

## Setting up Your Open House

When you are selling your home, the most effective way to attract potential buyers is to hold an Open House. To have a successful Open House, you need to plan it, promote it, and present it. Here are some things you need to consider when putting your event together:



### Planning the Open House

Timing is everything. When you are choosing a date for your Open House, you need to make sure that it doesn't conflict with any holidays or community events, and that your real estate agent is available on that day. A couple of hours on a weekend often works best- choosing a Saturday or Sunday, with a restricted time limit, guarantees better traffic. Potential buyers will often plan to attend several open houses in one day, so giving a fixed time gives them a schedule to work with.

### Promoting the Open House

There are many tools you and your agent can use to promote your event, from lawn signs to social networking and websites. If you have photos of your home in its move-in ready state, posting those online is a good idea. Spread the word around in any way you can think of. You can even invite your neighbours, whether they are looking to buy or not- their opinions on the community will be the best and least expensive way to sell your home.

You and your real estate agent should start promoting at least one week before the date to get the most traffic possible.

### Presenting Your Home

Presenting your home is the biggest part of preparing for an Open House. Before you open your home to the public, you can raise your chances of getting a sale by staging your home. The first thing you need to do is a thorough cleaning and de-

cluttering of the entire home. Many real estate agents will encourage seeking a professional cleaner, because a professional will spot things you might not.

Before your guests arrive, light up your entire home. Throw open the curtains and turn on all the lamps. On a cool day, light a fire if there is a fireplace. This will help to create a warm and welcoming feeling, and present your home in the best possible way.

Scented chemical cleaners and foul smells can turn potential buyers away. To prevent this, make sure all the trash and recycling are removed, and any bad smells are cleaned up. Airing out the home by opening the windows beforehand is a good start; you can also brew coffee, bake cookies or simmer some orange slices and cinnamon sticks in water on the stove to give the air a pleasant and welcoming scent.

To help set the mood for the Open House, you can put on some soft music. Fresh flowers are a good idea, as are refreshments and snacks. All of these go toward making the potential buyers feel at home.

On top of all these tips for creating your Open House, you should plan to be away from your home for the day. Potential buyers can feel like they are intruding if the owner is home, leaving them with a negative impression of your home. If you have a pet, make sure they come with you (including all their stuff); nothing is as off-putting as pet smells when you are trying to sell your home.

Planning, promoting and presenting... these are the 3 key factors in creating your Open House.