

## Selling Out

Buying and selling a home is one of those things that baby boomers have learned to deal with in adult life. For many who may have lived in their homes for decades and raised a family there, the physical space can take on tremendous sentimental attachment. As you walk around your home, you can think of a memory for almost every corner and square foot of floor space of that house. But there comes a time when it is time to loosen your grip on the old plantation and prepare to let a new family move in.

For one thing, that home is a significant financial asset to you. If you have been in it for many years, it has almost certainly appreciated in value for you. So as you have paid down the mortgage, more and more of it actually belongs to you and not the bank. It has gotten more and more valuable, as the insurance company is more than happy to inform you.

Upgrading to a new home may be necessary for a baby boomer family as it grows and new needs create the need for more space. Improvements in income and the desire for a nicer living space for entertaining can also create this kind of demand. But as baby boomers move toward their retirement years, one of the biggest reasons they will have for selling their home will be to move to a smaller space or to redeem that financial resource for retirement or for other priorities that are more important than a big spacious house.

Whatever the reason, you want your home to show in its best possible light so the hopeful home shoppers see the wonderful home environment that you already know this house to be and can envision their own family in that house. There are some things you can do to make those moments when they are looking at your house the best experience possible which will put them in the mood to buy.

. Obviously, fix the place up. New paint jobs, replacing worn out cabinets, laying new tile and other improvements you may have been putting off should be done in the weeks and months before you list. This goes for outdoor improvements such as landscaping and gardening improvements. Don't let the buyer see that they are going to have to put a lot of maintenance into the home up front.

. Keep the house constantly clean and ready to be shown to prospective buyers. This means maintaining a lifestyle where you literally can get up and leave virtually in a moments notice. This is tough but if buyers can come see the house virtually on a moments notice, you will not lose as many prospects.

. Make prospective buyers feel that they are welcome to look around. If

you greet them when they come, invite them to enjoy looking around to help them overcome that feeling that they are imposing. Buying a house is as much about how the house feels as the technical features of the structure.

. Think about the senses. Often if they know someone is coming to see the house, its not uncommon for sellers to bake a loaf of fresh bread in the oven. That smell as the home buyer comes in creates a tremendous atmosphere of home. Candles are also pleasant but don't overdo it. You can even leave out a plate of cookies with a handwritten note saying "help yourself." Those cookies might just sell the house.

Many of these tips appeal the emotional side of home shopping. But that is as much a part of a buyer's decision as the importance of good construction and neighborhood. By doing your part to make visitors feel like this is their future home, you go a long way to helping them want to make it so as well.

PPPPP 649