

***10 Steps To FSBO
Success***

**FOR SALE BY
OWNER GUIDE**

**Compliments of
Doug & Jill Taylor**

kW DEVON WAYNE
KELLERWILLIAMS.

Dear Home Seller,

Congratulations on your decision to sell your home without a Realtor! This period in your life can be as rewarding as it is stressful. Our goal is to maximize your profit, minimize your stress and prevent you from getting scammed on what is likely, your largest single asset.

A few points to consider:

1. Think Like A Buyer.

You're not selling *YOUR* home, the buyer is purchasing *THEIR* new house. Your prospective buyer will show up to your doorstep with a dream... of a life moving forward in a new home. We hope that our guide will assist you in preparing your home so that both your dream and your buyer's dreams will be realized.

2. Marketing Your Home.

We will provide you with a professionally printed FOR SALE BY OWNER sign along with a free 800 number with a professionally recorded message describing your home. Our technology will allow prospective buyers to simply call from their cell phone to either schedule a showing, make an offer, or speak directly with you.

Technology has leveled the playing field!

Realtors used to have an overwhelming advantage in this area because they were the only professionals who could get properties listed in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS.) However, as professional Realtors we can personally attest to the success of canvassing neighborhoods, knocking on doors and networking to bring buyers and sellers together. In most instances, a yard sign, along with a Craig's List ad and Facebook post are simply not enough to sell your home.

We strongly recommend purchasing access to the MLS through via services such as ForSaleByOwner.com

Get out of your comfort zone and knock on every door in your neighborhood and surrounding community. Let everyone know that your house is for sale! We will provide you with a professionally designed flyer of your home. Be sure to print this out and hand to friends and neighbors.

3. Now... Think Like A Seller.

The ultimate goal is getting to the settlement table while maximizing your financial return. Navigating the complexities of the PA Real Estate Contract is only half the battle. The importance of negotiating price, terms, title and conveyancing are often overlooked in the process. These oversights can lead to a delayed settlement and in some cases completely derail the sale of your home. Don't leave money on the table or expose yourself to future liability. Consider hiring a real estate attorney. In our *10 Steps to FSBO Success Video* we recommend Michael Hawley, Esq. [Click here for Michael's contact info.](#)

Proven Ways To Sell Your Home

We've all heard the old adage, Location, Location, Location when it comes to real estate. While there's wisdom in those words, we also know that price and condition are equally as important when it comes to selling residential real estate.

According to the National Association of Realtors, the average purchaser looks at 10-12 properties prior to purchasing a home. In order to compete effectively with other sellers, homeowners must present their homes to the marketplace in an attractive, desirable condition. Our step-by-step guide will help you through the process.

The Journey Begins

Make a list. Walk outside and take a look at your home and property. View your home as if you are the buyer and it's the first time you're seeing the house. The human brain has a way of filtering out the same "noise" that it experiences every day. Accordingly, those shutters with missing slats or the siding that was damaged in last year's storm may not look so bad to you, but to your prospective buyer, they'll tell a different story.

What story does your home tell? Does your house tell a story of neglect or even abuse? No one wants anything that's been neglected or abused unless you happen to own an animal shelter. Now, with a fresh pair of eyes, write down everything that you see that could use a little TLC, or maybe even major repair. Then decide which repairs will have the greatest impact on your prospective buyer and the sale of your home.

Do the same thing on the inside. Walk through the front door. Will the buyer experience the proverbial "first kiss" here, or will it be when he or she enters the kitchen or some other area of your home? Write down everything and then work backwards until you have a list that will become your action plan.

Taylor Pro Tip: Ask for assistance from everyone in your family. After all, a shorter sales cycle will benefit everyone involved!

Reflect to Enhance

You know your home better than anyone else. Think back to when you first walked into your house. What attracted you to this property? These features should be among the first that you enhance. Ask your spouse and your children to add their own special positive reactions.

Your teenager may remember how he or she fell in love with your home years ago because of the tree they climbed in the backyard. Listen to your family's recollections and trust your own. The day you chose this house was likely one you remember vividly. Let those emotions be your guide to assisting your prospective buyer in feeling the same things.

Touch every room, the attic, the basement, garage and yard. Note at least one positive feature in each area. Highlight the items that attracted you when you first purchased the home as well as the desirable updates you've made throughout the years.

The following pages will guide you step-by-step through the process of preparing your home for sale to achieve the highest sales price that the market will allow. Your concentration will be in six areas: repairs, cleaning, neutralizing, space management, atmosphere and staging. Not all of these activities will be fun, but each is extremely important in the process of selling your home.

6 Key Points For Focus

Repairs

1. The rule of thumb is, if something needs to be repaired, fix it! There are probably many things in your home that simply become used over time, things that you have been "promising yourself" that you will attend to. Well, now is the time. The prospective buyer will mentally add up the cost of repairing all the minor flaws and will end up with a total that is generally much higher than what it would have cost for you to make the repairs. You might be saying to yourself, "The repairs aren't any big deal," but the buyer is thinking, "If the sellers didn't take care of THESE little items, then what about the roof, the furnace, etc.?" From experience, we know they will!

Repairs (cont'd)

2. Check all walls for peeling and loose paint.
3. When dealing with major repairs, it is important to remember that we're living in an era of full disclosure, litigation and vigilant professional home inspections. Accordingly, repair any problems with the major systems or offer the buyer an allowance to let the buyer decide which repairs to make after closing.
4. ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS disclose anything that you know about the property. Having been a consumer yourself, you know that buyers will more readily decide to purchase from someone they feel they can trust. The last thing you need is a lawsuit after the sale closes and the buyer finds out that you hid something. Any gain or profit made from the sale of your home may not be enough to cover the attorney's fees and court costs to defend yourself, even if you win!

Cleaning

Every area of the home must sparkle and shine! Each hour spent will be well worth it.

1. Clean all of the windows, including attics and basement.
2. Clean all wall-to-wall carpeting and area rugs. Clean and polish linoleum, tile and wooden floors. Consider refinishing wood floors if necessary.
3. Clean and polish all woodwork if necessary. Pay particular attention to the kitchen and bath cabinets.
4. Clean and polish all light fixtures.

Neutralizing

Be conservative when selecting colors for paint and carpet. The objective is to make your home appeal to the greatest number of potential buyers.

Ask yourself, “How many of the available buyers would be able to move into your house with their own furniture and not have to replace the carpet?” Position your home on the market to be as move-in ready to as many people as possible. Remember, the goal is to have the buyer mentally picture your home as theirs.

Taylor Pro Tip: Place your personal taste aside... the market is always demand driven. The average buyer will have a hard time looking beyond blue carpeting and bold wallpapers. Consider replacing unusual or bold colors with neutral tones. Two coats of off-white paint may be the best investment you can make.

Space Management

Create the illusion of more space.

1. Arrange furniture to give the rooms as spacious a feeling as possible. Consider removing furniture from rooms that are crowded. If necessary, place large furniture in storage.
2. Pack up collectibles... both to protect them and to give the room a more open feeling. Leave out just enough personal items to give your house a cozy feeling while still allowing the prospective buyer to envision themselves living in their new home.
3. Remove all clutter and make it a habit to pick up clothing, shoes and personal items each day in order to be ready for last minute showings.
4. Empty closets of off-season clothing and begin packing for your move. Organize storage areas to demonstrate the most efficient use of space. Leave as few items on the floor or shelves as possible.
5. Use light to create a sense of space. All drapes should be open. Turn on all the lights throughout the home.
6. The cost of a professional stager can add exponentially to the sales price of your home. In our *10 Steps to FSBO Success Video* we recommend Paula Travieso of [StagePack360](#)

Atmosphere

Consider the overall atmosphere of your home. Keep in mind your sense of smell as you go throughout this checklist. Create the feeling of your home being safe, warm and in good condition.

1. A clean-smelling house creates a positive image in the buyer's mind. Be aware of any odors from cooking, cigarettes, pets, etc. that may have an adverse effect on potential buyers. Remember that some people are much more sensitive to smells than others. Smokers rarely notice the odor of tobacco that fills their home, furnishings and fabrics, while pet owners may be oblivious to possible pet odor. Litter boxes should be emptied daily.

Taylor Pro Tip: You may use products such as carpet deodorizers, air fresheners, and room deodorizers... but the best strategy is to remove the source of the smell rather than just cover it up!

2. Unfortunately, often the only way to remove the smell of pet urine from flooring is to pull up the carpeting and padding and have them replaced. If this is preventing the sale of your home, don't hesitate to make the investment.
3. If smoking and cooking odors have permeated your home, have your carpets and furniture cleaned. Air out or dry-clean your drapes.
4. Mildew odors are another no-no. Don't allow wet towels to accumulate in hampers or dirty laundry to pile up in closets.
5. If your basement has a damp smell, run a dehumidifier. Purchase hanging moisture absorber packs such as DampRid® from your local hardware or home improvement store.
6. Once offensive odors are removed, consider adding pleasant ones. Recent studies have shown that humans have strong, positive responses to certain smells. Cinnamon, fresh flowers, baking bread, are all excellent ways to enhance your property.

Staging

This part of preparing your home for sale can be the most fun and involves the use of color, lighting and accessories to emphasize the best features of your home.

1. Study magazine ads or furniture showrooms to see how small details can make rooms more attractive and appealing. The effect of a vase of flowers, an open book on a coffee table, a basket of birch logs by the fireplace can make all the difference in a room. Be careful not to create distracting clutter however.
2. Soften potentially offending views, but always let light into your rooms. Replace heavy curtains with sheer panels. Never apologize for things you cannot change. The buyer will either decide to accept or reject the property regardless of the words you say. Just present the home in the best way possible with complete honesty.
3. Go through your photo albums and select pictures of your house and yard during all seasons. If hung at eye level in a well-lighted area, the pictures will speak for themselves and give you yet another selling edge.
4. Take advantage of natural light as much as possible by cleaning windows, opening shades and drapes, etc. Add lamps and lighting where necessary. Be sure that all fixtures are clean and have functioning bulbs.
5. In our *10 Steps to FSBO Success Video* we recommend Paula Travieso of [StagePack360](#)

The Exterior

Check your home for any needed maintenance, just as a buyer would. Repaint and/or touch up as necessary. Don't let the outside turn buyers off before the inside turns them on.

1. Color has the power to attract. A tub, or a basket of flowers on the front steps is a welcoming touch.
2. If you have a porch or deck, set the stage with pots of flowers and attractively arrange furniture.
3. Check to see that all doors and windows are in good working order. Give special attention to your home's exterior and front entry. Clean and paint floors if necessary. Remember, first impressions are likely to color the remainder of the house tour.

The Exterior (cont'd)

4. Wash all windows and replace any broken or cracked windowpanes.
5. Screens should be free of any tears or holes.
6. Inspect all locks to ensure that they are functioning properly.
7. Check for loose or missing shingles. Clean out gutters and down spouts. Touch up peeling paint on gutters.

Taylor Pro Tip: Invest in a new doormat that says, “Welcome”.

The Yard

1. Make sure the yard is neatly mowed, raked and edged.
2. Prune and shape shrubbery and trees to compliment your house. Remove overgrown landscaping that hides your home's features.
3. Consider adding seasonal flowers along the walks or in the planting areas.
4. Add an inch or two of bark mulch around your shrubs and trees.
5. It is important to devote at least one area of your yard to outdoor living. Buyers will recognize a set-up backyard scene and respond positively to it.

Taylor Pro Tip: Cover your picnic table with a fringed, red-and-white checked cloth, set out some plastic plates and glasses, bring out the barbequing equipment and buyers will almost smell the hotdogs cooking!

The Driveway

1. The driveway is not a place for children's toys. Not only are such things dangerous, the clutter is unsightly.
2. The surface of your driveway should be free of major cracks and defects... it's one of the first things a buyer will see when they drive up. Sweep and wash the driveway and walks to remove debris, dirt and stains. Repair and patch any cracks, edge the sides and pull up any weeds.

Also, check out our web series **#theWiRE** on www.taylorexperience.com where we take you on guided tours of beautiful homes throughout Chester and Delaware County PA.

We hope our detailed guide to selling your home without a Realtor has been helpful. Should you have any questions about this guide, photos, video or real estate in general, please don't hesitate to pick up the phone or email us.

Cheers,

Doug & Jill Taylor
www.TaylorExperience.com
610-255-7222
Keller Williams Realty
744 W. Lancaster Ave, Suite 125
Wayne, PA 19087