



Big Mistakes That Cost Sellers Money - What Not To Say To Buyers!

The door bell rings, you grasp the knob, and throw one last glance around. As your daughter quickly puts the vacuum cleaner away, you open the door with a big smile. There stands an agent, with buyers.

"Hi! ... How are you? ... Come In."

Those are probably the last three unsolicited comments that should pass your lips for the remainder of the visit. The real estate field is littered with stories of potential sales that were killed by sellers who inadvertently uttered the wrong thing.

Before continuing, you should understand that the types of 'better left unsaid' things discussed here have nothing to do with the "Seller's Disclosure" Addendum, or hiding anything from a potential buyer. To the contrary, all of the suggested "DON'T SAY IT!" topics presented here are based on personal preferences. Being human, sellers often find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep from offering opinions or information that they think makes them appear "credible" to the buyer. Without knowing the life's experiences and propensities of each buyer you see, how can you keep from opening your mouth and inserting your foot?

Please don't talk about:

1. How many kids are or are not in the area. (Even if the buyer has children, you have no way of knowing whether or not they want gangs of them banging down their door on Halloween.)
2. The huge stone birdbath in the backyard that is visited by HUNDREDS of birds each year. (How could you know the spouse is deathly afraid of birds?)
3. How great your church is. (They might be of different faith.)
4. How quiet the neighborhood is. (They may want a more social atmosphere, and look forward to making new friends.)
5. The 'newness' of items in the home. ('New' is most definitely a relative term! What you consider 'new,' may be 'old' to others. For example, an item that is two years-old may be 'new' to someone who has lived in the house for 15 years, but may be 'old' to a buyer who thinks of 'new' as anything in place for less than 6 months.)



6. Information on existing warranties (They may expire before the new owners close on the house, or they may not non-transferable.)

7. How many 'showings' you've had. (Buyers could interpret this as "No one else wanted the home, why do I? or "I wonder what's wrong with this house?")

Please do not OFFER the following statements as the reason you are selling:

1. The death of a family member. (Some people have a phobia about moving into home where someone died.)
2. How you've outgrown the house. (If buyers have the same number in their family, they may have second thoughts about their need for such a large home.)
3. How the home is too small for you. (Your comment may give them the push to look for more expensive (bigger) homes.)
4. Your recent divorce. (Potential buyers may be having marital problems. This could easily turn them off.)
5. That you bought another home. (If a buyer knows there is urgency, this can be used against you in negotiating.)

If you get the distinctive impression that everything you say to a potential buyer could get you into trouble down the road - then you have correctly interpreted this article. Since you are under contract with a real estate agency, the best course is to make yourself scarce after the greeting. In fact, a good course of action might be to say:

"Please take your time viewing my home. And if I do not see you before you leave, thank you for coming. You'll have to excuse me, but: (important phone call, helping kids with project, deadline at work, etc.)"

This extricates you from a potential "foot-in-mouth" encounter later, and does not make you appear to be avoiding the buyers' questions.