

FSBO Tips | Step by Step Home Seller's Guide

By [Jeanette Fisher](#)

If you're thinking about selling your home by owner, you need to understand a few facts. Although many sellers sell FSBO (For Sale by Owner), most home sellers turn to an agent for help. This happens when the unprepared seller gives up after a few frustrating weeks of wasting money on advertising with poor results.

Serious home sellers, who prepare their home for sale, can sell FSBO and make the commission selling their own home. Notice that it is not SAVE the commission; you will EARN the commission with extra work. It takes work to sell a house.

According to the National Association of Realtors, almost two-thirds of the people surveyed who sell FSBO say they wouldn't do it again themselves. Primary reasons included setting a price, marketing handicaps, liability concerns, and time.

If you want to hire yourself, here are a few tips for selling by owner.

FSBO Tips

Step #1 Change Your Thinking

The minute you decide to sell your home, start thinking about your house as a marketing product instead of HOME. You're selling real estate property, whether you have a house with land, a condo in a community, or a cabin in the woods.

Because your home may well be your largest asset, you need to think of your house as the investment it represents to your future. Capitalize on your most valuable asset, reduce home selling stress, take control of your sale, and make the most profit possible.

Your motivation for selling determines how you prepare your home for sale and the steps you take to sell. For instance, if you need to sell right away without spending any cash or charging up your credit cards to dress up your house, you would need to discount the sales price. If your home benefits from perfect condition you still could sell fast for a better price. However, if your home lacks pizzazz and you have time, you can make simple changes to sell

for top dollar. The key to making the highest profit possible is to make changes that don't cost a lot but give you a high return on your money and effort.

Step #2 Check out Your Competition

Like the professional marketer that you must emulate, research similar properties for sale. Take notes on house features, conditions, seller's enticements like owner financing, and rate properties in comparison to yours. You must understand what home shoppers will compare your home to. What is your home's best benefit to a prospective buyer? What makes your home better than any other house for sale?

Step #3 Make Your Home Stand Out

Prepare your home to sell. This doesn't just require deep cleaning and removing clutter. You must create a buyer's dream home. You might need to paint and redesign some rooms. This step means that you think about your prospective buyers and their emotional needs and desires.

- Start with the first glimpse of your home. Pretend you are a home buyer seeing your home for the first time. What do you see from your car? Make your home so inviting buyers will get out of their comforting cars and walk to your front door. Place fresh seasonal flowers, in pots or planted, along the front walk or by your front door.
- You might need to make repairs -- like lubricating squeaky door hinges, fixing dripping faucets, and making sure toilets flush properly.
- Exterminate. One bug or spider, dead or alive, can cause some buyers to leave immediately.
- Depersonalize. Pack your personal mementos and photographs. Give your buyers the opportunity to visualize their personal effects in your home.
- Clean or replace carpeting. You may be accustomed to the way your carpet looks, but what do buyers see? If you're selling to first-time home buyers, they most likely won't have the money beyond the down payment to pay for new carpeting. Move-up buyers expect perfection, even if they want to tear it all out.

- Stage your home. Take the extra care to stage each area of your home. Consider your target buyer's profile and stage spaces for this audience. First-time buyers with young children appreciate space for family games. Move-up buyers with older children appreciated spaces for entertaining. You could set up a board game for the younger market and a bar for older buyers.

Step #4 Prepare Your Services

Find a knowledgeable loan officer to help you with pricing and screening buyers. Loan officers can arrange an appraisal, give you a list of comparable sales, and qualify your buyers. Also, look for an escrow officer or closing agent to help you with sales contracts and disclosures. Many escrow offices double as title companies to help you with legal papers. Depending on your local customs, you may need a real estate attorney's help with the legal details.

Step# 5 Price to Sell

When you have worked so hard to prepare your home for sale, price it right. Keep your emotions out of this step. You must price your home right because buyers shop around and will know if your price is too high.

Step # 6 Market Your Property

Plan your advertising strategy. Write ads for your buyer. Don't copy real estate agent ads because they write to attract all buyers. Write your ad featuring the best benefit for your buyer—the advantage that sets your home apart. Create a sizzling home flyer and use directional signs as well as a yard sign.

When you show your home, keep the reasons you're selling to yourself. Don't give home buyers an upper hand by letting them know of any problems you may have. If they ask why you're selling, just tell them that your housing needs changed.

Step # 7 Sell to the Right Buyer

Sellers selling FSBO get many investor calls looking for a desperate home seller. To get full price for your home, you must sell to a home buyer who plans to live in your home. Avoid wasting your time with investors. Ask prospective buyers when they plan to move to determine if you're talking to a real buyer. Have your loan officer qualify a buyer before you accept any offer.

Step #8 Monitor Your Sale

Stage your home for the appraisal. Invite your buyers to return early in the sale to reinforce their desire and avoid buyer's remorse. Follow the [Home Seller's Checklist](#) and keep your sale on track.

[Sell Your Home for Top Dollar—FAST!](#)