

Jennifer & Jason's Homeowner News™

Courtesy of Jennifer Lange & Jason Kogok ✉ www.luxurymovers.com

January 2014

Oh, No, I Found My Perfect Home

You are driving around town one day, when you stumble upon what seems like your dream home - and there's a For Sale sign in the yard. Curious, you call your favorite Realtor (the one who's been sending you these newsletters every month) and schedule a showing. The house turns out to be perfect. You can't wait to make an offer! Oh, but then you remember you don't have a buyer for your current home yet. Oops. Now what? Don't despair, you have a few options.

Plan A

If you have enough income to qualify for two mortgages, and enough cash in the bank for the down payment on the new home, your solution is simple. Buy the new home and then take your time selling the current one. However, this solution has at least two downsides.

First, paying for two mortgages can get expensive, especially if it takes months before the two closings. The way to deal with this (if you are lucky) is to try to take advantage of the real estate market's seasonal cycles. Typically, the market cools off during the winter months (cooling off the prices, too), and perks up in spring and summer (also perking up the prices). So, if you happen to buy the new home in winter, then hang on to the old one until the market "heats up," you might actually benefit from "buying low and selling high."

The second possible drawback of owning two homes at the same time is

that buyers interested in your current home may try to make lowball offers, hoping to take advantage of your situation. Here the solution is quite simple - don't divulge more information than necessary. "The home is available and ready for new occupants" - no further explanations are necessary.

Plan B

Now let's suppose you have enough income to qualify for two mortgages, but not enough cash for the down payment. You need to tap into the equity of your current home somehow. A simple way to do this is to get a home-equity line of credit. There is usually a small up-front fee, after which you make monthly payments on the amount you borrow until the home is sold. Here you get the same advantages and disadvantages as with Plan A, with one additional caveat: taking on this additional debt may impact your ability to qualify for the loan on your new home. So, before going this route, check with your lender.

Plan C

You don't have cash for a down payment, and Plan B would make it tough to qualify for your new financing. Provided you have a good credit history, a sizeable equity in your current home, and little other debt, a Bridge Loan may be the

(continued, Page 2)



Hello and welcome to the January issue of our newsletter! As always, we try to provide information that we hope will be useful to you. But this is only a small part of our service. Our true passion is helping people, like you, navigate the complexities of real estate. Do you plan to buy or sell soon? Or do you know someone who is? We are ready to use our knowledge, skills and dedication to help you, or anyone you refer to us, with what could be the biggest investment of your life. Just give us a call or send us an e-mail. Consultation is always free, and there is never any sales pressure.

Jennifer Lange & Jason Kogok

(919) 601-2012 (Jennifer)
jennifer@luxurymovers.com
(919) 602-5969 (Jason)
jason@luxurymovers.com

**COLDWELL
BANKER**

**HOWARD PERRY
AND WALSTON**

Each Office Is Independently Owned And Operated.

Four Secrets of Great Staging

“You never get a second chance to make the first impression,” the old saying goes. When it comes to selling your home, that first impression can easily be the difference between getting multiple offers, or none at all. What are the secrets that smart sellers use to make their homes appealing to buyers? There are about a dozen; we’ll share four quick ones here.

Light

Dark equals small, melancholy, and suspect. Light equals large, happy, and clean. Turn on all the lights in your home when you have showings. All of them! In the daytime too. Open all the blinds; let the natural light in. Let your home bask in all the light you can muster. Your home will exude warmth and lived-in quality that buyers will like without realizing why.

Declutter

Furniture is fine; anything on the furniture is usually not. Thoroughly declutter your home, then invite a trusted Realtor for a second opinion. Your Realtor will probably say that there is still too much clutter. Trust that advice. You have organized your home in the way you like best. But when selling you have to make it appeal to the average buyer, which means like the pictures in a magazine. Don’t take “get rid of your stuff” advice personally – you want to sell the home quickly and for a good price; the minimalist and super-clear approach is the way to do that.

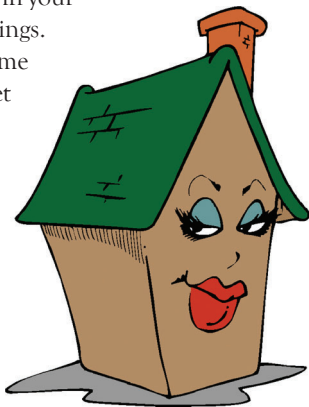
Pleasant Smells

This can be a touchy subject. Do you have pets? Many people can tell as soon as they open the door. Keeping the house clean is great, but there is often a latent whiff that many a buyer can detect. If you have carpets, have them shampooed. Or replaced. Does this cost money? Yes. But lowball offers do too. No pets; the home has no smells whatsoever? Great, you can

make it even better. When you expect showings, bake some cookies. Or sprinkle some vanilla on a baking sheet and stick it in a hot oven for a little while. Pleasant, homey smells appeal to people and wake up in them the feeling of home. You want that feeling in your potential buyers.

Fresh Paint

This is the home improvement with the biggest bang for your buck. Yes, it costs a bit of money. Yes, it takes a bit of time. But new paint can give your home that “just remodeled” feel. The last time we checked, the highest quality paint at Home Depot costs less than \$40 per gallon. A typical American three-bedroom home usually requires less than ten gallons. Roll up your sleeves, and you could increase the value of your home ten times more than the cost of that paint.



Your Realtor

At the beginning of this article we wrote that there are about a dozen secrets to staging a home. We could fit only four on this page. For the remaining eight or so, call or email us. Our pre-sale consultation is always free, and since we are not the sales types, it is also free of any obligation.

(continued from Page 1)

solution. This type of loan is specifically designed to provide short-term financing to “bridge” the gap between two closings. It can be structured to pay off your current mortgage completely (similar to a refinance), or to add to your current debt (similar to getting a second mortgage). Either way, you use the equity of your current home to help finance the new one.

Bridge loans are relatively simple to acquire, but they don’t come cheap. The rates and closing costs can be considerably higher than other types of financing, so consider one only if all other financing avenues have been exhausted.

Help is Available

Maybe you will choose to buy first and sell later, in which case one of the solutions we have just described may work for you. Or maybe selling first is a better option for you, in which case a different strategy may be needed. In either case, juggling the process of selling one home and buying another can be tricky. A good place to start is a consultation with a trusted Realtor. We will be happy to sit down with you, go over your particular situation, and help you draft a plan of action. The consultation is free, and there is no obligation - feel free to give us a call any time.

Free Special Report Available

The Seven Expensive Mistakes Sellers Frequently Make is a four-page special report that no seller should be without. If you are thinking of selling a home soon, arm yourself with the knowledge that can help you avoid expensive mistakes too many people have made. Request this report today – there is no cost or obligation.

jennifer@luxurymovers.com

jason@luxurymovers.com

Fire Safety Basics for Homeowners

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths from fires are in the top five causes of unintentional injury deaths in the United States. Here is how to reduce the danger in your home.

Fireplace

This is where the largest open flame in the house is, and therefore the highest potential danger. Use a screen that covers the entire opening of the fireplace. It must be heavy enough to stop rolling logs from falling out onto the carpet. The chimney must be inspected and cleaned regularly. Dirty or poorly maintained chimneys can result in a deadly roof fire.

Kitchen

The majority of fires that start in the kitchen occur due to unattended cooking. Therefore, the best way to prevent them is to stay in the kitchen while cooking and keep your eye on the stove. Clean cooking surfaces regularly to prevent the build-up of grease, and don't wear long, loose clothing near an open flame. If a pan catches on fire, don't use water but baking soda to extinguish it.



Bedroom

Fires that start in bedrooms are often due to misuse of electric cords, such as overloading circuits, poor maintenance and running the cords under rugs. Another common source of fires – electric devices. For example, space heaters that fall over or are placed near something combustible. Only buy devices that are safety rated by UL (Underwriter Laboratories). In the case of space heaters, choose models that have the feature where the heater automatically shuts off if it falls over, and make sure you place it at least three feet from anything that could catch on fire.

Smoke Alarm

This is the single most important means of preventing residential fire fatalities. It

provides an early warning signal that allows you and your family to escape in time. There are two types of smoke alarm sensors – ionization and photoelectric. Ionization sensors are designed to detect flaming, fast moving fires, while photoelectric sensors are better at detecting smoldering, smoky fires. Which is better for your home? Both. There are smoke alarms with dual sensors which detect both types of fire, and those are the ones the U.S. Fire Administration recommends.

Children & Fire

Kids are responsible for over 35,000 fires annually. No surprise here – matches and lighters are fascinating toys to them, and “secret places” where kids like to play, such as closets or under the bed, are easy places to catch fire. So, be careful where you leave matches, lighters and other ignitable objects. Check places where your kids like to play and look for any signs that your kids were playing with fire. And teach children that fire is not a toy.

The Escape Plan

One can never completely eliminate the possibility of a fire, so having an emergency evacuation plan is important. You should have at least two escape routes out of each room. Keep in mind that some of these routes might involve getting onto the adjacent roof, or using a ladder. Check all your windows and verify that they are not stuck and that screens are easily removable. If you have security bars, make sure that all family members know how to unlock and open them quickly. Designate a meeting place away from the house so that no one has to look for someone who is already safe. Finally, conduct a family fire drill periodically – making sure that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency will give you additional peace of mind.



Q: As a seller, should I agree to let the buyer occupy the home before the closing?

A: If you've already vacated the home, and the world was perfect, this would be no big deal. But the world is not perfect. First, your transaction may fall through for some reason, and then you are stuck with someone living in your property while you try to find another buyer. Will they move out fast? Will they leave the home in the same condition they found it? Second, once the buyers move in they'll start to feel at home, and they might decide to make a few "improvements." Again, if the transaction falls through you are stuck with these "improvements," and if the work wasn't done right it can affect the home's marketability. Third, the buyers may "discover" repairs that "need to be done" but insist that you pay for them. This is after you signed the contract but before the closing. More headaches. For obvious reasons we are no fans of early possessions. But you may like the buyers, decide that they are trustworthy, and grant them an early possession. If you go this route, make sure you have a written agreement with them that spells out the dos and the don'ts. An addendum to your contract could work, but an actual lease agreement is better. Just a handshake is out of question. Ask your Realtor for help, or consult a real estate attorney.

(919) 601-2012 (Jennifer)
(919) 602-5969 (Jason)
www.luxurymovers.com



Jennifer Lange & Jason Kogok

Coldwell Banker
Howard, Perry & Walston
5000 Falls of Neuse Rd., Ste 100
Raleigh, NC 27609



January 2014

ARCHITECTURE CORNER

MID-CENTURY MODERN

Following the end of the World War II, a small but influential group of architects wanted to give the average American family a style of home that would be functional, comfortable, and that would “promote a healthy lifestyle.” The Mid-Century Modern (MCM) was that style. Based on the philosophy of simplicity, harmony with the surroundings, and the effort to bring the outside in, the MCM homes conquered countless suburbs of the 50’s and 60’s.

The features that make the MCM homes easy to identify are flat, rectangular planes of walls and roofs; large windows, sliding doors, and airy, light interiors. Rather than sticking out of the surrounding area, these homes are built to gently fit in, as if the builders wanted their creation to become a part of the nature, not conquer it. The purpose of large windows and glass doors was to let as much of the surroundings in. The big reason for this was promoting the healthy lifestyle – the MCM architects believed that being surrounded by nature would encourage people to get out more and become more active.

The interior of MCM homes is characterized by openness. The then-new post and beam construction allowed for fewer and lighter walls, which meant more light and more views. Where privacy was needed, etch matte glass panels or partial walls were preferred to solid walls in order to allow more light. The bedrooms were often small but thoughtfully and functionally laid out; the living and family rooms were big. This was done intentionally to encourage occupants to spend time together instead of being cooped up in their own corners of the house.

This style never really fell out of favor; instead its philosophy and features were adopted by later architects to be reused in new styles. The state that today has the highest number of original Mid-Century Modern homes is California, with the city of Palm Springs being this style’s unofficial capitol.

