

# Preparing to list? 9 talking points that'll squash seller fears

Honing your approach to these conversations can enhance your listing presentation and mentally prepare your sellers for the nuances of a COVID-19 seller's market

BY [TERESA MACK](#)

There is no 100 percent guaranteed safeguard against a virus in a pandemic, but a savvy real estate professional knows how to strike the balance between risk management and marketing to allow a seller to secure the best price and terms in a rapidly changing market. Here are nine things you should talk through with your [sellers](#) amid pandemic to make sure they're comfortable with the process.

## 1. A specific marketing plan that includes COVID-19 best practices

Open houses were an efficient means of marketing properties, however, now in some cities, open houses are prohibited or showings must be done by appointment only.

This means that your sellers have to be prepared for a longer sales cycle and a more cumbersome showing process. Explain the showing protocols that you will use when showing the home, explain the steps you will take to sanitize before and after showings, especially if the home is occupied.

If your local board has forms or best practices, share these with your sellers. The more formalized your process is, the greater confidence your seller will have in the process.

## **2. Showings**

Explain how you'll draw buyers into the property in the absence of open houses.

Don't assume that your sellers will appreciate the effectiveness of marketing tactics that they are not usually exposed to, like agent relationships, direct phone calls to prospects, direct marketing to visitors from prior open houses in the area and the use of your database. Make sure to explain what you will do and what the expected outcome is of that activity.

Explain that due to COVID-19 and with the goal of reducing opportunities for exposure, you will pre-screen buyers and show qualified buyers one appointment at a time.

Ask your sellers if they want to restrict showings to buyers who are already pre-approved for a loan. Explain the declarations you will get from buyers as to their health and any known exposure to the virus. Also, explain that sellers also have to declare their physical condition and disclose any COVID-19 exposure to prospective buyers and their agents.

## **3. Listing exposure**

Online marketing is more critical than ever, and it's important that you explain how buyers find properties, how your marketing techniques

will improve the likelihood that the sellers' property will be seen and explored.

Explain how your multiple listing service (MLS) syndicates to other websites. You might want to contact your MLS and get a clear picture of their syndication structure and explain it to the seller.

## **4. Visuals**

Professional photography, virtual open houses, video recordings and social media posts should also be explained. And if possible, show or provide examples.

Photography should include [3D Matterport scans](#), floor plans, video (professional and by the agent) and 2D pictures, which allow you to show a still and best angled shot of the property.

## **5. Amenities and neighborhood attractions**

Your area knowledge and expertise will be more important because prospective buyers might not be able to experience the neighborhood and its normal activities, and many commercial businesses may be closed or have limited operations or operating hours.

Explain to the sellers that it might be good to provide additional information about neighborhood amenities, local businesses, schools and other things of interest in the area. Ask your sellers what they love most about their community, and try to incorporate these elements into your marketing presentation to augment the slow down or closures that COVID-19 might have created.

## 6. Information gathering

Explain that in the quest to lower the opportunities of exposing the property or the seller to the risk of COVID19 transmission you will front-load the information to the buyer.

This means that you may provide information like permits, history of the property, early seller disclosures, [pre-sale inspection reports](#) procured by sellers, floor plans, aerial photos and neighborhood information earlier in the sales process than normal. Additionally, explain that you will encourage prospective buyers to drive by or examine a Google Map before scheduling an in-person showing.

## 7. Limiting access

Let the seller know if you will limit access to the property by prohibiting pets, children or people in a high-risk category when possible.

FaceTime or other video chat services can be an excellent way for an agent to “show” a property without exposing the occupants.

## 8. Preparing for showings

Your seller will likely be more involved in [preparing the property](#) before each showing. Before the pandemic, agents would often tidy, clean, reposition items, fluff pillows, put away items that were unsightly or unnecessary, open windows, turn on lights, and open closets or cupboards that a buyer would want to look into.

But in our new normal the seller has to undertake many of these steps to avoid someone unnecessarily touching items in the property. The

seller should also disinfect frequently touched items, provide good ventilation by opening windows and open doors to areas that need to be shown during a preview.

## **9. Communication**

Realtors should always [communicate regularly](#) with the seller, but in the new normal, it's especially important that the sellers know when and who is in their property and for what purpose so that they can object in a timely fashion if that is appropriate.

These nine extra conversation points should enhance your normal listing presentation and hopefully prepare your seller for the nuances and practices necessary to sell a home at the best price and terms in the midst of a pandemic.

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