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WHEN IT MAKES SENSE TO SELL

Spring has arrived with plenty of buyers and a shortage of quality properties on the market. There is no better time for you to list your property. Rising house prices and a lift in sales is a result of pent up demand: for two years householders have been carving back debts, causing home sales to drop to unusually low levels.

August showed a hint of recovery - nationwide the volume of sales was 5,192, up from July and a sharp 21 percent increase over last August. The number of new listings is rising, and the median home price rose 3 percent in the month to \$355,000, the Real Estate Institute reports. Based on agent surveys, here are some likely reasons people will sell this spring.

1 DOWNSIZING
Do you own a big expensive home but lie awake at night worrying about how you are going to make your payments? If your budget is stretched too tight, selling can save money and improve your rest.

2 JOB TRANSFER
Change is a major reason to sell! If you have found a new job you probably can't wait to start house-hunting (but selling first is wise). Even if you are shifting across town, you can save hundreds of dollars per month on petrol by moving closer.

3 TIME IS RIGHT FOR PRICES / FEAR OF MISSING OUT
This is becoming a more common reason for selling, particularly in Auckland where QV says prices are back to their 2007 peak, and 1.5 percent higher in the inner city.



4 LARGER HOME
People with growing families crave space. The arrival of a new baby or extended family often brings on a sale and the search for a bigger home.

5 RELATIONSHIP CHANGES
Going through "The Big D"? Divorce or relationship breakdown is a major source of "For Sale" signs around the neighbourhood. Selling is often the most sensible option, freeing equity for two separate residences.

6 BETTER SCHOOLS/ NEIGHBOURHOOD
Families wanting to move up and provide the best for their children often sell their starter home and shift to a better part of town as soon as they can afford it.

7 EMPTY NEST
Your children are gone and that big old house just doesn't do it for you anymore. A smaller home and the money it frees to travel or invest may be just what you need.



READY, SET, GO!

Spring is the busiest time of the year for real estate sales. If you are planning to list your home, you need advice, so call your agent and get started. Here are some key points to consider.



How much is my home worth?
Your real estate agent can provide you with a complimentary market assessment. He or she knows the price of comparable homes that have sold in your area recently and can advise you how yours stacks up to the competition.

Price or no price? Selling with or without a price (by auction or negotiation) makes a real difference in how much buyers offer for your home. Discuss the pros and cons of each method with your agent and ask for advice, so you can decide which method suits you best.



How do I make my home look better to buyers? If your time and budget is limited, you will need input from others to make sure your home presents well. Don't guess: what you see wrong with your home and what a buyer sees can be two different things. For instance, you may not like that old back deck and want to replace it - whereas a buyer just wishes the kitchen were some other colour than purple. Talk to your agent: he or she will advise you on what changes or touch ups are needed to improve your home's saleability -- without breaking the bank.

HOW TO GET MORE MONEY FOR YOUR HOUSE



Getting rid of clutter is the secret most often mentioned by real estate agents for getting a better price for your home. The reason? An uncluttered home looks bigger, and buyers are paying for space.

When preparing your home for sale, your goal is creating an appearance of large open living spaces. One the most effective things you can do is storing or loaning out excess furniture. This will open up your rooms immediately. Next gather some big boxes and stow away as many small personal items as you can find. In bedrooms and living areas put away books, knickknacks, collectables, personal photos, stacks of papers and magazines. In the kitchen, put away small appliances and dusty items on top shelves.

Once you are done, you will be able to add back in a few touches, such as a stunning potted plant or bright new cushions for a bit of designer effect.

Dave Tomu

Real Estate Specialist

Licensed Salesperson: REAA 2008

021 960 702 | ah: 09 940 9652 | B: 09 827 9599

F: 9 826 0837 |

tomu@xtra.co.nz | www.yoproperty.wordpress.com

Gee Realty 2001 Ltd

Licensed Agent: REAA 2008

7 Rata Street | New Lynn | Auckland 0600

PO Box 15 644 New Lynn Auckland 0600

www.harveys.co.nz

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