



REAL ESTATE COMPANY LLC

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TIPS FOR SELLERS

Please visit our local websites at:

www.grayrider.com

www.columbiacountynewyorkrealestate.com

www.columbiacountyrealtors.com

Step #1 - Setting the Price

Pricing your home is both an art and a science. Achieving the optimal price is the result both of objective research into comparable properties and a gut feeling about your property and the current market. The right price should:

- Attract buyers
- Allow you to earn the most money possible
- Help you sell as quickly as possible

The simple fact is, price is the number one factor that most homebuyers use to determine which homes they want to view. And it's important to remember that, although the price is set by you, the value of the home is determined by the buyer. Try to avoid allowing your enthusiasm to impact your better judgment - overpricing is a common mistake that can cost you in the end.

The Importance of Proper Pricing

- Faster sale and less inconvenience
- Exposure to more buyers
- Increased realtor response
- More advertising/sign calls
- Attracts higher offers
- Means more money to seller
- Avoids being "shopworn"

What really matters is how your home stacks up against the others currently offered for sale and recently sold in your area or neighborhood. Buyers will be looking at other properties and comparing prices.

Common Reasons for Overpricing

- Over-improvement
- Need
- Purchasing in higher priced area
- Original purchase price too high

- **Lack factual data**
- **Bargaining room**
- **Move isn't necessary**
- **Assessed value**
- **Emotional attachment**
- **Opinion of family and neighbors**

Dangers of Overpricing

- **Most of the activity on your home will occur in the first few weeks. Pricing a home properly and then creating immediate urgency in the minds of agents and buyers is critical.**
- **Buyers who have seen most available homes in their price range are waiting for the "right house" to come on the market. That's why if a house is priced right, it will sell quickly. The buyers are there waiting for it.**
- **Don't start with a high price and the assumption that you can reduce it later. By the time you decide to lower the price, it may be too late, as interest will have already waned.**
- **A major cause for concern is appraisal problems; overpricing can lead to loan rejections and lost time.**
- **Even if your home is nicer than other homes in the same area, your house won't be picked for viewing if you set the price too high.**
- **Buyers and agents become aware of the long exposure period and often are hesitant to make an offer because they fear something is wrong with the property.**
- **Attracting the wrong buyers.**
- **Fewer potentially qualified buyers will respond.**
- **You might help sell similar homes that are priced low.**
- **You could lose money as a result of making extra mortgage payments while incurring taxes, insurance and unplanned maintenance costs.**

Step #2 - Free Comparative Market Analysis

The Role of a Real Estate Agent in Pricing

- The Gray Rider Real Estate Company will provide you with a comparative market analysis (CMA), a comparison of the prices of recently sold homes that are similar in terms of location, style, and amenities. A CMA is computer analysis performed by comparing previously sold homes in the area, and currently active homes to know your competition.
- There is no "exact price" for real estate
- I don't tell you what I think your home is "worth"
- The market determines value...together we determine the price
- You determine the price based on the factors you control:
 - Marketing time
 - Financing alternatives provided
 - Condition
 - Exposure method
- Keep in touch with market trends and keep up to date with market activity of comparable homes
- Estimate your net proceeds
- Help to determine offering incentives

A Real Estate Agent has NO control over the market, only the marketing plan. Never select an agent based on price. If you are interested in receiving a free Comparative Market Analysis for your home or property, please

Step #3 - Preparing Your Home to Sell

First Impressions Are Lasting Impressions. The exterior of your home often determines how buyers will view the interior, so:

- Make sure your front entrance is clean and inviting
- Paint or replace your front door if it's faded or worn
- Add some paint to shutters, trim and any other outside features showing signs of wear

Beauty Is More Than Skin Deep. Buyers often see the surface condition of your home as a sign of what's underneath, so:

- **Keep windows and floors clean**
- **Replace faded wallpaper and glue any areas that have come away from the wall**
- **Repair worn woodwork**
- **Repaint scarred or dirty walls in a neutral color**
- **Steam clean carpeting or replace it if necessary**
- **Repair loose knobs, sticking doors and windows, warped cabinet drawers, broken light switches and other minor flaws**
- **Check and repair caulking in bathtubs and showers**

Accentuate the Positive. Try to see your home with a fresh perspective and arrange each room to bring out its best attributes, including:

- **"How we live in a home and how we sell a home are often 2 different things."**
- **Open draperies and curtains to let the light in during the showing**
- **Remove all unnecessary clutter from your attic, basement and closets to better display spacious rooms (consider storage or a garage sale to dispose of extraneous items)**
- **Arrange all your rooms neatly and remove excess furniture**
- **Keep fresh, clean towels in the bathroom**
- **Use candles or air fresheners to make the room smell pleasant**

Put Your Home in the Best Possible Light. Strategically lighting your home, even during daytime showings, can create a cozy mood and highlight positive attributes of each room, so:

- **Avoid the use of overhead lighting that makes rooms look washed out and lifeless.**
- **Be creative and arrange lamps to help smaller rooms seem larger, and large rooms seem more intimate.**
- **Use lighting to highlight the "living areas" of your home, such as a pair of chairs such as a pair of chairs near a fireplace, or a table in a breakfast area.**

Inside:

- **Clear all unnecessary objects from furniture throughout the house. Keep decorative objects on the furniture restricted to groups of 1, 3, or 5 items.**

- **Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops. If it hasn't been used for three months...put it away! Clear refrigerator fronts of messages, pictures, etc. (A sparse kitchen helps the buyer mentally move their own things into your kitchen.)**
- **In the bathroom, remove any unnecessary items from countertops, tubs, shower stalls and commode tops. Keep only your most needed cosmetics, brushes, perfumes, etc., in one small group on the counter. Coordinate towels to one or two colors only.**
- **Rearrange or remove some of the furniture if necessary. As owners, many times we have too much furniture in a room. This is wonderful for our personal enjoyment, but when it comes to selling, we need to thin out as much as possible to make rooms appear larger.**
- **Take down, or rearrange certain pictures or object on walls. Patch and paint if necessary.**
- **Review the house inside room by room. Paint any room needing paint, clean carpets or drapes that need it, clean windows.**
- **Leave on certain lights during the day. (I'll show you which ones). During "showings" turn on all lights and lamps.**
- **Have stereo FM on during the day for all viewings.**
- **Lockbox--#1 Importance: "If we don't have it, they won't show us."**

Outside:

- **Trim landscaping to reveal architectural detail (bottom of windows, etc.). "If they can't see it, we can't sell it."**
- **Go around the perimeter of the house and move all garbage cans, discarded wood scraps, extra building materials, etc., into the garage.**
- **Check gutters and/or roof for dry rot. Make sure they are swept and cleaned.**
- **Look at all plants...prune bushes and trees. Keep plants from blocking windows. "You can't sell a house if you can't see it." Plants are like children-they grow so fast!!**
- **Weed and then bark all planting areas. Keep lawn freshly cut and fertilized. Remove any dead plants or shrubs.**
- **Clear patios or decks of all small items, such as small planters, flower pots, charcoal, barbecues, toys, etc. (Put them in the garage).**
- **Check paint condition of the house-especially the front door and trim. "Curb appeal really works!"**

In General:

Try to look at your house "through the buyer's eyes" as though you've never seen it or been there before. Any time or money spent on these items will bring you back more money in return, and hopefully a faster sale.

Step #4 - Showing Tips

THE 10 MINUTE DRILL

Occasionally you will receive a call to schedule a showing to take place within the next few minutes. The following is a checklist for this type of panic:

Sound: Turn off the television and tune the radio (low volume) to a soft rock, middle of the road or classic rock station.

Sight: Turn on every light in the house (day or night) and open every drape and blind (day time only).

Odors: Heat some frozen pastry slowly in the oven or heat a pan on the stove and then drop in a few drops of vanilla.

Kitchen: Wipe kitchen counters, place dirty dishes in dishwasher.

Bathrooms: Wipe counters, flush and close toilets.

Living/Family Rooms: Hide magazines, newspapers, and games; remove clutter.

Bedrooms: Straighten beds. Hide clutter under bed (not in closet).

Exterior: Put away toys and clutter. Keep walk clear.

Children & Pets: They are a distraction, so send them outside.

Goodbye: Sorry, but this is the single most important thing you can do in a showing to help sell your home! Even if the showing agent insists that it is okay to stay, you must leave. Buyers must get emotionally committed to your home to buy it and they cannot become emotional about "their new home" if you, the current owners, are "hanging around". Please, at the very least, go into the backyard. Even better, go to the store.

Step #5 - Home Warranty (Optional)

Adding a home warranty to your listing adds confidence and might result in someone purchasing your home over a newer home. Many people are nervous about old appliances and fixtures, etc. Buyers are much more comfortable with a house that includes a one year warranty. The warranty can be promoted in the advertising as a drawing feature of the home. Offering a home warranty when you list your home has numerous advantages:

- (1) Peace of Mind on covered items during the listing period at no additional cost.**
- (2) Competitive Edge over similar homes not offering a warranty.**
- (3) Reduces after-sale problems. If a covered system or appliance repair is needed, the Buyer calls the warranty company, not you!**
- (4) Pay at closing. There is no charge to the Seller until closing.**

Step #6 - Lead Based Paint

All homes built prior to 1978 require a Disclosure of Information and Acknowledgement for Lead-Based Paint and/or Lead-Based Paint Hazards signed by the Seller and Buyer. Buyers will have up to 10 days to check for lead hazards.

Many houses and apartments built before 1978 have paint that contains lead (called lead-based paint). Lead from paint, chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards if not taken care of properly.

Since 1996, federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renting, buying, or renovating pre-1978 housing.

The following information about lead-based paint is very important if you have or are considering to purchase a home built prior to 1978:

People can get lead in their body if they:

- Put their hands or other objects covered with lead dust in their mouths.
- Eat paint chips or soil that contains lead.
- Breathe in lead dust (especially during renovations that disturb painted surfaces)

Lead is even more dangerous to children than adults because:

- **Babies and young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths. These objects can have lead dust on them.**
- **Children's growing bodies absorb more lead.**
- **Children's brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead.**

Lead's Effects

If not detected early, children with high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from:

- **Damage to the brain and nervous system**
- **Behavior and learning problems (such as hyperactivity)**
- **Slowed growth**
- **Hearing problems**
- **Headaches**

Lead is also harmful to adults. Adults can suffer from:

- **Difficulties during pregnancy**
- **Other reproductive problems (in both men and women)**
- **High blood pressure**
- **Digestive problems**
- **Nerve disorders**
- **Memory and concentration problems**
- **Muscle and joint pain**

Checking Your Family For Lead

A simple blood test can detect high levels of lead. Blood test are important for:

- **Children who are 6 months to 1 year old (6 months if you live in an older home with cracking or peeling paint).**
- **Family member that you think might have high levels of lead.**

If your child is older than 1 year, talk to your doctor about whether your child needs testing.

Your doctor or health center can do blood tests. They are inexpensive and sometimes free. Your doctor will explain what the test results mean. Treatment can range from changes in your diet to medication or a hospital stay.

Where Lead-Based Paint Is Found

Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. The federal government banned lead-based paint from housing in 1978. Some states stopped its use even earlier. Lead can be found:

- In homes in the city, country, or suburbs
- In apartments, single-family homes, and both private and public housing.
- Inside and outside of the house.
- In soil around a home. (Soil can pick up lead from exterior paint, or other sources such as past use of leaded gas in cars.)

Where Lead Is Likely To Be A Hazard

Lead-based paint that is in good condition is usually not a hazard.

Peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking lead-based paint is a hazard and needs immediate attention.

Lead-based paint may also be a hazard when found on surfaces that children can chew or that get a lot of wear-and tear. These areas include:

- Windows and window sills.
- Doors and door frames.
- Stairs, railings, and banisters.
- Porches and fences.

Lead dust can form when lead-based paint is dry scraped, dry sanded, or heated. Dust also forms when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can get on surfaces and objects that people touch. Settled lead dust can reenter the air when people vacuums, sweep, or walk through it.

Lead in soil can be a hazard when children play in bare soil or when people bring soil into the house on their shoes.

Checking Your Home For Lead Hazards

You can get your home checked for lead hazards in one of two ways, or both:

- A paint inspection tells you the lead content of every painted surface in your home. It won't tell you whether the paint is a hazard or how you should deal with it.

- A risk assessment tells you if there are any sources of serious lead exposure (such as peeling paint and lead dust). It also tells you what actions to take to address these hazards.

Have qualified professionals do the work. The federal government is writing standards for inspectors and risk assessors. Some states might already have standards in place.

Trained professionals use a range of methods when checking your home, including:

- Visual inspection of paint condition and location.
- Lab tests of paint samples.
- Surface dust tests.
- A portable x-ray fluorescent machine.

Home test kits for lead are available, but recent studies suggest that they are not always accurate. Consumers should not rely on these test before doing renovation or to assure safety.

What You Can Do Now To Protect Your Family

If you suspect that your house has lead hazards, you can take some immediate steps to reduce your family's risk:

- If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- Clean up paint chips immediately.
- Clean floors, windows frames, window sills, and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made especially for lead. Remember: NEVER MIX ammonia and bleach products together since they can form a dangerous gas.
- Thoroughly rinse sponges and mop heads after cleaning dirty or dusty areas.
- Wash children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
- Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
- Keep children from chewing window sills or other painted surfaces.
- Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- Make sure children eat nutritious, low-fat meals high in iron and calcium, such as spinach and low-fat dairy products. Children with good diets absorb less lead.

How To Significantly Reduce Lead Hazards

In addition to day-to-day cleaning and good nutrition:

- You can temporarily reduce lead hazards by taking actions such as repairing damaged painted surfaces and planting grass to cover soil with high lead levels. These actions (call "interim controls") are not permanent solution and will need ongoing attention.
- To permanently remove lead hazards, you must hire a lead "abatement" contractor. Abatement (or permanent hazard elimination) methods include removing, dealing, or enclosing lead-based paint with special materials. Just paint over the hazard with regular paint is not enough.

Always hire a person with special training for correcting lead problems - someone who knows how to do this work safely and has the proper equipment to clean up thoroughly. If possible, hire a certified lead abatement contractor. Certified contractors will employ qualified workers and follow strict safety rules as set by their state or by the federal government.

Remodeling or Renovating a Home With Lead-Based Paint

Take precautions before you begin remodeling or renovations that disturb painted surfaces (such as scraping off paint or tearing out walls):

- Have the area tested for lead-based paint.
- Do not use a dry scraper, belt-sander, propane torch, or heat gun to remove lead-based paint. These actions create large amounts of lead dust and fumes. Lead dust can remain in your home long after the work is done.
- Temporarily move your family (especially children and pregnant women) out of the apartment or house until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned. If you can't move your family, at least completely seal off the work area.
- Follow other safety measures to reduce lead hazards. You can find out about other safety measures by calling 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask for the brochure "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home." This brochure explains what to do before, during, and after renovations.

If you have already completed renovations or remodeling that could have released lead-based paint or dust, get your young children tested and follow the steps outlines earlier.

For More Information

The National Lead Information Center

Call 1-800-LEAD-FYI to learn how to protect children from lead poisoning.

For other information on lead hazards, call the center's clearinghouse at 100-42 LEAD. For the hearing impaired, call TDD 1-800-526-5456.

[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[U.S. Housing and Urban Development](#)

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