

Finding the Right Real Estate Agent: A Guide for Seniors

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When considering buying or selling a home, seniors have a special set of needs that may not apply to others in the real estate market. The first time home buyer has a certain set of needs. Young families with small children have another. Seniors fall into a whole different category.

It is important then, to make sure that the real estate professional you choose has the ability to meet the needs of the senior buyer or seller. Most agents are simply interested in putting your home on the market and getting it sold. But there is much more to the process than that. Seniors need an agent who is willing to “go the extra mile” to make the transaction as stress-free and hassle free as possible.

Senior sellers may be in the process of “scaling down”, moving to a smaller home or an assisted care facility. Your agent needs to understand how to help you to figure out what you will need to take with, and suggest ways to dispose of excess items that won't fit in your new environment. Your agent should have suggestions for companies who can organize estate sales, garage sales or help you organize a charity to pick up items which may not be needed in the new setting.

Seniors may have lived in their home for a number of years and not understand what people are looking for in today's market. Your agent needs to know what the market may demand. If you are selling a home in a 55+ community other seniors may not demand granite counter-tops and the most updated appliances. A simple fresh coat of paint may be all you need to make the property appealing before putting it on the market. Other markets will demand more upgrades, or a sales price adjustment, which the right agent will advise you on.

Seniors may have owned their properties for a number of years, resulting in numerous tax implications. While Real Estate Professionals cannot give you tax advise, the right agent, working with your tax advisor should be able to advise you in ways of selling your properties which could result in less taxes or tax deferments. These types of sales need to be handled correctly to protect as many of the seniors assets as possible. The amount of equity you have in a property, the way title is held and whether or not property has been held as an investment all make a difference is the next step you make. Be sure your agent understands the implications of disposing of these properties.

An agent dealing with seniors need to be understanding of special health needs which may be in the home. If health issues are a concern in your home make sure that you have an agent who will show compassion and concern in trying to show the home at convenient times for the family members with those special needs. Again, if you have an agent whose only concern is that they get the home sold as quickly as possible, compassion may give way to convenience- the real estate agent's convenience.

When searching for the right agent, try to find an agent who has had experience in working with other seniors and those who have been in similar circumstances to yours. Let your “gut instinct” be your guide. If you feel pushed by an agent, or rushed, as though they don't have time for you, perhaps you don't have the right person.

Once you do have the right agent- sit back, relax and leave the driving to them!

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