

# BOOST LISTING SUCCESS



## 5 Real Estate Listing Steps to Boost Success in 2017

2017 looks to be another solid year in the residential real estate market - but before you get your first listings for the year we thought it would help to go back to basics and provide some helpful tips so you maximize your listing opportunities and ensure a profitable 2017!

We recently interviewed Mary DeLaLeurs, Managing Broker/Owner of [TORG Realty, Inc.](#) to help cover the basics and provide helpful tips from a real estate broker's perspective. Mary has been in real estate for over 20 years and was recently highlighted in [Illinois Top Agent magazine](#).

**Mary, once a realtor secures a listing what are the key steps that a seller should follow to ensure a successful listing?**

Here are 5 basic steps to follow:

1. Understanding the Seller's Exit Strategy
2. Preparing the Property
3. Creating a Stellar Online Impression
4. Getting Social
5. Showing Management



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### Understanding the Seller's Exit Strategy

Successful brokers don't just sell properties, they partner with their sellers to maximize profitability. This starts with understanding their motives behind the sale. Are they relocating for a job? Are they selling because they've encountered financial difficulties? Do they need more space? Whatever their motive, this will help develop the listing strategy.



Once I identify the timing of the exit strategy, I can work backwards from there. For example, if the sellers are relocating in 60 days, then I can advise them that the typical contract from offer to closing takes approximately 45 days. Which means they have only two weeks to secure a buyer. With this knowledge, I now know I will need an aggressive pricing & marketing strategy.

Taking the seller's time frame & financial goals into consideration along with reviewing the current competition is key to finding the right price point. Pricing the property correctly is critical and deserves its own separate article...more to come.

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### Preparing the Property

The first in preparing the property is walking the property with the seller. This is when I look at the property through a potential buyer's eyes. What will they see? What will attract them to the home? What are areas that may need improvements or freshening up? Because the sellers look at their house everyday they may not see their house through the eyes of a potential buyer. It is my job to let them know

objectively what areas may need decluttering, repositioning their existing furnishings or perhaps bring in a [professional home stager](#). These items are critical in preparing the property.



I also find it helpful for the seller to repair small items throughout the home prior to listing the property. This may include reinstalling a toilet paper holder that has fallen off the wall, replacing missing window cranks, having the furnace serviced, and/or cleaning the home & carpet. These items will make a great first impression of a well-maintained home. When these items are not completed prior to listing/showings a home inspection could become lengthy and give a potential buyer "cold feet." I also like to give the seller a home inspector's checklist so they are knowledgeable of the process and can prepare ahead of time before the smaller issues become bigger ones. These proactive steps will help boost the first impression of the home.

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### Creating a Stellar Online Impression

Next, we need to capture the essence of the home with stellar listing. 97% of buyers look online first before contacting an agent. Creating a listing buyers can visualize themselves living in provides value which usually results in getting more money for your seller.

The main components in making a great impression with your online listing are the **listing details, description and photography**. I collaborate with the seller to find out the features of the home, surrounding area, and amenities. From there, I use my real estate expertise and emphasize the benefits of these features. For example, instead of saying, “This home features a walk out patio” I would say, “Relax & entertain on this walk out patio of this beautiful water front home with mature trees and perennial gardens”. This clearly helps buyers visualize the benefits of the property. Also, it is very important that the details of the property are accurate and correct. The features and benefits that are being emphasized should be consistent in the photography and the listing description in the MLS.

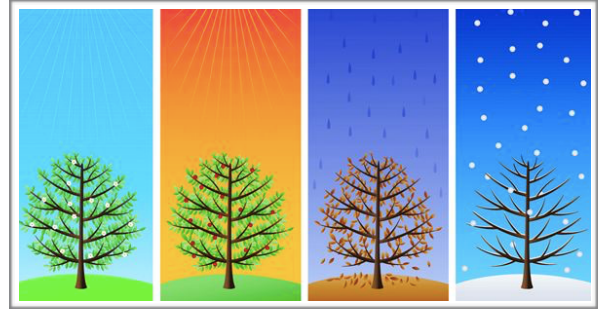


I always recommend using a [professional real estate photographer](#) for all my listings. I cringe when I see beautiful homes diminished by smartphone cameras, panoramas and “fisheye” lenses. It degrades the home which means less money in the seller’s pocket. Taking the photos with the right equipment is an essential part of the photography stage as well as the proper editing, lighting and angles. To-

gether with the professional photographer, we use our expertise and knowledge in making the photos come to life, which creates a vision to potential buyers. I feel brokers should **stick with what they were trained to do** which is real estate and not photography. It’s the same as giving legal advice to someone when you are not an attorney. It just shouldn’t happen.

I also recommend using the maximum number of pictures for each listing per the MLS guidelines. Even if it’s a smaller home, townhouse or condo I will include amenity & surrounding area photos i.e. parks, swimming pool, walking trails, etc.

The first exterior photo should match the time of year of the listing. For example, if you are listing a property in the spring, your first picture should be a spring picture and not a winter wonderland. If the home has fantastic views in each season, I sometimes use the “off season” photos as filler pictures to show the different views.



In addition to having the right professional photographer, make sure the sequence of photos flow logically as if the buyers are walking through the house. Many listings I see have photos in a random order which makes it harder for buyers to visualize the home. Making the flow representative of the buyer’s potential experience will lead to more showings.

When writing the property description, make sure your words convey the value of the listing and are in sync with the photos. Like in the above example of the walk out patio. If there were no pictures of this patio would a potential buyer benefit from the description? I think not. Use your words and pictures to demonstrate the benefits to the buyer.

Before going live, proofread your listing to make sure everything is correct and please please don’t **TYPE IN ALL CAPS**. It makes the buyer feel like you’re YELLING AT THEM!! Once the listing is completed, I always make sure the seller agrees with the vision and approves the listing prior to publishing.

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### Getting Social

Like I mentioned in the first part of this blog series, buyers go online first before contacting a broker so getting **social plays a key role** in today’s market. While the prevalence of online searches is undisputed, here are some interesting facts about how connectivity has impacted buyers:

- The largest transportation provider in the US doesn't own a single car. ([UBER](#))
- The new largest hotel company in the world doesn't own a single hotel ([Airbnb](#)).
- [Amazon](#) just passed Wal-Mart as the nation's biggest retailer (and, much more valuable) and they don't own a single store...

With these statistics, it is obvious that social media and an online presence play an essential role in all businesses including real estate. The times of putting a property on the MLS and **hoping it sells are over**. Reaching the Millennials (people between the ages of 18 & 34), which consisted of 32% of all home buyers last year is critical for



your marketing since they have been reported to search social media sites prior to contacting a broker. One tip I can share that has worked well for me has been to “friend” my seller on Facebook so they can share the link to their sphere of influence. By doing this I can have constant, near-real-time communication via Messenger and the sellers can see the interest level of people by the amount of “likes” and shares”.

The “network effect” is very real and you can even find a buyer from someone they are already connected with. When a person sees a post they are interested in, they share it to their peers. Just by doing this you can reach hundreds or even thousands of people with the click of a button. In addition, I feel that **buyers start their search on social media** sites prior to going on dedicated real estate apps such as Zillow and Redfin because their natural day-to-day activities are on social media sites. Increasing your exposure on social media sites should decrease the listing time of the property which results in obtaining an offer quicker.

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### Showing Management

Now comes the time for showings! You’ve spent all this time preparing and listing the home now is the time to shine. I always educate my sellers on the importance of allowing showings because getting as many prospects through the door will increase the chance of getting an offer. The more flexible the sellers are with showings, the greater the chances of getting an offer quickly assuming the property is priced appropriately.

The **first week on the MLS is critical** and agents should treat it as such - after all, there is a direct relationship between how long a listing is on the market and the ultimate closing price. The longer the home is on the market the more the closing price drops because buyers think “something must be wrong with the property.” For example, let’s say potential buyers have been looking in your area for the last 3 months. They have seen all the properties in your area and they still haven’t found what they are looking for. When your new listing comes up they immediately contact their broker to set up a showing only to find out the times they are available, the sellers are not willing to accommodate. This creates the assumption that the sellers are not serious about selling their property and more than likely the buyers will move along to the next new listing that hits the market.



Brokers should be very clear about the showing schedule on the MLS - set days and times that the home is available for viewing. Balancing the seller's schedule while maximizing the opportunities for showings is tricky however, is critical for a successful sale.

If you find the property isn't getting many viewings or offers in that first week this could be an indicator that it's not priced appropriately based on the condition of the property or the area. Further, make sure to **reach-out to agents that showed the property** to their buyers and get feedback so you can improve or modify your strategy with the seller. Feedback in writing is the best form of communication as it can easily be shared with your seller. A good old fashion phone call can also get you the feedback you are looking for on the buyer's likes and dislikes.

We hope these insights help you with your listings in 2017 and beyond - please let us know if any questions!

*-Leslie and Mary*



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