling off market and ramifications to the agent and broker, it’s important for the agent to educate the seller on why they can’t post phots or have an invitation-only open house, if it’s not formally listed. It is also important for the agent to educate the seller on the difference of “Coming Soon” vs “Off Market” and what activities can be done for each.

It is important for the agent to inform the seller on what the agent can and cannot do if they choice not to list in MLS, along with the impact on the seller and bottom line. It is also important for the agent to make sure the proper MLS paperwork is filled out. It is important to discuss all of this with the seller and agent, because it isn’t as easy as “just find me a buyer who will pay my price.:

1. **Commission, can anything be done?**

Just about every listing appointment, has commission questions come up. There is a good chance as the seller or buyer, you went online to get information, but it’s important to know that information could be taken out of context. It is crucial for agents to be ready for the question from the seller “If my home is going to sell so fast, why do we need to pay x amount.”

Not that long ago, about 3 or 4 years, homes could of taken up to 6 months or longer to sell. It was easy to justify all the work that would go into selling like open houses or luncheons. Some of the luxury price points made signing a listing agreement a many months to year agreement before it sold.

The information on buyer agent commissions is no longer confined to the MLS system. When the seller wants to reduce the listing fee, it is important for them to know it could impact the selling-side commission offering and how the home stacks up against the competition.

An agents can’t intentionally omit showing a property due to the commission being offered. While it is hard to police internal choices an agent makes while putting together a property tour, agents shouldn’t omit any homes that fits in the buyer price range.

For first time sellers, selling a home could be like a game of chess for the first-time player. Agents should demonstrate to a seller that besides marketing and all the hype you can create for a new listing, intentional strategy, attention to detail and knowing the contract and all addendums inside and out is crucial in anticipating and mitigating things from going wrong by being proactive in the first place. Ensuring all negotiated terms are clear, providing a timeline of events, actively monitoring each milestone and being able to explain how the contract addresses the umpteen scenarios that can arise along with how you would handle them can make you a shining star to the seller. When agents show the seller value, the seller will feel bad for asking the agent to discount in the first place.

The agent should give the seller so much knowledge and professionalism that the seller will be absolutely blown away. The agent should walk in the door with all the potential contract forms well organized in a binder or folder, indexed and tabbed so they understand what they could be dealing with. While also having all important information or items sellers should pay close attention to highlighted.