

ASK THE EXPERT

Getting the Right Exposure

BY KELLY PERKINS

In my first year as a real estate agent, I hosted over 80 open houses, virtually every single weekend, and have continued to do about the same each year since. Some people call this work; for me it's play. I love the prospect of meeting new potential buyers and celebrating sellers' homes.

While some sellers prefer "private showings only," in doing so, they may be dismissing one very good form of exposure. To sell a home in a timely fashion, an effective launch should include a broker preview, followed by a series of strategically planned open house showings available for the public. The early days of marketing a house are the most critical, and the goal is to both harness the momentum that naturally comes with a new listing, as well as cast a wide net to capture as much foot traffic possible. Just as they say, you can't judge a book by its cover, you also can't judge a home by the exterior or by the photos posted online. Additionally, people who physically visit an open house are motivated for a variety of reasons and have a genuine interest in real estate. This means they are also talking to others about what they have seen, which could

inspire the buyer who ultimately purchases the home. Moreover, these visitors provide valuable feedback that can further refine your marketing efforts.

One of the misconceptions I hear is, "I don't want my nosy neighbors or strangers walking through and looking at my things." First, before listing your property, you and your realtor should declutter the house as much as possible, and in doing so, remove personal items. If this is done, anyone looking will be focused on the bones of the house, the flow and décor (staged or not).

Open house showings can also spark unexpected conversations, which fuel the selling process. I experienced one such occasion. A family was selling their home and the young son, cute kid, was not so happy about it. Actually, he looked forward to moving to a new home, but he simply dreaded having to clean his room for each open house and scheduled showing. So, what did he do? He played pranks on

me, the listing agent! As the family would gather the kids and rush out the door with just minutes to



While some worry that public open houses allow too much snooping, they can be a great way to create natural momentum and foot traffic.

spare before each open house started, oddly enough, the little guy was always the last one out. My first discovery of his mischievous behavior was a rubber snake he strategically wrapped around the handle of the patio door, which made me practically leap into a prospective buyer's arms when I almost unwittingly grabbed it. Turned out to be a great conversation door

opener (pun intended). Another time, after some staging was done, the little guy replaced some of the thoughtfully placed artifacts with his plastic dinosaurs. When one of open house visitors pointed out the surprise unique artwork, we collectively laughed as they concluded this was clearly a home with a spirited family. It also further inspired a discussion about the unique personality of the property that might otherwise have never been exposed.

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