
Connie De Groot Featured in

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"SELLING NOW IF YOU CAN"

By Yolanda Arenales

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After almost 6 months of having a for sale sign Peter Jennings, who now lives in Diamond Bar, California, has lost the hope of finding a buyer for his house in the outskirts of San Diego. Like him, many other current sellers face the frustration of not receiving offers for their properties. According to some immobile agents with years of experience in the sector - therefore they have gotten over other cycles of slow sales-, there is much that the seller can do to accelerate the process.

According to Connie De Groot, an agent from Coldwell Banker in Beverly Hills, the first fundamental aspect is to fix a suitable price, and the best way to find that price is with an agent who is specialized in the area in which the house is located, and who is capable of evaluating the price level of the building well.

"The appropriate price does not need to be one in which the seller loses money. The great majority of acquired houses in the past three, two or even in the past year have increased in value in the recent times," says Connie De Groot.

For those that bought their houses further in the past the difference is, except for some exceptional cases, still better.

The house should appear in addition in "Magazine style": clean, organized and, if possible, after having realized cosmetic changes such as painting, fixing up the garden, or changing (or as a minimum cleaning thoroughly) the carpeting.

If the seller has a tight budget, De Groot suggests resorting to creative solutions, like "inviting" friends and family to lend a hand.

"Organizing a painting or cleaning party can be very effective," says the agent, emphasizing that a few drinks and some grilled meat or a bite to eat can be a great excuse to assemble some "volunteers" that can help with the project.

Henry Ho, agent of Help-U-Sell Westside Realty, adds that the seller and agent must make an extra effort.

“Opening the house to the public frequently, or in other words holding frequent open houses, gives really good results. Many agents don’t like holding too many open houses because it takes up so much time, but what is important is exposing the house to many potential buyers, and the more visitors, the more opportunities of a sale,” reasons Ho.

The agent adds that there is no need to leave aside the “virtual” visitors.

“Be assured that your agent is doing marketing on the internet with linkage to sites such as Realtors.com, in addition to online publications,” says Ho.

When showing a house, remember that less can be more.

“No one wants to see the “trash” of the others,” says Phil Immel, real estate agent in Orange County for the Prudential Company, and creator of the website Real Estate Guru.com.

Immel indicates that one person’s treasure (piles of comic books accumulated on shelves, the larder of a grandmother that one may conserve for sentimental reasons or the sofa that obstructs the children’s bedroom, just in case there are guests some time) can be perceived simply as disorganization and can give the most awful impression.

“The buyer wants to acquire space, not the things that accumulate in it,” comments Immel.

In this sense, De Groot points out that it can be worth it to rent out storage space to store furniture and objects for the weeks or months that the house is being showed.

“Eliminate your family photos as well. The buyer needs to ‘see’ him or herself living in the house, and not feel like an intruder in someone else’s home,” advises the agent.

De Groot indicates that the current inventory of nine months is clearly against the seller- she considers the market to be balanced for buyers and sellers when there are six months of inventory-, but even then, a well prepared house for sale has good opportunities.

“It’s true that there no longer are people that fight to make an offer, but one of my recent clients received 14 offers almost immediately,” comments De Groot, who emphasizes that every little effort counts.

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