

Selling your house in a down market

1. **You have to be willing to price it right:** If you're going to sell your home in a down market, you may have to be willing to make some concessions on price. In many areas foreclosures have depressed the prices quite a bit. While you may not be able to cut your price to the level of some of those bank owned homes, you can still do your research as to what comparable homes are selling for, and undercut their prices. You may not get as much action as the foreclosures, but you will at least get more action than other sellers who aren't as flexible on price. Try not to get emotionally stuck on a certain price.
2. **Make sure the home has curb appeal:** Even if you can't compete on price with foreclosures, you can do your best to make sure that your house at least looks better on the outside than the foreclosure down the block. Get the home power washed, paint the trim and the doors, put on new exterior lights and/or knockers, and give your plants some sprucing up. All the hard work should pay off by at least getting that buyer through the door. This is important because you can only make a first impression on the buyer ONCE.
3. **Clear the home of clutter:** When you're living in the home, it may be ok to have stacks of papers on the coffee table, and tons of personal photos on the walls. But when you're selling a home you want the potential buyers to picture themselves living in the house. Remove personal photos from the walls, and replace them with neutral framed art. Take everything off the countertops in the kitchen to make it seem like there is more counter space. Remove any unnecessary furniture and put it into storage. If you can remove clothing from the closets and put it into storage to make the closets feel bigger. Reduce all the extra clutter throughout the house to make it feel bigger, more spacious and buyer friendly!
4. **Fix big problems:** If your house has a big problem that will turn a lot of buyers off, fix it! Shag carpeting in the living room? Consider changing it out with fresh new carpeting. Non-working water softener? Pay to have it fixed, or get a new one. Big hole in the wall? Get some drywall and patch it up. Ugly peeling linoleum in the kitchen? Put in new flooring. Anything that can cause instant dislike for your house should be fixed, as long as it isn't too expensive.
5. **Fix smaller problem areas around the house:** Go throughout the house and take notes of all the small things that need fixing that may be a turnoff to a potential buyer. Take the time to go around and fix those things one by one. If you noticed them, the buyer will too! When we sold our house we ended up repainting some trim on the outside of the house, repainting several rooms that had scratches and marks on the wall, and removed some rubber marks on the kitchen linoleum. It only took us one or two days of hard work, but in the end the house looked much better, and was more inviting to a buyer.
6. **Consider staging the house:** When we sold we actually staged the house to make the rooms feel more spacious, give it a less cluttered look and a make people feel more at home. In the living room we removed several larger pieces of furniture, and replaced them with smaller more luxurious pieces from our parent's houses – in a different layout. We took our personal photos down and put up framed art pieces. We removed all the magnets and photos from the fridge, and put up nice valances on the windows. Watch a lot of HGTV and try to emulate what the experts do to stage a house!

7. **Offer bonuses to agents or buyers:** consider offering a bonus to the first agent to bring in a full price offer, or offer to pay closing costs for a buyer (this might be especially attractive for first time buyers). We have seen sellers offering to pay a year's worth of homeowner's association fees. Be creative.
8. **Use the power of the web and your personal networks to market your house:** Be sure that your agent uses other online websites to sell your house like craigslist, sites like zillow.com , trulia.com, Realtor.com etc. We can create your own Website address know as a URL using your house's address like (400seymourstext.com), promote the house through social media like facebook and twitter, and send out a copy of your listing to people on your email list. Sometimes word of mouth is one of the best ways to market a house. Let all your neighbors know that you are selling your house. They may know friends or family that love the location.
9. **Get a good agent to help you sell:** Get a good agent to help sell your house, not a friend of a friend – or your aunt Agnes who just got her real estate license. Your house is one of your biggest assets, and this is no time to do someone else a favor. Interview a few agents and ask them to tell you what their marketing plan is for your home. Use someone who understands the power of the internet, the importance of good wide angle interior photos, and an overall marketing strategy for your house. Be sure you feel comfortable with the Agent.
10. **When the house is showing, keep the house clean and don't be there!:** When you are having an open house, or the house is having a showing, make sure that you aren't there. There's nothing more annoying than having the home's owners in a house when you're trying to look at it. Also, make sure to keep the house spic and span to make sure that it shows well. Finally consider baking cookies before a showing, or lighting one of those cinnamon roll candles. It will give the house a pleasant aroma, and people will feel at home.

Selling your house in a down market isn't an easy task, but you can still do some hard work along the way and make your chances that much better. In the end your house will show better, and you'll be able to sell your house that much quicker.