

# Quick Home Sale Prep CHECKLIST



*The Ultimate Guide to*  
**Getting Top Dollar**  
*When You Sell Your Home*



SmartMoney



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# The Ultimate Guide to Getting Top Dollar When You Sell Your Home

## *Quick Home Sale Prep Checklist*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Every homeowner has one thing in common: they want to get every last dollar they can when they sell their home.

That's because—if you're like most people—your home is very likely your single most valuable asset.

As such, getting the highest possible sales price is “Priority One” for every real estate seller.

We created this Guide to do exactly that: in a logical, easy-to-follow manner, show you precisely what you need to do to get **every last dollar you can** when you sell your home.

You might be thinking, “OK, that’s all well and good, but why should I listen to your opinions on this?” That’s an excellent question. And rather than bore you with that stuff at the start of this Guide, you can skip to the last few pages to find those answers.

In the meantime, let’s review the things you can do to get top dollar when you sell your home!

### 2. WHAT DETERMINES MARKET VALUE

But before we get into the those details, let’s quickly discuss how market value is—and is not—determined.

Over the course of selling thousands of homes in Northville, Novi, Plymouth, Canton and the surrounding market, we’ve observed that many people don’t fully understand how this works. And this lack of understanding sometimes causes sellers to make poor decisions that ultimately come back to bite them when they sell their homes.

There is no doubt that many factors go into determining the ultimate market value of a given piece of real estate. Although—thankfully—not as volatile as the stock market, the same supply and demand factors that influence the price of a given stock on a given day in many respects similarly affect the fair market value of a home on a given day or during a given

period of time. Below, you will find a summarization of the various factors that determine the fair market value of real estate.

The most important section is the first one, “The Market Value of Your Home is Not.” Here we see the issues that so often influence sellers to make bad decisions with regard to pricing their homes. You might review this list and feel that the items are somewhat obvious. And, for the most part, you’d be correct.

However, we frequently hear people talk about “the amount for which their home appraised,” or, “the amount for which their home was assessed,” as if those measures were the real determinants of price.

We wish it were that simple, but it isn’t. Here are the things you need to know:

#### **The Market Value of Your Home is Not:**

- What you have in it
- What you need out of it
- What you want
- What it appraised for
- What you heard your neighbor’s house sold for
- What your assessed value suggests that it is
- How much it is insured for
- The LIST PRICES of other comparable homes in your immediate area

#### **The Market Value of Your Home Is:**

- Based on today’s market
- Based on today’s competition
- Based on today’s financing
- Based on today’s economic conditions
- Based on the buyer’s perception of condition
- Based on location
- Based on normal marketing time
- The SALES PRICES of other comparable homes in your immediate area within the last six months

Now that you perhaps have a better understanding of what impacts the true value of your home, let’s talk quickly about...

### **3. WHY PRICING CORRECTLY AT THE BEGINNING IS SO CRITICAL**

One of the greatest challenges in the home selling process is pricing homes correctly. Again, the goal of this Guide is to help you get the highest possible sales price. However, you must be careful not to let that desire cloud your judgment as to what is reasonable and realistic in your specific circumstances. Here are two reasons why it is so critical to price a home properly from the beginning.

#### **Most of Your Showings will Occur in the First Three Weeks Your Home is Listed**

Per the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), in a typical listing situation the number of showings per week increases during the first, second and third weeks after a home is listed for sale (peaking during the third week). Starting in the fourth week, the showings begin to decrease and continue to do so until approximately the eighth week, at which time they level off at the lowest level.

Further, a new listing is (1) “exciting” (that is, there is an emotional advantage to you as a seller at the beginning of the listing period; buyers have an elevated sense of urgency and expectation at this time), (2) shown more, and (3) generally sells for a higher price than older listings. Later, fair or not, prospective buyers begin to wonder why your home hasn’t already been sold.

### **Homes Sell Closer to Asking Price During the First Few Weeks**

Based upon another study performed by NAR, properly priced homes sell faster and for more money during the first weeks of the listing period. Specifically, here is what that study showed:

Home Sold in Month	Difference Between Asking Price & Selling Price
One	-3.0%
Two or three	-5.1%
Four, five or six	-6.7%
More than six	-15.2%

As you can see, it is very important to price your home properly from the very beginning. Most motivated buyers—and these are the people you are trying to attract—follow the market closely and typically look at new listings not long after they have been listed (this is particularly true during periods of rapid price appreciation). If you overprice your home, you will likely miss out on this “first wave” of potential buyers, which is exactly the group that is most likely to pay the highest possible price for your home.

We purposely introduced this point at the start of this Guide because it’s that important. Yes, by all means, get all the market will allow. But understand that there is a very real risk to overpricing, and we’ve seen lots of sellers get burned by this.

## **4. FINAL PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS**

If you want a more complete and comprehensive overview, we suggest you download our FREE [Ultimate Guide to Getting Top Dollar When You Sell Your Home](#), which is the original

from which this Quick Start Guide was created. If you have any questions or need clarification on anything that appears in this Guide, you can find your answers there.

## 5. THE CHECKLISTS

We've broken the total checklist into a series of smaller checklists:

- **Before You Get Started** - These are the things you really should do before you even make the final decision to sell your home.
- **First Impression Items** - First impressions are massively important in the context of getting top dollar for your home. You simply must do everything you can to create the best possible first impression for every potential buyer. Pay particular attention to this checklist, and do everything that applies to you on that list that you can reasonably afford to do and have the time to complete before putting your home on the market.
- **Core Preparation** - This is the heart of this Guide: the core list of things you should do to get your home ready.
- **Before Every Showing** - You need to develop the right mindset for showing your home, and the main aspects of that are (1) always being ready for your home to be shown and (2) doing everything you can to accommodate every showing. With respect to that first point, this is the checklist to help you ensure your home is ready every single day. Because it needs to be if you're going to get top dollar when you sell.

Let's get on to the checklists!

## Before You Get Started

Question	Yes	No
Have you considered your motivations for selling, and the implications of those motivations?		
Which do you plan to do first: sell your current home, or buy your next home?		
Have you prepared yourself properly psychologically?		
Have you considered the impact of timing and seasonality on your decision to sell?		
Have you considered obtaining a professional appraisal and factoring the results into your preliminary thinking regarding pricing?		
Have you obtained professional opinions from local real estate agents regarding the possible pricing of your home?		
Have you had your home professionally inspected (so that you can correct things before putting your home on the market)?		
Have you toured other homes currently on the market that are comparable to your home to assess how buyers will likely perceive your home in comparison?		
Have you selected the real estate professional who will represent you in your home sale? (If not, be sure to download our FREE <a href="#">16 Questions You Must Ask Your Next Real Estate Agent</a> )		
Have you obtained solid data upon which to make your pricing decision?		
Have you specifically analyzed the “sales-price-per-square-foot” of your home vs other recent sales of comparable homes in your market?		
After determining your price, is there still reasonable room to negotiate and get the true sales price you want or need?		
Have you disclosed everything possible on your Seller’s Disclosure Statement?		
Are you using professional photography to market your home?		
Are you using an online showing service to handle the logistics of your showings?		
Have you reviewed a “Seller’s Net Sheet” to ensure you understand all of the sale-related expenses for which you will be responsible? (If not, you can review one on the <a href="#">“Understanding for Sellers”</a> page on our website)		

## First Impression Items

Question	Yes	No
Have you washed your windows?		
Have you cleaned out your gutters?		
Have you repainted or replaced your front door?		
Have you power washed the exterior of your home?		
Have you repainted some or all of your exterior?		
Have you made your yard and landscaping as meticulous as possible?		
Have you repaired or repainted any trouble areas of your fencing?		
Have you planted colorful flowers (assuming it's spring or summer)?		
Have you replaced your mailbox?		
Have you replaced your address numerals or placard?		
Have you resealed or repaired any driveway imperfections?		
Have you replaced any worn shutters?		
Have you replaced any worn gutters?		
Have you added lighting to walkways or driveway?		
Have you added any new porch furniture?		
Have you repainted your garage door?		
Have you replaced any missing shingles, or, if necessary, replaced your roof?		

## Core Preparation

Question	Yes	No
Have you thoroughly cleaned your home (preferably professionally)?		
Have you lightened up your home (washed windows, trimmed trees, removed unnecessary window blockages, etc.)?		
Have you decluttered your home?		
Have you removed excess furniture?		
Have you cleaned out closets and optimized storage?		
Have you cleaned our your garage?		
Have you cleaned out your basement?		
Have you cleaned our your attic?		
Have you rented a storage unit to store any items you don't have room for in your home?		
Have you depersonalized your home?		
Have you staged your home?		
Have you repainted key rooms or any other rooms in need of new paint?		
Have you neutralized your home in general?		
Have you had your furnace tested and repaired as necessary to ensure it functions properly?		
Have you tested your sprinklers to ensure they are in proper working order?		
If applicable, have you had your septic system evaluated to ensure it will pass inspection?		
Are all appliances in good working order?		
Do all light fixtures have functional bulbs with adequate wattage?		
Are all wall switch plates and outlets in good working order and unbroken?		
If applicable, is your water softener in good working order?		
Is your water heater in good working order?		
Has the stove been thoroughly cleaned?		
Has the microwave been thoroughly cleaned?		
Has the refrigerator been thoroughly cleaned?		

## Before Every Showing

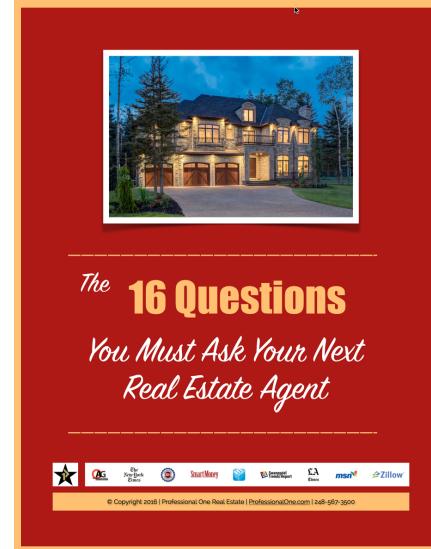
Question	Yes	No
Did you vacuum recently?		
Have all toys been picked up and put away?		
Is the kitchen clean?		
Have all countertops been cleared and cleaned?		
Have any full or near-full garbage cans been cleared out?		
Have wet towels and washcloths been removed from view?		
Have all bathroom counters and sinks been cleaned, and all shower curtains closed?		
Have all bedrooms been cleaned up and beds made?		
Have all pets been removed or put in cages?		
If applicable, has the litter box been recently cleaned?		
Has the garage door been closed?		
Did you leave lights on?		
Did you remove all ashtrays?		
Did you leave the lights on?		

## 6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

While it may appear a tall order to try to do everything in this Guide, we've been through this process thousands of times, and we can tell you it's not nearly as daunting as it may feel at the moment.

The keys to leveraging what you've learned here are as follows:

- **Start early** - Don't wait until you want to put your home on the market before you get going on what you need to do, because that is not realistic and you probably won't be able to do enough fast enough to really optimize your chances of getting top dollar when you sell. So, get started as soon as you think you might want to sell.
- **Do as Much as You Reasonably Can** - The more you do, the greater the odds of maximizing what you'll get when you ultimately sell.
- **Work with a Pro** - Your home is a major financial investment. We've been doing this a very long time, and we can tell you that it really does matter who represents you in the sale of your home. There are great agents in most companies, but you simply must take the time to find the right agent to represent you. We'd love to tell you more about that, and if you are interested, you can download our free [16 Questions You Must Ask Your Next Real Estate Agent](#) Guide.
- **Trust the Process** - The advice we've shared with you in this Guide has been developed and honed from many years of selling properties in the Canton, Livonia, Northville, Novi, Plymouth and surrounding communities. We know it works. We thank you for taking the time to read this Guide and for putting our tips and suggestions into action. We sincerely hope you get top dollar when you sell your home!



Warm Regards,

*Your Friends at Professional One Real Estate*

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## About Professional One Real Estate

### It's All About the Service

The principals of Professional One Real Estate are refugees of a sort: they escaped from traditional, “bigger is better,” “we’re #1,” “it’s all about transactions, not clients” brands because they just didn’t fit. Money didn’t motivate them. Serving clients to the fullest did. Watching many “#1” agents and teams for the past 30+ years, they saw agent incomes skyrocket—and client service and public opinion of the real estate industry steadily decline.

They came from professional backgrounds—one a CPA from the #1 accounting firm in the world, another the director of the online arm of a Fortune 10 company, and the third a Hall-of-Fame member of one of the top three brands in real estate—and they shared a common vision and a common obsession: to provide the best possible service to each and every client.

Inherent in that larger goal were these significant supporting philosophies:

- People matter more than transactions.
- Every client situation is unique and should be served uniquely.
- Do nothing from a short-term perspective.
- Do what is best for the client, no matter what.
- Customer satisfaction is the only metric that truly matters.

They understood they could follow the now-well-established formula of (team formation + series of self-aggrandizing self-promotion campaigns + focus on sales + more self-aggrandizing self-promotion campaigns + more focus on sales = huge personal incomes), or they could focus on serving each and every client obsessively and completely, and enjoying the fruits of that labor (which are more than enough, truth be told).

They chose the latter.

And you can be the beneficiary of that decision.

### Proud of Our Priorities

At Professional One, we focus on things that are not as easily measured: valuing relationships more than money, creating lifelong connections with people and on client satisfaction.

We’re proud to have those as our priorities.



We think we reflect them in our Mission Statements & Core Values.

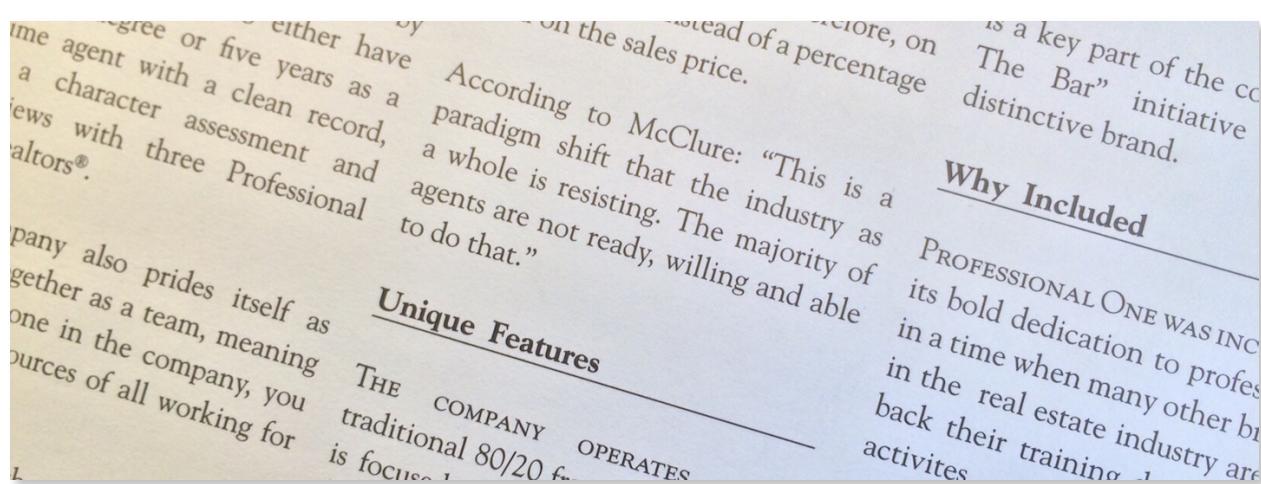
We love serving our clients.

And it shows in everything we do.

## Proud to Be Recognized

We're proud to say that others have noticed, too, as we were named a "Beta Brokerage of the Future" at Inman Real Estate Connect in San Francisco, and also one of the "Most Creative Brands of the Decade" in the definitive resource of the real estate industry, the Swanepoel Trends Report." The quote below is from that source.

**"Professional One was included for its bold dedication to professionalism."**





## About the Author

Michael McClure founded Professional One in 2002 with a clear vision of what he wanted to create: the most PROFESSIONAL real estate company and brand in America. Having worked as a CPA at the #1 accounting firm in the world for nearly 10 years before entering real estate, he knew what was possible with high enough standards and a relentless commitment to excellence.

Michael has since become nationally recognized for his passion for “raising the bar” in real estate, creating one of the largest online real estate groups dedicated to that objective (called “Raise the Bar in Real Estate” and featuring over 15,000 members worldwide), and also a podcast that has been written about in national publications. He’s co-authored books on the use of technology in real estate, operated as the Chief Operating Officer of a company dedicated to training real estate agents (in partnership with the #1 speaker, author and trends analyst in real estate in the world, Stefan Swanepoel) and been recognized on a number of “most influential” lists in the North American real estate industry. He’s conducted large-scale trainings for Keller Williams, Coldwell Banker and even for the #1 real estate portal in the world, Zillow.

He’s been quoted in many national-level media sources, including the LA Times, MSN, Smart Money Magazine, Inman News, the Detroit News and others. He’s been recommended by the head of real estate product development at the New York Times, and called “the best at using technology in real estate” by the author of the #1 book about the use of social media in the world, *Socialnomics*. He has over 100,000 friends, followers and members online.





## Why Professional One?

We're proud to be nationally recognized. But we're even prouder of the service we deliver to every client.



### Competency

We have one overriding objective in everything that we do: **provide the highest level of competency and professional service** in the real estate industry; we were formed explicitly for this purpose.



### Experience

We have one of the most experienced teams in this market; our small group of agents has **120+ cumulative years of selling experience and over \$500 million—more than \$.5 BILLION—of closed sales.**



### Education

In an industry with literally no educational requirement, **we have graduates** from the Michigan, Michigan State, Northwestern, Ohio State, Kalamazoo College and even Moscow State University.



### Intangibles

Our staff includes a CPA, MBAs, a licensed builder, a linguistics expert that speaks six languages fluently, a former director of advertising for a division of GM, a mortgage processing expert and an interior designer, among others.



### Standards

We have the **highest-barrier-to-entry of any company in real estate**. In the entire world. Very few agents qualify to be Professional One agents. In fact, because our barrier is so high, we don't actively recruit agents, because so few meet our standards.



### Technology

Our founder has literally **written books on the use of technology in real estate!** Along with Stefan Swanepoel—the leading author, speaker and trends analyst in the real estate industry—he co-authored the Swanepoel Technology Report and the Swanepoel Tech Guide.



### Reach

Our audience in terms of social media is greater than many of the largest real estate companies in the world! With over 55,000 followers, we ranked in the top 6 of all real estate BRANDS in the world in terms of reach on Twitter, as one example. As another, our founder created one of the most prominent real estate Facebook groups in existence, featuring over 15,000 members. **We know how to create "private audiences" as well as any company on earth.**



### Reputation

Our founder has spoken nationally on the topics of professionalism in real estate, the use of technology in real estate and how to build audiences using social media. He's been quoted in Smart Money magazine, the LA Times, MSN, the Detroit Free Press, Inman News and many other news sources. He has been named among the 50 Most Influential in real estate. In addition, Professional One was named **"One of the Most Creative Brands of the Decade"** and a **"Beta Brokerage of the Future."**



### Risk-free

We literally **guarantee our services**. This is the real icing on the cake. **No other company in the industry has this aggressive of a policy.** Obviously, we could never offer this guarantee unless we do what we tell our clients we're going to do. And, you can be assured, we do. The bottom line: if you list with Professional One, there is no risk to you. If we don't do everything that I promise we'll do, you can simply take the listing back from us.

