

TUCSON

Home Seller's Guide

The Ultimate
How-To Guide to
Commanding
Your Home's
Highest Price


Preparation

Tierra
Antigua
REALTY


the
Agent
CO-OP



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Your Selling Journey

The Market

You have made the huge decision to sell your home. You start checking out market conditions and estimating the associated profits and costs.

The Price

Your Realtor® will help you evaluate the current real estate market and all relative factors about the property so you can be sure not to over or under-price your home.

The Marketing

Your Realtor® will market your home on many platforms to be sure it is seen by as many potential buyers as possible, as to command its highest price.

The Inspection Period

Your buyer has (unless negotiated in the contract) 10 days from the contract date to perform all inspections and back out of the contract (they keep earnest money) or request repairs. You then have 5 days to respond to their request for repairs. Your agent will help you coordinate the scheduling of inspections with the buyer's agent. Your Realtor® also helps you negotiate any repairs requested.

Select Your Realtor®

You hire a Realtor® team to consult with you on the many important factors of selling your home, as well as negotiate on your behalf and deal with any issues that may arise along the way.

The Preparation

You perform necessary repairs and ensure your home remains clean, staged and landscaped throughout the process. You want your home to look its absolute best from the professional photo shoot through close of escrow.

The Offer(s)

The offerer dictates the timeframe for responding to their offer within the purchase contract. Your Realtor® helps you to understand the offer(s), prepare a counter-offer if you wish, and process the paperwork to accept the negotiated contract and keep things moving forward.

The Close

The buyers will perform a final walk-through of the home prior to closing. This ensures the home is in the same condition it was when they first visited. Once the closing documents are signed and the buyer's final funds are received, the deed is recorded with Pima County and escrow is closed.

PACK



Preparing Your Home Pack. Simplify. Repeat.

Preparing your home for sale is a critical step in getting the best price you can.

If you are aware of any needed repairs (there are almost always some), it's best to take care of them prior to buyers visiting your home to minimize surprises down the line. I'd even recommend getting an inspector to inspect for you so you can know what to expect and incorporate any costs into your net proceeds prior to listing. I will discuss repairs requested by buyers during their own inspections in another document called The Inspection Period. Now, you need to begin your packing process. For real.

Begin packing **BEFORE** you sell. Get a storage unit. Consider a PODS unit, a U-Haul Box, or similar - as many as needed to clear out about 60-80% of your stuff. Any storage unit will work, but these options allow you to pack at a slower pace, since the unit lives on your property while you pack it. You can arrange to have it taken away and stored off-site as soon as you've finished filling it.



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This will help tremendously when you are ready to move, so it's time well spent. If you take the time to pack now, your home will attract more buyers and sell very quickly; you won't need to be without these things for very long! Keep only what you need to function minimally and even then, hide away functional things (like your toaster) when your house goes on display. With all of this thinning out, it will be much easier to keep your home tidy during the sale process and you will find offers coming in much faster.

Declutter.

If you have stocked bookshelves, pack up 90% of the books and other items. You might choose to leave a set of bookends with just three or four books depending on the space. Perhaps a decorative candle, or a single art statue. Remember, you're trying to leave it looking like a hotel or model home, not a place that has people living in it. What to do with your artwork? Art doesn't necessarily need to come off the walls, but if you have a lot of it, it's wise to thin it out. Keep your most impressive pieces on the wall and go ahead and repair holes from pieces removed. If your art is controversial in the slightest, pack it up. Remove personal photos and mementos. There are two reasons for this. One, it keeps your personal things safe while strangers are going in and out of your home. Two, house hunters want to imagine their own family in the home, not yours. A few plants sporadically placed will warm the atmosphere.

Reduce furniture.

Take the absolute minimalist approach. Hold on to furniture pieces only if they are sized appropriately for the space. If you have a large sofa and a loveseat that take up a good portion of your living room/family room, pare it down to only the loveseat, a small coffee table and maybe a side table at most. Leave one plant out in the room (or a candle), for a warm and inviting feel. Do the same in the bedrooms. Perhaps you can live with only one dresser instead of two while your house is on display. Fewer and smaller furniture items will make the space look bigger.



repeat



Thin out your closets.

Pack up your off-season clothing and anything you don't wear often. Having closets that are full will give the impression that there is limited storage space. Ideally, you'd only have a few items hanging on matching hangers to imply what the space is used for. Do the same with your kitchen pantry. Organize items like they do in the Container Store catalogs - it may not be your idea of practical or realistic to live with long-term, but it will help sell your home for more money!

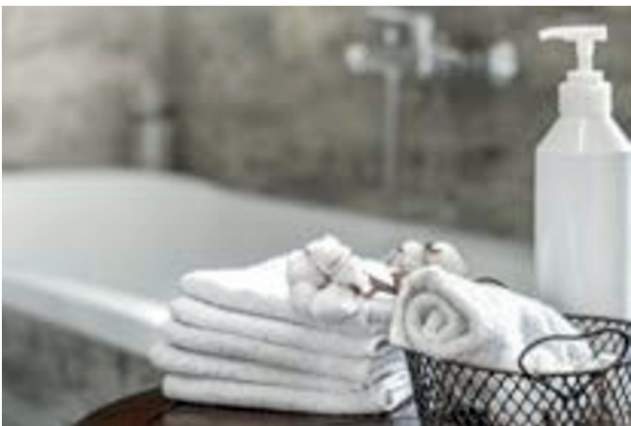
When it's time to finish packing up to move to your new home, you'll be so glad to have done all this prep work!

Clean, simple style.

Hang clean, simple guest towels in your bathrooms. Perhaps one unopened bar of soap stacked on top of one or two folded wash cloths on the counter (as you might imagine a hotel would present for a guest).

Make beds with clean, attractive spreads (simple designs). The point is to attract attention to the space, not the furniture.

Clean thoroughly. A dirty and/or cluttered environment will cause prospective buyers to notice flaws. Scrub sinks and tubs super clean. Hire professionals if necessary - it'll be worth every penny and effort, and will pay dividends when house hunters are considering how much to offer on your home. A vacant home can draw attention to flaws as well, and potential buyers may feel they need to save funds from their offer to fix up the place. Staging helps them see that the house is move-in ready.





Appeal to the senses.

Make sure your home smells fresh! If you have odors in your home caused by anything from cooking scents to pet odors or tobacco, clean thoroughly and use citrus cleaners more so than air fresheners, as air fresheners can come on too strong. Citrus and cinnamon scents (in moderation) are found to increase home sales! If you have carpet that has years of smells built up in it, replace the carpet! It will be SO worth the money spent. Smells can turn people right out the door, and you may have become used to them from living there (animal smells are a good example of this - you usually can't smell your own dog's scent in your home until you come back from being away for some time). Don't assume offering a carpet allowance will take care of it - once the impression is made, you can't take it back.

And finally, take out your trash before every showing.

Word to the Wise:

Remember, you're not trying to share your personality with your potential buyers - this isn't about you or your taste in collectibles, furniture or colors. Take cues from current model homes on home decor - keep it extremely simple and neutral. The goal is to appeal to the masses. Introduce a splash of color, but use the color very minimally (like in sofa cushions or artwork) and use only one color in addition to the neutrals. If your home is painted with bright vivid colors throughout, have the walls painted in neutral tones (not all white though). Think of it as creating an inviting blank slate for the buyers to imagine all of their own belongings and design ideas. If you have a single accent wall in a bold color, no sweat. Play to it when you stage by complementing it with throw pillows or other small accents. You can often make it work with items you have, but absolutely keep any accenting to this single color and make sure it's a small percentage of the overall visual.

All Ready for Show. What Now?

Light up the place! Let all the natural light available into your home. Open blinds and curtains and turn on all lights when you leave your home for showings, as agents may not do so and it enhances the experience of homebuyers. Close windows to eliminate any street noise. Do your best to make your house completely available for showings.

It's okay if you need notice for showings, but don't make people wait too long. If you work from home and need to limit the hours for viewing your home, just know that it will take longer to sell your home. If you can, arrange to be away from the home for the first two days on the market, so agents can take clients any time of day. Allowing yourself to be inconvenienced will mean a faster sale and overall fewer life disruptions!

Do everything in your power to avoid being home (or having pets at home) during a showing. You want prospective buyers to feel comfortable and not rushed when viewing the home. If you're there, they will rush in and out and feel awkward about conversing with one another about the pros and cons of your home for their family. Don't leave signs of your pets out either (like food bowls and litter boxes); you don't want focus on the fact that pets live here.

Keep your garage door closed and your driveway clear of any cars or other vehicles when your house is being shown. Take a walk or go for a drive and enjoy the break! You'll be well on your way to a successful sale.





... homeownership is a catalyst for building wealth for people from all walks of life. A monthly mortgage payment is often considered a forced savings account that helps homeowners build a net worth about 40 times higher than that of a renter.

- Lawrence Yun, Chief Economist, National Association of Realtors



THE TEAM



Your Personal Agents

Backed by an Entire Team of Experts

Working with Southern Arizona’s largest locally owned real estate company has unique advantages. Tierra Antigua is made up of over a thousand individually contracted agents. Each of us is able to operate our business our way, with our own standards of excellence, above the already high standards in place at the Tierra Antigua brokerage level, but with the support of agents whose collective experience is seriously expansive. That’s a lot of expertise ready to help you buy or sell!



Robin Singer

Full-time Realtor® | Master of Business Admin
Lifelong Mover | Arts & Crafts Enthusiast



Sarah Smith

Full-time Realtor®
5th Generation Tucsonan | Outdoor Enthusiast



Chris Caskenette

Full-time Realtor®
Musician | Pop Culture Enthusiast



Communicating with you every step of the way is our top priority. Let us know how YOU like to communicate.

Find your nest.

We can tell you , we don’t always have immediate answers to every real estate question. However, we will always get you answers in a timely fashion. We’re resourceful and committed to educating you throughout the process of selling your property, and beyond.

Tierra Antigua Realty's Core Values

Mission

To elevate the consumer's experience through the success of our REALTORS®.

Vision

To improve the lives of those in our community by exceeding expectations and elevating the real estate experience in Southern Arizona. We are dedicated to the success of our agents personally and professionally. Tierra Antigua Realty's core value system is centered on honesty, professionalism, integrity and knowledge. We are required to strive for excellence in every aspect of our business.

Motto

Agents, Clients and Community First!



THE TEAM

Meet the Founders



Kimberly Clifton
Owner
Realtor® | Designated Broker

Matthew Clifton
Owner
Realtor® | Associate Broker

Kimberly, a Tucson native, and Matthew, who moved here in 1974, share a deep appreciation of the Sonoran Desert, which they will forever call home. With a love of the landscape, the diverse cultural heritage, and architectural beauty, they put their passion to work as successful REALTORS® and dedicated participants in the community, helping those in need.

What began simply as a decision to go on their own, quickly attracted other REALTORS® who appreciated their professionalism, knowledge, strong work ethic and charitable outreach. Listening to their clients' and agents' needs soon produced the model for their real estate success... "Treat agents as family, and give them all the resources they need to serve their clients best."

From their first days in real estate, Kim and Matt Clifton's passion for the industry always motivated them to seek every resource available to make Tierra Antigua Realty a state-of-the-art organization for knowledge and empowerment. As a result, Tierra Antigua Realty has an unsurpassed reputation and has grown to the largest, locally-owned real estate brokerage in Southern Arizona.



Closing - What to Expect

Utilities

Be sure to schedule all of your utilities to be transferred as of the day of closing and no sooner. Utilities need to remain on during inspections and until your buyers take possession. Simultaneously, your buyers will schedule to have them transferred to their name as of the day of closing.

Settlement Statement

The title and escrow company will outline all of the costs associated with closing on your property, including your loan, but also including title fees, prorated taxes & HOA fees (if applicable) and any other costs, such as a home warranty if you have one, etc. It will tell you the exact amount you'll need to bring to your closing appointment.

Closing Proceeds

During the sale process, your title company will reach out to you to gather information. Please provide it as promptly as possible. They will also gather information from you on how you would like to receive your proceed funds.

BEWARE! Wire fraud is on the rise. Do not trust any wiring instructions received by email. Always contact your Escrow agent directly and confirm anything they may send you by email, and only using a phone number known to you.

Your Closing Appointment

Coordinated with the help of your Realtor®, this is the date when you will sit down at the Title Company with a Notary to sign all of your closing documents. It often occurs a couple of days prior to the actual closing (transfer of ownership), and it is important to note that in Arizona, closing is not complete until the deed is recorded with the county with the new buyer's information, which takes place once all funds are with title and all paperwork is complete and signed. This may not be until late in the afternoon on your closing date.

Items to Bring to Your Closing Appointment

- Driver's License or other valid, government-issued photo ID
- Cashier's Check or Wire Transfer Confirmation

Key Real Estate Terminology

Appraisal

The Term 'appraisal' in real estate is an appraiser's independent opinion of value on a property, which is different from a Comparable Market Analysis (CMA) report that your agent might provide you to establish market value. They are similar, but an appraiser uses very specific formulas to adjust for particular features and attributes, and most loans will require that the appraisal value be at least the value of the contract price in order to underwrite the loan. It's the mortgage company's way of ensuring they are backing a marketable property should the Buyer default on their payments. Appraisers are independent parties and must not be affiliated with anyone in the transaction.

BINSR (Buyer's Inspection Notice and Seller's Response)

The 'BINSR' is a notice document that the Buyer uses to give notice to the Seller of any disapproved items discovered during their due diligence, and to give the Seller a chance to correct those items. Refer to your purchase contract or ask your agent about deadlines affiliated with the BINSR.

Escrow Officer & Company

The escrow company is an unbiased third party to the transaction who leads the facilitation of your escrow (through an Escrow Officer), including earnest money, escrow instructions preparation, funds disbursement, signing of documents and more. The escrow company also coordinates with the title company, and in some cases, they are separate companies who share a parent company (in Arizona). Because of this, title and escrow are often referred to interchangeably, although in actuality, they have very separate functions.

Insurance Claims History

Your homeowner's insurance company keeps records of all claims made on the policy, including the specifics of the claim, when it occurred, and how much was paid out. When you are in contract with a Buyer, you need to provide the buyer with a report outlining any claims for at least 5 years (or the length of ownership, whichever is shorter) within 3 days of contract acceptance. Ask your insurance agent for a letter of experience or CLUE letter.

Title Company

The title company verifies that you, the Seller, has the legal right to sell the property to your buyer, and then issues a policy, called title insurance, protecting homeowners and lenders from conflicts (like title claims) that may arise from the property's previous owners.

The Preparation Checklist



Pack, Simplify, Repeat.

- Procure a Storage Unit.
- Make a list of all of your rooms and exterior areas and schedule out your packing plan.
- Remove clutter throughout the house, pack, organize and clean out closets. Reduce furniture!

Live'n up Your Curb Appeal.

Tired houses don't impress.

- Freshen up your landscaping, and clear pathways and front steps of any debris; make sure there are no tripping hazards.
- Paint your front door and buy a new doormat.
- Paint or replace mailbox, if needed. If screens, windows or shutters are worn or damaged, replace or repair.
- Replace dim bulbs and repair any lights as needed.
- Repair any cracks in interior or exterior walls.
- Clean and organize the garage, and ensure the door is in good working order. Remove any oil and rust stains from the driveway and garage floor.

Awaken the Interior Charm.

- Shampoo carpeting or replace if worn (or has ANY odor). Clean tile floors, particularly grout. If the grout doesn't clean up, consider a professional grout cleaning or re-coloring.
- Give walls a fresh paint job. Clean windows and window coverings.
- Repair any leaks and caulking in bathtubs and showers.
- Replace worn/discolored (or busy) shower curtains with fresh, simple ones. Clean thoroughly!

- Repair or replace loud ventilating fans.
- Repair or replace loose knobs on doors and cabinets and adjust sticky or squeaky doors.
- Store any exercise equipment away unless you have a dedicated gym space.
- Make sure air conditioners/heaters, evaporative coolers, hot water heater are clean, working and get them inspected if necessary. Replace filters.
- Ensure all pool and/or spa equipment and pumps are working properly and pool/spa(s) are kept clean.
- Inspect fences, gates and latches. Repair or replace as needed.
- Get a professional deep cleaning. Worth every penny!
- Your agent should be getting professional photos and, if applicable, drone footage to show your home in its best light!

Time to Show.

- Maintain a clean home. Mess and dirt reveal every flaw.
- Clear counter tops of small appliances and nicknacks; leave a clean and empty sink.
- Make beds and hang clean, attractive towels in the bathrooms.
- Send pets away or secure them away from the house, and be sure to clean up after them. Barking/crying will encourage buyers to hurry out of your home.
- Close the windows to eliminate street noise. Empty and clean trash cans and store out of sight.
- Keep the garage door closed and driveway clear. Park vehicles (and campers) out of sight.
- Light up the place! Open blinds and curtains and turn on all the lights.
- Depart before prospects arrive and give them plenty of time to dream inside your home.

Why stage at all?

You may be wondering if there is a point to staging in a hot real estate market where sellers have the obvious advantage. It comes down to getting more money for your home. Whether occupied or vacant, a little staging goes a long way to helping potential buyers fall in love with your home and to see your home as their own. This will very realistically result in a higher price well worth the investment.

According to the National Association of Realtors, every hundred bucks spent on staging yields a \$400 potential return on sale price.

The more impressed the buyers are when viewing your home, the more they're willing to offer. Simple as that.

On a side note, many buyers, due to low inventory on resale homes, are turning to new construction. When they visit site sales offices, they are “wow”ed with beautiful model homes with lots of bells and whistles and beautiful, trendy decor (even though the home doesn't come with all that beautiful furniture!). This is just one more reason to stage your home to compete with the buyer's alternative. Are buyers scarce? No, definitely not now. But if you can compete with alternatives, you'll get more bids and higher bids. It doesn't mean buyers will expect the type of so-called “perfection” of a new home, but they need to see their “used” home is just as beautiful, and that the unique charm of your home is worth the trade-off of “brand new.”



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