

10 Great Tips For Selling Your Property

You think it may be time to move on. You're wondering if it's time to sell the family home, downsize to something more manageable, realize some urgently needed cash, or maybe just enjoy a change of space and place.

Where do you start? How do you minimise the emotional, financial and family impact of selling an asset that may have been a familiar friend for years, even decades?

These tips will steer you through a potentially difficult process, minimize the trauma, and maximize your returns.

1. Seek advice BEFORE you decide to sell

Buying your house was probably one of the largest risks you ever took. And now the shoe's on the other foot. You're thinking about selling for a range of reasons including but not limited to:

- Downsizing
- Empty nesting
- Retiring debt
- Relocation
- Financial issues
- Family pressure.

Make sure you're mentally and emotionally prepared for the reality of farewelling an asset that may have been in your and your family's life for many years. Talk the issue through thoroughly with family and friends. And don't be afraid to seek professional guidance.

If the home has been the family seat for a generation or more, be sure that your children and any other stakeholders understand your decision.

Do you have to sell your home because of financial, economic, or personal pressures? It can even be worth engaging counselling or psychological assistance. People who think of themselves as emotionally stable can find themselves grieving the loss of a possession that represented pride, achievement and security.

Property Appraisal

If you're close to the decision, it's always wise to have a realistic idea of the selling price of your property. You should get at least three independent appraisals from respected agents who can show accurate records of sales in your area in recent months and years of properties similar to yours. And it's also sensible to have a clear idea of property prices in the areas, sizes and styles you may have selected for re-investment.

As Vendor Advocates, with more than 40 years experience, we provide a free advisory service that helps you reach the right decision taking into account all the factors, including the emotional impact.

For trusted free advice before you decide to sell, call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483.

2. Select the sale method that suits you

Selling your home ranks close to the top of the stress list. As the vendor (seller), it can cause even more tension if you're in, or approaching your senior years.

You may ask yourself these questions, and many more:

- How should I sell
- Who should I appoint?
- Will I get the right price?
- What if I don't?
- What next?

In Australia, there are four ways to sell your property:

1. Auction—one of the most popular sales methods. You decide on the minimum price you would like to achieve (your reserve) and your qualified and licensed agent conducts the public sale on a specified date. Auctions can bring higher prices as buyers compete for what they may perceive as a desirable but scarce asset. Other buyers, however, can find the process too confronting.
2. Private sale—this method is less daunting and easier to understand for you as the vendor. You either list an asking price, or ask for expressions of interest. It can and usually does take longer, and buyers, especially those represented by canny agents, will always try for a bargain.
3. Fixed date sale—with your preferred price range firmly in mind, you invite potential buyers to submit their offers up to a cut off date. You or your agent then choose to negotiate with the preferred bidder, or re-list the property if you're not satisfied with the offers.
4. Do it yourself—it seems to make sense. Why pay all the charges for real estate agents, marketing and advertising, lawyers and conveyancers when you could do it all yourself? The short answer is time, expertise and risk. Selling your home is a complex process governed by stringent laws and compliance issues. A very low percentage of residential sales in Australia a year are conducted by the owners themselves, often at unacceptably high costs for unexpectedly low returns.

Our 40 plus years experience across thousands of successful home sales gives you the depth of knowledge to help you decide the right sale option for you and your property.

Call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 to discuss your best choice.

3. Choose the best time to sell your property?

Opinions, many of them claiming to be expert, vary wildly. Most claim that spring leading up to early summer is ideal, with gardens blooming and optimism in the air.

Plenty of agents take the view that the buying season launches in September and peaks at the end of November or the first week of December. People are anxious to settle their property issues well before Christmas and head into the New Year certain of their financial position.

Others believe autumn offers equally favourable opportunities. The summer holiday break and back-to-school distractions subside and a business-as-usual mentality returns.

The truth is, the market decides. And it makes up its mind on a complex set of variables that only experienced professionals can help you understand. These can include factors as diverse as:

- Local supply and demand
- Population and demographic trends and shifts
- Legislative and political pressures and swings
- Interest rate and economic fluctuations
- Infrastructure and government policy decisions, and more.

All of these can change swiftly and with little or no reference to each other. They can make the real estate environment uncertain and even frightening for inexperienced players.

All the more reason to turn to a trusted vendor advocate whose sole business is weighing up these factors with your property exclusively in mind.

Call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 to map out the perfect timing for your sale campaign.

4. How to find and appoint the right agent for you and your property

Think of finding the right agent for the sale of your home as you would recruiting a key member of staff. Would you hire a senior executive charged with major decisions and negotiations on one of the biggest deals of your life without a thorough credentials check?

Of course you'll look for an agency with a strong sales track record, with highly professional staff and preferably a long history of service in your local area. Successful vendors always shortlist at least three agencies for inspection and an apples-for-apples comparison check of their marketing proposal.

Start your search online

These days you can do a lot of your preliminary searching online. But ultimately, it's the personality, attitude and work ethic of the individual agent selling your property that will make the difference between a good and a great sale.

Not all agents—or houses—are equal. You need to be confident that the agent you eventually appoint will go into bat for you and your property determined to get you the best price they can, and to work hard for the result, not the commission.

Now is also a good time to appoint a trusted lawyer or conveyancer to handle the legal paperwork that has to accompany any Australian property sale.

Points to watch

These points may seem obvious, but selling your home can be a very emotional time. Even the most level-headed vendors can sometimes overlook or forget factors that can have a critical impact on the outcome of your sale:

- Check that the agency and the individual belong to a reputable real estate regulatory authority
- Make sure they listen to your wants and needs without trying to dictate terms upfront
- Determine that they're honest and transparent and willing to share full details of their short, medium and long term sales record
- Investigate their local presence and knowledge and that their expectations of price accord with recent history
- Be alert to their proposals for marketing. If the budget is heavily skewed towards agents publications and newsletters rather than online, the agents are putting their interests ahead of yours.

Questions to ask

Don't be shy to ask some quite pointed questions. Selling you home is a major issue, and you may not get a second chance at a first rate result:

- What is your sales record over the last 5 years for homes of our calibre?
- In percentage terms, how far above or below the estimate have your sales been for the last 10 houses sold?
- Whom do you prefer to represent: vendors or buyers?
- What is your commission rate and how did you reach that figure?
- Who will manage the marketing campaign?
- How will the campaign and the budget be split?

Some people can find these negotiations confronting. That's why appointing a vendor's advocate—an experienced individual who negotiate only for you as the seller, makes sense.

Call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 for expert and impartial advice on finding and appointing the best agent to sell your property.

5. How much should you pay for expert help to sell your property?

The old saying 'you get what you pay for' holds truer in selling your home than in most personal transactions because the stakes are so much higher. Nonetheless, the commission you pay your selected agent is your decision entirely.

The subject of real estate agents' payments in Australia generates a lot of heat. But accepting that nearly Australians sell through an agent, the numbers are pretty revealing.

According to the influential real estate portal, Sell My Castle (www.sellmycastle.com.au), as a nation we pay an average of 2.44 percent commission on a house sale. South Australia, at an average of 2.07 percent is the lowest and Tasmania at 3.26 is the highest. Victorians pay an average 2.13 percent.

Small Percentage, Big Dollars

If the difference in these percentages seem insignificantly close, look again in dollar terms. Suppose you sold your Hobart property for \$600,000. You would pay your agent \$19,560 in commission. At the other end of the scale, a \$600,000 house selling in Adelaide would attract a commission of \$12,420, a difference of \$7,140.

The same home selling in Melbourne would cost you \$12,780, \$360 more than Adelaide, but still a hefty \$6,780 less than our island neighbor.

Negotiating commissions

In essence, you have two choices when it comes to rewarding your agent for the sale:

- Fixed fee. You agree to pay the agent a specific dollar amount, regardless of the sale price. That way, you know exactly what you will pay. At the same time, the agent knows exactly what they will receive, which can lower the incentive to work harder for a higher price, and raise the incentive to sell quickly.
- Staggered or tiered commission. To encourage your agent to work harder for a higher return, you agree to pay an agreed percentage commission (even a little lower than average) on a sale price close to or at your reserve, then a much higher commission for anything beyond that price.

For example on your expected Melbourne sale price of \$600,000, you might agree to pay 2.0 for a price of \$600,000, and 10.0 percent for anything above that figure. As a result of the agent's extra work, the final sale price reaches \$650,000.

Here's what the numbers look like:

Commission on \$600,000—\$12,000

Commission on additional \$50,000—\$5,000

Result—while you've paid your agent an extra \$5,000, you're actually \$45,000 better off.

6. How should you spend your marketing budget?

A cocktail of jargon, sales claims and media promises can go to some people's heads when it comes to the marketing component of selling your home.

The truth is, the sale of your property is also an opportunity for some real estate agents to:

- market themselves
- build their brand
- profit from media kickbacks.

And all at your expense.

Scrupulous agents will make marketing recommendations aimed at the best possible return for you as the vendor while earning fair and equitable remuneration for themselves.

First though, the right agent will accurately identify your most desired targets—people in the right demographic, geographic and economic space to have an interest in buying your property. They will then design a marketing campaign and budget to achieve maximum impact on those targets.

Two primary factors—locality and reach

The campaign and budget rests on two primary factors—what the real estate sector calls 'locality' and 'reach'.

Locality promotion rests on the visible marketing of your home to potential buyers who have the time to physically search for real estate opportunities. The familiar For Sale board at the front of your house, posters in the real estate agent's window, letter box brochures, and advertising in local and community newspapers are examples.

Reach stretches further afield. Through strategic online promotion, it targets prospects who are not necessarily in your neighborhood but for whom the special features and benefits of your property are attractive.

Too many agents exploit uninformed vendors with expensive advertising campaigns in media designed to maximize the agents' returns, not the sellers'.

As a rule, more emphasis on a reach marketing and less on media will tell you your agent has structured your campaign and budget in your interests.

Because you and your property are unique, call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 for a unique assessment of your marketing needs.

7. How to prepare and present your property for the best possible result

Have you heard the tip of filling your house with the homely smell of freshly baked bread to get a higher price on auction day?

Old wives' tale or not, how you present your home for inspection and sale makes a significant difference to the final sale price. So much so that a thriving home staging industry has sprung up to prove the point.

These days, agents will advise you on the best ways to maximize the look and feel of your property to obtain best possible returns. From substantial renovations and make-overs to a lick of paint and a garden tidy-up, every property taken to market can benefit from a little TLC to help it appear at its winsome best for the right buyer.

Here are some of the best tips we have come across in more than 40 years of helping vendors achieve maximum gains from the sale of their home:

- **Exterior**—When you're selling a home and garden package, the garden and building frontage is like the face of a stranger. You'd rather be met with a smile than a frown. Fresh paintwork, clean windows, tidy and mulched beds, mown lawns, clean gutters, and swept paths all reinforce the impression of a serious asset requiring little thought, effort or money.

- Outbuildings—Invest the time and effort in cleaning out the inevitable stash of junk that accumulates in garages and sheds. The male of the species may not make the final homing decision, but a neat and workable man cave can underpin a powerful influence
- Interior—Start with the essential functional spaces. As the epi-centre of home life, the kitchen defines the heart and soul of the property. Consider a partial or full make-over, including a re-paint and new appliances, if your domestic temple isn't up to scratch. Every dollar invested in this setting will return four or five more at the sale. Ditto for your bathroom. Declutter as much as possible, and remove all 'walkable' valuables during inspections.
- Furniture and furnishings—Lesson number one: Furnished homes and apartments always sell faster and for higher prices than empty spaces. Purchasers buy what they see, not what they imagine. Feed their imaginations with your own homely layout. Hire if necessary—home staging businesses do all the work, and the return far outweighs the investment.

8. What to do for a successful sale

It's time for the sale. You're ready to commence the marketing campaign leading up to the sale. You've done all the hard work. You've

- Achieved complete clarity about the decision and timing of the sale
- Done all the research and found and appointed the right vendor's advocate
- Established the right marketing strategy and costs for the campaign
- Readied the property to look its best for the sale.

Auction or Private Sale?

Whether you're going to conduct the sale through an auction or a private sale, there are some time-tested tips you should follow. They'll ensure the process involves as little stress as possible for you and your family:

- Do not conduct Open for Inspection days yourself. Leave these to your agent, and remove yourself and your family from your home while they're in progress. Despite your best and most courageous intentions, strangers poking through (and often commenting on) your precious living space and possessions can be emotionally distressing.
- Don't accept early offers unless they are outstanding, and even then, share them with your agent or Vendor Advocate before accepting
- Don't accept conditional offers either before checking with your agent or Vendor Advocate and your lawyer or conveyancer that the offer is reasonable and that any condition or conditions are legal and acceptable
- If you decide to auction your property, be prepared for a highly stressful event. Encourage family members and friends to attend for support.
- Do not in any circumstances allow the auctioneer to announce that the property is 'on the market' until bidding has reached a level close to or even beyond your reserve (the price you're prepared to accept)
- When deciding on an acceptable offer, take into account the agent's range of estimates and all the costs associated with the sale
- Don't be cajoled into accepting settlement terms that don't suit your circumstances. Making two moves is expensive.

Free yourself of the emotional stress and let Brian Capp (0418 500 483) handle the sale itself, whether an auction or a private sale at no extra cost.

9. Five great benefits when you use a vendor advocate

When you entrust statewide Property Advocacy as your advocate, you receive these benefits:

1. We recommend and screen at least three reputable agents, including your own if you have one. That means peace of mind for you, knowing you're obtaining the best possible advice, service, and sales method from professionals we know and trust.
2. We negotiate the best commission rates on your behalf, which means reassurance that you will receive the best possible result at the lowest practicable cost.
3. We handle all negotiations with the selected agent, and analyse campaign progress. That relieves you of any form of pressure.
4. We act as your representative on sale day, bringing a veteran's skill to your cause. That means you obtain the highest conceivable price with none of the panic that can sometimes accompany a tense moment.
5. We serve you after sale day with advice on settlement and critical To Dos. That means more peace of mind for you knowing the many small glitches that can accompany the sale are looked after.

Call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 for an eye to eye explanation of the gains you'll enjoy using a vendor advocate.

10. Ask to see your vendor advocate's or agents' recommendations

As vendor advocates, we live by the value we give you in our service in getting your home to market and obtaining the best result possible.

This e-book offers 10 great tips for selling your property. But the value plus tip is in the proof. What people have experienced and how they feel about my services is the true benchmark of a successful advocate. See our website for testimonials from our satisfied clients.

Brian Capp at your service

As a licensed real estate agent and auctioneer, and vendor advocate for 40 years, I know how the industry works. As a senior myself, I love to help as a vendor advocate for older people. I enjoy bringing my skills and negotiating power to you at no extra cost, and with a distinctly better outcome than dealing with agents on your own.

Why not call Brian Capp on 0418 500 483 and turn my experience and knowledge to your advantage at no extra cost?