

Free Market Analysis

I offer a Free Market Analysis at our first meeting in your home. You should not feel pressured to sign on the spot. I will advise on home-prep and staging the sale of your home by reviewing your property and providing decorating and repair suggestions. I can act as a resource to identify repair specialists and the whole host of experts that will be needed throughout the selling process. A most important first step will be agreeing on a list price.

Setting a List Price for Your Home

Marketing your home at the right price yields the fastest sale at the highest price. There are many factors that go into the price of a house. Every house is unique, especially its location. My job is to strategize the price by understanding your market, neighborhood, model, improvements and competition and work together with you to price your home so that it sells for the best price in the least amount of time and stress!

Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

CMA is the term real estate agents use when they prepare a report and analysis of a home's worth in the current market. Some of the most popular Internet CMA sites: Zillow.com, Realtor.com or Redfin.com show you one number that comes from their "black box" data and algorithms. These estimates may work in cookie cutter home subdivisions but, given the fact that so many homes are either custom-built or, have been customized by renovations and remodeling, these estimates may vary by 15-20% from ultimate sales prices. These companies do mention that is the case in many areas but, it is in the fine print. That is why it is important to get a CMA developed by a knowledgeable real estate professional after viewing the property in question and reviewing sales activity in the area.

Your Personalized CMA

I will walk through your home observing upgrades, renovations and needed improvements. Property condition strongly affects price. At this point, I may actually recommend de-clutter, repairs or improvements to increase your home's value. I will should conduct a systematic search of comparables in the MLS and Tax Records to see comparable sales in the area. This search usually includes: properties that have sold within the past 12 months; active listings; pending sales and sometimes even expired listings or FSBOs, something that no automated system can do.

This selection process needs the human touch to review price differences due to property size, living area size, garage spaces, number of bedrooms and baths, age, architectural style or physical condition, etc.

A public website where you can check recent sales surrounding your home and build your own CMA is:
www.SurroundHomes.com

Staging Your Home

Home staging refers to all the possible actions you can take to improve your home's appeal to potential buyers. There is no end to what you might think of doing from cleaning up, repairing, painting, renovating and adding or subtracting: furnishings, appliances, landscaping, etc. There are also artistic specialists that can be used for this activity. My function as a real estate agent is to advise you on the range of actions that have the biggest payoffs without too much delay or stress.

Listing Period: Before the Contract

The regional Realtor® Listing Agreement has become a long document, over 50 pages. I will walk you through the boilerplate and focus on the relevant parts. In particular, you will need to fill out disclosure/disclaimer forms regarding the condition of your home, provide utility bills and deal with new laws such as a required radon inspection report.

Home Listed with an Barbara Ciment Team ... Your Marketing Campaign Begins

My Team will cover all the bases! A critical first step to marketing your home is to upload a detailed and appealing listing of your home into our regional MLS. (MRIS recently changed its name to Bright MLS after merging with other MLS organizations in NJ and PA areas). You should expect to have a professional photo shoot of your home, that will produce dynamic floor plans, captioned photos in MLS, printed color brochures, multi-website distribution, advertising, open houses, e-flyers and e-alerts, My Team prepares color Fact Sheets/Brochures uploaded to various websites and printed out for placement in the home. Similarly, owner disclosure forms, owners statements, need be distributed. We will order a For Sale signpost for your front lawn and try to set up a schedule for open houses and/or showings by appointment.

Manage Media Marketing

Aside from the MLS, there are other outlets that need to be employed to market your home. As most home buyers start their search on the Internet, it is very important to respond to inquiries from the various MLS listing websites. I provide

personalized email alerts to stay current and these powerful tools help us understand the changing market conditions. With all the modern tools, it still doesn't hurt to use direct mail printed target cards, flyers and newsletters. Wide-area news publications are less useful these days while, local neighborhood outlets and List Serves are good outlets for e-Flyers.

Contract Registered: Negotiating its Acceptance

Now starts the intense process of dealing with all sorts of people and personalities and skilled professionals. This will require communication and negotiating skills for the usual and the unanticipated problems. First and foremost, I represent your interests in an ethical manner, maintaining standards of professional ethics towards potential buyers. I will provide advice and constant feedback on all material activities, including:

- All serious inquiries and reports on showings from agents and buyers and their impressions
- Report back on property condition
- Monitor qualification of buyers, call lenders and mortgage brokers to get personal feedback
- Explain all negotiated clauses and terms, e.g., any pre/post-occupancy requirements or contingencies
- Attend home inspection and deal with requirements and demands resulting from it; advise on repairs and required service providers
- Respond to buyer demands by drafting clear and effective clauses for any negotiated items
- Prepare seller's expense sheet
- Maintain good working relations with agents, attorneys, inspectors, appraisers, mortgage lenders and repair professionals to expedite results.

The Art of Negotiation

Everyone knows how to ask for what they want or need but, that does not mean they know how to negotiate to get what might get accepted. Until you start the process of listening to the other side and seeing what might be possible or likely, no one knows in advance where they are going to agree and settle. I will should facilitate the negotiations and keep you informed on the demands of all parties and the requirements of all terms, while charting a course to win-win positions. Successful agents know how to represent your interests faithfully and ethically, while probing the other side to find what will make the deal that you ultimately might accept, even though it may not be what you originally expected. It is this skill that separates "great agents" from "good agents."

Under Contract: Hurdles to Closing

Finally, the haggling is over and we have an agreement and we are Under Contract but, not yet certain to close!

- Monitor lender's approval
- Meet with appraisers and inspectors and deal with difficult appraisals, or lender's requirements that often trigger contingencies that make the contract completely renegotiable
- ***This negotiation period may actually be longer than the initial contract negotiation above...***
- Finally all differences are resolved and Settlement Date is set. Agent should review documentation and fees and correct inevitable errors.

I will strive to minimize stress, and encourage flexibility, patience and understanding of how to work with a wide range of personalities, i.e., buyers, sellers and controlling family members, who may be involved in the transaction. In addition, you need to understand and cooperate with the host of professionals who have roles to play in the sale and purchase of a home: inspectors, appraisers, loan officers, contractors, lawyers and others.

Closed But, Issues Still May Arise

- Post-settlement support relative to questions arising from unanticipated findings or occurrences of property condition and whether seller disclosures were accurate and truthful. E.g., water in basement, leaks from roof, cracking or settlement of home, pest infestations, etc.

This is a brief overview from the home seller's perspective of the role of the Listing Agent and what you should expect and require in your relationship. Clearly, much of this discussion applies to the home buyer but, there are other issues that buyers need to consider in choosing an agent and that will follow in another section of this website.