

8 Tips to Getting the Highest Appraisal for Your Home

By Danni Duggan

Many sellers want to know what, if anything, they can do to ensure that their home appraises for the highest value possible in the current market. Sure they have a terrific offer on the table, but what if the appraised value of the home does not meet the offer price? Will the buyer be able to bring additional money to the table to close the deal, or will the seller be back at square one trying to attract yet another buyer?

Although an appraisal is an evaluation by a neutral, professional third party, there are a number of things a seller can do to convey to the appraiser that the home has been both maintained and updated, worthy of matching the higher comps in the neighborhood.

1. Declutter and Clean. True, the value of your home does not depend on whether or not you remembered to make the bed or do the dishes this morning, but if you cannot bother to do these things when you know the appraiser is coming over, one might wonder what other things, bigger things, have you also let slide.
2. Enjoy the Great Outdoors. Oh, and while you are out there, mow the grass; plant some flowers; trim the hedges; and ensure that the first impression an appraiser gets of your home is that you care for it. If you do not have time or physical capability for all that primping, hire someone. Yes, it is that important. Buy some hanging flower baskets or window boxes. This is

the very first impression an appraiser will have of your property. Make it count. Remember, you do not get a second chance at a first impression.

3. Upgrade where it makes sense. While this may not be the time a seller wishes to invest in a kitchen or bath remodel, it is the time to repair or replace leaking faucets; fix cracked tiles; address dirty paint; install missing light switch plates; and update outdated lighting fixtures. Small upgrades can make a difference. Do not underestimate the value you can add in these details. Hopefully, these details were handled prior to marketing the property for sale.
4. Make a List. Check it Twice. Prepare a list of all upgrades you have made to your property, along with the associated costs, if you have that data. This list is especially important if the upgrades exist inside the walls. The appraiser does not have x-ray vision, so if there is new plumbing in the walls, add it to the list.
5. Know your Neighborhood's Amenities. In addition to the list of upgrades done to the home, provide the appraiser with a list of neighborhood amenities. Is there a new organic grocery store nearby? How about a movie theater or playground? Have the neighborhood schools been highly ranked? Do you have easy access to public transportation? Let the appraiser know. There is a reason that "location, location, location" is such a cliché. It matters to buyers; therefore it matters to appraisers.
6. Pets? What Pets? If you can arrange to send your critters to daycare on appraisal day, do it. Otherwise, crate them or put them in the car (on a cool day) just before the appraiser's visit. This is not the time to convince the appraiser that



you have the best, most loving dog in the whole wide world. They meet several a day. They may not like dogs. Let your home's appraisal time be the 30 quiet, animal-free minutes they get all day.

7. Provide Comps. If you have a recent Competitive Market Analysis prepared by a local REALTOR®, by all means share it with the appraiser, especially if the comps provided by the REALTOR support your pricing strategy. Your job is to help the appraiser do his or her job. Which brings us to the final tip below.
8. Back Off. Let the appraiser know that you are happy to answer any questions, but do not follow him or her around the home. Provide your upgrades and amenities list, and then back off. You do not want the appraiser to wonder if there are problems from which you are trying desperately to distract.

By following the tips provided above, know that you have proactively helped your home shine and appraise at the best price it can in today's current market conditions.



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