



Seller's Advice

By selling your property yourself you will be taking on most of the tasks that would have been done by an estate agent. But if you are well prepared and organised the process can be very straightforward – and very rewarding!

Valuation

Every agent will tell you that your house is very sellable – but at what price? Agents provide a very useful function in suggesting a value for a property. But the laws of supply and demand determine the actual selling price. When putting a value on your property, your task is to make yourself aware of the price at which houses like yours are selling in the area. Buy the local property paper, follow the prices and how quickly houses sell. Be sensible when setting your asking price. If you are asking too much you won't get any viewers. If you have a unique property with few useful comparators you can ask a surveyor to value it for you – for a fee. Estate agents will generally provide a free valuation with no obligation.

House Details

The purpose of the property details that you put on the website is to attract genuinely interested people to view your house. You do not want to waste time arranging a viewing with a keen entertainer who wants a big kitchen when yours is only a gallery style with room for one. The direction a garden faces is vital to keen gardeners. It is very important therefore that you are honest and accurate. Do not be subjective or overly descriptive because what you think is “original” might in fact be “reproduction”; things are not “beautiful” to everybody! It will also be useful if you have copies of any planning permission (where required) and guarantees for any home improvements that have been done.

We are in a metric age but include imperial measurements in brackets because there are still people who prefer feet to meters. Don't forget the height of rooms if this is a particular feature! Measure the garden because some people find the size of garden a deciding factor in whether to view or not.

A website is a visual medium. As such, quality images are very important. If you are using a digital camera make sure you are using the highest resolution available. Do not use the digital zoom because this tends to result in a reduction in image quality. Take pictures of the best views of your property. Think about lighting for both inside and outside pictures. Remove washing from the line, cars from the drive. One last piece of advice; people do not want to see a picture of old Auntie Enid relaxing in a deckchair on the patio, but they do want to see a picture of the garden without her!

Indicate where appropriate what is and is not included in the price. The more information you include the better your prospects of having a painless sale.

If your buyer is not local he will want to know about the area in which you live – schools, sports facilities, buses, trains, restaurants etc. This is part of the preparation you should have done. Be ready to answer these sorts of questions, it is all part of the selling and it will show your buyer that you are a considerate person with whom he will want to do business.

If some maintenance needs doing please mention it. This lets the buyer know you are being honest and it removes the chance that he will back out of the purchase at a later stage or try to renegotiate the price (during which time you could have sold the property to someone else). Why wait for the buyer to discover a problem, which he will do via his surveyor.

For Sale Board

The double-sided board is a standard size and shape. You will need to provide your own post, to put in the ground or attach to a wall or fence, and nuts and bolts etc. For a firm ground fitting in soil, use a spike, which can be bought from most DIY stores. The object of the board is to attract attention, so put it where it will be most visible and where it directly relates to your property. Please read the guidelines in the Terms and Conditions document.

Advertising

Behoused will conduct off-line marketing and advertising to drive potential buyers to the website, however, you might consider putting your own advert in your local paper or supermarket. All you need give is brief details and the web address of Behoused where more information will be available.

Presentation

Before you show anybody around your house make sure that it is clean and tidy. Remove the clutter. Open the windows and let some fresh air in and cooking smells out. Take a long look around your house; is the paintwork looking tatty, the wallpaper peeling or the grass too long? The approach to the front door is the first impression a visitor has, if this is not good it will taint what the buyer thinks of the rest of the property. It might be a good idea to spend some time, and maybe a little money, to make sure that your property is presented in the best way possible by redecorating (but in neutral, clean colours), or by putting some new plants in the garden. Spring clean the house from top to bottom. Get rid of the dust and grime. Clean all the windows – inside and out. If you have pets remember, not everybody is an animal lover. Remove excess furniture. Most important of all make absolutely certain that the toilets are clean and odour free.

The Guided Tour

Who is it you are showing round your property? Before you agree to show your house to anybody make sure you have his details - address, email, phone numbers. Find out what car he drives, its registration number, if his house is on the market you can contact his estate agent or view it on Behoused, (Ask for his property ID)– let him know you are going to do this. Verify he is who he says he is. Tell him you will ring him back. If you can't, maybe you should not be showing him around. Even if everything checks out do not conduct a tour alone. There should be at least two of you – both adults. Be friendly, you could be in contact with him for a long time. But don't leave the family jewels on show. Put your valuables in a safe place. When you show people round don't get in the way or obstruct the view. Point out the features of the house, both good and bad. Explain if some things are included in the price and others are not – it will save arguments and disappointments later. Let the buyer know why you are selling. Also do not disclose any confidential information like the burglar alarm code at this stage.

Price Negotiation

Your buyer will want to pay as little as possible, and you will want to sell for as much as possible – the key point is that he is a willing buyer and you a willing seller, you just have to agree on a price. If you approach this stage calmly with a clear idea of the price at which you want to sell and the room that you are prepared to give for negotiation, there is no reason why it should be a difficult process. You will need to assess your buyer's ability to proceed with a purchase. Does he have a property to sell? Is it on the market? Has it sold? Is there a chain? Has he got his financial situation sorted out? Give careful consideration to any offer you get, do not give an instant decision which you might regret later. If an offer is too low be very polite and tell the buyer, that gives him the option to raise his offer. If you are rude he could just walk away. Always ensure that your relationship with a buyer is courteous and businesslike.

Accepting an Offer

Once you and your buyer have agreed on a price and what it includes, you must inform your solicitor. He will then take over the legal aspects of the sale. Once an offer is accepted please avoid the temptation to accept a higher offer from somebody else. Amend your details on the Behoused site so that others know the house is under offer. Agree a method of keeping in contact with your buyer so that you can both keep up to date with the progress of the sale. Be patient, these things can take time. Once contracts are exchanged, your house is effectively sold. Amend your details on the website and fix your "SOLD" panels to your for sale board, obscuring the property ID to help avoid being contacted by anyone else.

GOOD LUCK!