

President's Column

Jan. 18, 2012

Where to start when you're going to market

So your family's housing needs have changed and you've decided to put your home on the market. Now you need to find someone who can successfully market your property and get you the most exposure to attract offers ... but where do you start?

Use the good kind of traffic

The Internet has become the starting point for many homebuyers' property searches, and online marketing efforts have grown to reflect that trend.

A 2011 survey of Texas homebuyers and sellers found that 89 percent of buyers used the Internet in their search, and 94 percent of sellers in Texas reported that their home was listed or advertised online.

But Web-based marketing doesn't just include the multiple listing service anymore. An increasing number of REALTORS® are using their own Web site or blog, their broker's Web site, social media and social networking sites to promote their listings.

The good thing about the Web is you can offer visitors multimedia tools that more buyers expect to find while searching. Check out a prospective REALTOR®'s current listings online. Do they include photo slideshows, a virtual tour or maybe even a diagram of the home's layout? You might be able to expect your REALTOR® to provide the same for your home.

Don't forget the old reliables

Despite the increased attention paid to online marketing tools, there remains a lot of value in traditional marketing techniques. Yard signs, open houses, printed fliers and newspaper ads are still considered standard tools for promoting your home to a variety of audiences.

In fact, 85 percent of Texas homebuyers said they find print newspaper ads very useful or somewhat useful in their home search in 2011. Your ideal REALTOR® should be familiar with the market, which publications reach the largest number of potential buyers and whether classified ads or display ads are appropriate.

Holding open houses may also be included in your Texas REALTOR®'s marketing plan. But if not, or if you would prefer not to, you can always discuss these options with them and they will be happy to

accommodate your wishes. These are great conversations to have with your Texas REALTOR®, whose goal is to help you get the most out of your investment.

Asking for referrals is a great way to search for a Texas REALTOR®. Ask your friends, family members or coworkers who they would recommend. A word-of-mouth referral is great starting point where you can get honest feedback.

Find the best fit

It's ideal to work with a Texas REALTOR® who is familiar with your area because they will understand which marketing tools are most likely to succeed. Ask prospective REALTORS® about their current marketing and how they would market your property. REALTORS® have different strengths that may include the Internet, MLS, print ads, open houses, staging, and other means. Make sure you're comfortable with the marketing efforts planned for your property.

In addition, the Find-a-REALTOR® search on TexasRealEstate.com allows you to locate a REALTOR® by proximity to your area, and you can narrow the search by designations and by specialty. Remember that you aren't obligated to work with a Texas REALTOR® until you sign a residential listing agreement form. You are free – and encouraged to – interview multiple REALTORS® to determine who can meet your expectations before deciding to enter into a contract with someone.

In today's real estate market, many agents launch an all-out multi-faceted marketing campaign. A buyer's market means stiff competition for sellers and it helps if you pull out all the creative stops. Sit down with your REALTOR® and discuss innovative ways to step up the marketing strategy. The more visibility your property has, the more likely you are to come across a qualified buyer.