

Yes, It's a Hot Market, But Your Home Isn't Selling. So, What Can You Do?

This column is for those who have had their home on the market for months, but haven't had many showings and have received no offers. Is it the market, is it the house, is it the location, is the agent to blame? You don't know. You're just frustrated.

Yes, homes are selling now, but yours isn't. In Jefferson County, as I write this column on Monday evening, over 35% of the homes for sale are under contract, not counting the foothills areas. That's a lot of buyers buying homes — but not yours. So, what can you do?

Your listing contract binds you to work exclusively through your agent. You are to refer all brokers, buyers and other interested parties to him or her and not speak with them directly. And your listing agreement doesn't expire for a month. But you want action **NOW!**

Well, there are things you can

do to get things moving. Here are some suggestions.

1) You can hold your own house

open more often than a busy agent can. Borrow his/her signs. You may not negotiate with anyone, but you can provide access and answer questions. You can collect names and contact information to give your agent. Unless the visitor knows you, I suggest you say you're helping the

agent without revealing that you're the owner. If the person wants to talk price and terms, give them the agent's cell number and card.

2) Google your home's full address, including ZIP. There should be at least one or two pages of results, including realtor.com, Zillow, Trulia, and broker websites which contain your listing. Are the pictures good and plentiful? How's the description? Are there any errors that need correcting? Do

you get any ideas from the way other homes are portrayed that could be used on your house?

Give this feedback to your agent. Ask him/her to do more, but be specific. If you have good pictures (flowers in summer, etc.), give them to him/her to use.

3) If you are unhappy with your agent, you aren't stuck with him. If he's an associate in a big firm, you can talk to the managing broker about assigning the listing to another agent, or at least coach the associate so he does a better job for you. Remember: the brokerage, not the associate, owns the listing.

4) If that doesn't work, or if your agent is his own boss, you can ask to be released. If he refuses, you can instruct him to remove the listing from the MLS and cease all marketing of the home, at which point he might as well release it. Instruct the broker to list it as "expired," not "withdrawn," because the "days on market" starts

over at zero after 31 days of being "expired," but not if it's "withdrawn."

5) If you're happy with the agent and his/her marketing of your home, try calling the agents who have not seen your home yet to get them to preview it. (This is not forbidden in your listing agreement.) Tell them your listing will be expiring eventually and you'd like their opinion about the home in case you decide to change agents. Ask them for pricing, staging, and marketing feedback. Ask them what they'd do that your agent isn't doing. (I suggested this strategy to one of my own clients recently because it's a great way to get agents to preview a listing they haven't seen. And we'll get some genuine professional feedback.)

6) If you have reason to think your agent may have overstated his track record, you could also ask these other agents, "Is it true that my agent sold 50 homes last year with average time on market under 30 days?" That would be useful to know, wouldn't it? Only other agents can check that kind of data on the MLS.

7) Ask your agent to show you your competition. Put yourself in the shoes of a buyer. Ask yourself, "Would I buy my house versus this house which is listed at the same price?"

8) Share these ideas with your agent and brainstorm other ways to stimulate showings and offers for your home. You could be part of that 35% that's under contract!

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