

For Full-Service Real Estate Services Call Marla at 760-521-2787

*When It's Time to Get Moving*<sup>SM</sup>

# A 10 Step Guide For Sellers

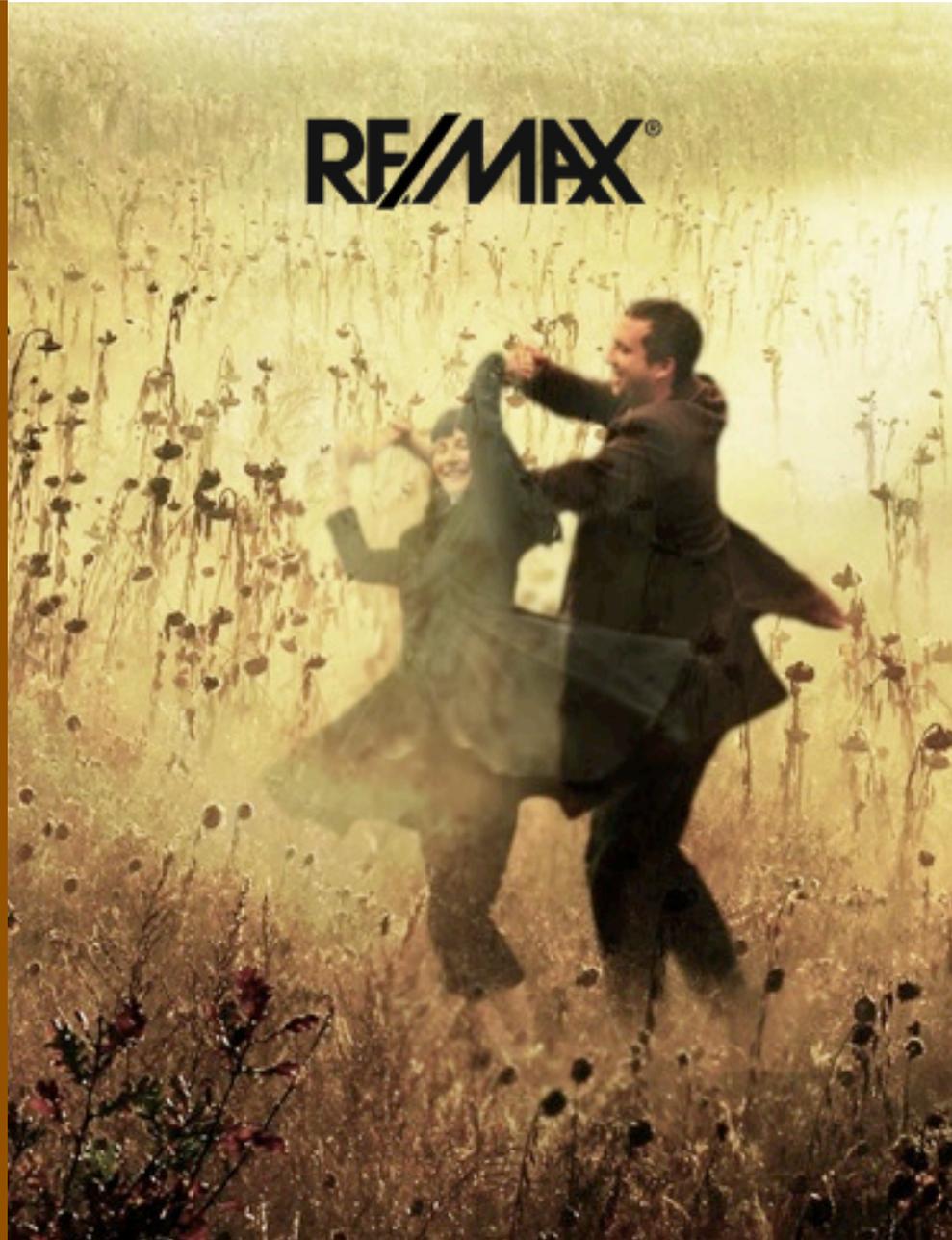
*Prepared & Presented by*  
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# Allow Me To Introduce Myself



*My name is Marla Cruickshank. I specialize in Bonsall, Fallbrook, De Luz, Rainbow & coastal north county San Diego real estate. I'm focused on this area because I'm convinced that there is no other region in San Diego county that offers such an incredible combination of location, near perfect weather, open spaces, scenic beauty and small-town friendliness. I really believe in this area and that's why I own a home*

*here and base my business here.*

*The truth is, I'm really passionate about real estate. I live, sleep, and breathe this areas' homes and lifestyle. I'm also supremely committed to my clients. It's really personal. Having bought and sold many of my own homes, I know first hand what it's like to be both a buyer and a seller — I've been in your shoes and I understand your needs. It's this core understanding about what buyers and sellers want, that is the foundation of everything that I do. Ultimately, my goal is to provide to you the same level of accessibility, expertise, and superior service that I expect from others. I'll deliver.*

*Sincerely,*

*Marla*

**Personal:**

*Previous Career Experience:* Business administrator in the construction and publishing industries. Small business owner.

*Interests:* Volunteering, gardening, walking, travel

*Married (to Keith):* high-tech/internet entrepreneur and marketing consultant

*Son (Tyler):* Engineering Major, University of California at Irvine (UCI)

# My 10 Steps to Successfully Selling Your Home

## 1. DECIDE TO SELL — OR NOT

There are many reasons for selling a home. Perhaps you want more space for hobbies or a growing family. Or maybe you're in a mood to transition into a smaller or larger home. Perhaps a new job or retirement brings fresh opportunities and the chance to relocate. Whatever the reason, only you will know if you are ready to sell your home and start the next chapter in your life. Knowing that you *want* to sell your home is the *critical* first step on the process of successfully selling your home.



*Question: Are you ready?*



## 2. TARGET A SELLING SEASON

You may wonder when is the best time of year to sell your home. In most areas, more homes are sold in the late spring and early summer. This is when families with children move to new homes so that they can settle in for the start of the new school year. *But this peak selling time does not mean that sellers are only successful during this time.* On the contrary. It is also true that during a slower time of year, say during the December holiday season, there may be fewer buyers looking — but there may also be fewer homes on the market. As a result your home is likely to stand out more easily, because fewer for-sale homes will compete with your property. It turns out that no matter what time of year, supply and demand for housing is generally in balance, so ***most experts will say that the best time to sell is usually when you are ready.***



*Question: When are you most likely to put your property on the market?*

- Now
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- Unsure



### 3. PICK AN OPTION: DO IT YOURSELF — OR HIRE A REALTOR®

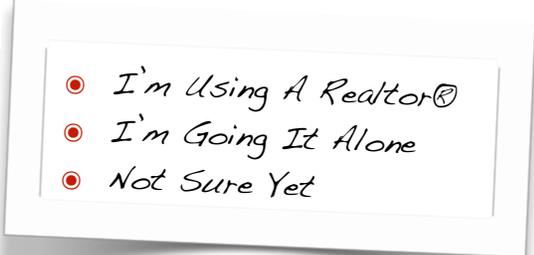
Some homeowners consider the option of selling their home by themselves, but in today's competitive marketplace, there are challenges you should consider before making a choice.

**a.)** First, selling a home has become increasingly complex. In recent years, the number of legal disclosure requirements and complex procedures have skyrocketed. This makes it difficult and even a legal liability to represent yourself in a real estate transaction.

**b.)** Because of this complexity and risk in “For Sale By Owner” (FSBO) transactions, many **buyers** seek exclusive representation by a professional Realtor® *before* they approach any FSBO seller. In these cases, the *buyer's* agent commissions must still be paid, but now the FSBO seller is “going it alone” and at a disadvantage. A Realtor® on your side can smooth out rough spots in the selling process, advocate on your behalf, and help deliver the best price and terms for your home.

**c.)** The entire selling process is time-consuming and often confusing. A Realtor® can lighten the load, taking on most of the tasks required during the often challenging selling process. A dedicated professional Realtor® on your side can mean the difference between success and failure.

**d.)** And finally and most critically, the best Realtors® have access to, and can effectively put to use, a variety of marketing tools, services, networks, and marketing skills that generate the highest price for your home.

- 
- I'm Using A Realtor®
  - I'm Going It Alone
  - Not Sure Yet

*Question: Are you hiring a Realtor®?*

## 4. GIVE YOUR HOME A TUNE UP

There are often small enhancements or improvements you can do to your home that will have big payoffs when it's time to sell. Major capital improvements, like adding a bathroom, will rarely give you an immediate payback, but cosmetic improvements can help you sell faster and at a higher price. New paint works wonders. A landscape clean-up will help give your home maximum curb appeal. And finally, the cheapest and often easiest way to make your home shine is to reduce clutter and clean your home from top to bottom. My view is that it pays to get a neutral third party opinion on how your home will show to potential buyers. Fresh eyes always help. Ask your Realtor® for feedback. It's important to consider these ideas.

*Question: What repairs, enhancements, and clean up might you consider in preparation for listing your home?*

- 
- *Clean yard*
  - *Clean house*
  - *Replace carpet or worn Flooring*
  - *Paint*
  - *Make repairs*
  - *Re-arrange Furniture & Stage my Home*

## 5. DETERMINE YOUR LISTING PRICE

The most important factor in successfully selling your home hinges on one key factor —how you price it. In today’s tough market, it’s challenging to be objective about real estate pricing, but it helps to step back and make an objective comparison between your home and other similar homes in your market area. By reviewing recent sales histories and noting the current inventory of comparable homes, you can begin to get a picture of how buyers might value your home.

A qualified real estate professional has access to the data you need. This data combined with a Realtor®’s objectivity and knowledge of local conditions are valuable benefits. During this phase of the process you should carefully consider how your home compares with other homes. There are various pricing strategies for setting price, getting showings, and ultimately selling your home.



*Question: How does your home compare to the competition*

- *It's Like New*
- *It's In Perfect Condition*
- *Great Neighborhood*
- *Recently Upgraded Kitchen*
- *Recently Upgraded Baths*
- *No Repairs Needed*
- *Great Views*
- *Perfect Floorplan*

## 6. THINK ABOUT CREATIVE WAYS TO ATTRACT OFFERS

In addition to correctly setting your listing price, you can often get a faster result by considering the following options:

- a) List Below Retail Price
- b) Offer Owner Financing
- c) Pay Buyer's Closing Costs
- d) Agree To Periodic Price Reductions
- e) Commit To A Reasonable Listing Duration
- f) Pay Above Market Commission
- g) Make Sure There Is Easy Access
- h) Allow A Yard Sign
- i) Provide For A Redecoration Allowance
- j) Allow Immediate Possession At Close Of Escrow
- k) Include Extras Like Appliances Or Home Theater
- l) Pre-order Pest Inspection
- m) Provide A Home Warranty/Plan
- n) Avoid Contingencies
- o) Complete Obvious Repairs
- p) Complete This "Get Moving" Guide.

*Question: Will you consider one or more of these incentives? **Yes — No***

## 7. LAUNCH THE MARKETING CAMPAIGN (YOUR REALTOR®'S TASK)



Your home is unique and the approach used to sell it should be tailored to fit your special circumstances. A well designed and executed marketing campaign is essential to getting the best result. For success, you need an attractive package that makes your home irresistible. It starts with printed and online advertising material featuring great photos and professionally written descriptive copy. Getting these photos and descriptions into the regional Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and other online databases is a core requirement. But an MLS listing is just the starting point. The marketing program for your home should also include a variety of other components including in-person selling, internet marketing, open houses, and social networking. (I describe my marketing program on page 14).

*Question: Will you cooperate with any of the following marketing programs?*

- *I will Allow a Yard Sign*
- *I Will Allow a Photo Shoot*
- *I will Allow Open Houses*

## 8. GET SHOWINGS

Our goal is to get quality, qualified showings that sell your home. Generating interest in and traffic through your home is great, but with traffic will come the challenge to keep your home ready at all times. This is where you can really make a difference by keeping your home organized, clean, and ready to show. The fewer restrictions you have on times to show the better. Consider each showing to be the most important showing, because you never know when that right buyer may walk through your home.

After each showing, we always want feedback so we know how buyers react. If we know what buyers think we can sometimes take corrective action to fine-tune how we sell your home. I will contact you after each showing to debrief you on the buyers comments and reactions.

*Question: Are you ready for showings? **Yes — No***



## 9. NEGOTIATE INCOMING “OFFERS TO PURCHASE”



When an offer comes in, it’s time to act. You will have three choices; You can accept the offer, you can reject of offer, or you can make a counter-offer. Bear in mind that your counter-offer can be rejected by the buyer, accepted, or countered once again. It is during this negotiating phase that an agent can really help provide a buffer between you and the buyer, giving you the time and space to make the right decision.

Naturally, the most important component of the offer will be the proposed purchase price, but you should look at more than that. Sometimes the potential buyer will also include in the “*offer to purchase*” a variety of clauses and contract additions that could amount to thousands of dollars in “hidden” discounts or fees — adjustment that may lower your net proceeds. We want to identify and discuss these adjustments as you review any offer.

With any incoming offer, we also want to look at the ability of the buyer to actually close the transaction. Are they pre-approved for financing? If they are paying cash, do they have verifiable assets? The quality and character of the buyer can have a dramatic effect on how quickly and easily you can complete the sales transaction. Your Realtor® can help you review offers and gather the data you need to make more informed decisions.

## 10. ENTER ESCROW AND CLOSE THE SALE



A sales agreement does more than just set a purchase price for the home. It will also contain the terms and conditions that must be met before your home is sold. The process of satisfying these terms is handled by opening an *escrow* for the transaction. Escrows are a process where a neutral third party assures that all the requirements of the sale are completed before the sale is deemed final. During typical escrows, home inspections are completed, financing is arranged, title reports are ordered, along with a variety of other potential tasks.

Very short closing periods are possible. More typically however, escrows are completed within 30-45 days of an accepted offer. Postponing the closing beyond that timeframe is risky because interest rate locks may expire. If rates go up, the buyer may no longer qualify for a loan resulting in a failed escrow and loss of the sale.

The actual ordering of work and processing of documents occurs via faxes, phone, and mail and your Realtor® will assist you in the process. Along

the way, the escrow officer will add and subtract various taxes, adjustments, and fees owed or payable to each party. At closing, which may occur in-person or virtually, a final reconciliation of funds will occur and moneys will be transferred to the seller and title passes to the buyer. The transaction is then complete. *Congratulations! Your home is now sold.*

# *Here Is How We Work Together*

The process of selling your home is a partnership. While I'll do most of the heavy lifting, you can help by gathering important documents and materials early in the process. Let's just go step by step. It's easy.

- Collect a Spare key to your home
- Collect Your Utility Bills
- Get a Copy of Your Current Property Tax Bill
- Collect A Copy of Your Title Insurance Policy
- Collect a Copy of Homeowners Association Documents
- Get Copy of Condominium Documents
- Covenants, Conditions, & Restrictions
- Collect Copies of Recent Inspections: Pest, Dry Rot, Roof & Septic, Well (if applicable)
- Complete Current Mortgage Information Sheet
- Complete Property Disclosure Statement
- Complete Disclosure & Acknowledgement of Agency

# My “Target Direct” Marketing Plan

In today’s rapidly evolving real estate landscape, change is everywhere. Change in demographics, markets, behaviors, and technologies. Keeping pace with that change is my constant obsession. And that’s why I’ve embraced the latest technologies and marketing strategies, so that I can deliver the results you want — ultimately matching the right buyer to your home.

## **PRO COPY, PHOTOS, FLYERS, ETC.**

Once you’ve committed to listing your home with me, I immediately task my team with getting photos of your home, writing professional copy, and getting any additional materials prepared so that we can quickly integrate this data into the master MLS database and other marketing materials, online and off.

## **MLS LISTING**

When I list your home, we will always submit it for inclusion in the San Diego MLS database. What appears in the MLS listing is of critical importance, because this information is electronically delivered far and wide — virtually across the planet. First and foremost, we want to reach the professional network of regional Realtors@s who access home listings through a “professional only” MLS search database. But we also want to make sure that the appropriate MLS data for your home is also sent out to a variety of publicly accessible database search sites including Realtor.com, Zillow.com, Yahoo.com, and Google real estate, and many others. Getting your listing right and formatted for easy syndication to all these networks is my team’s highest priority.

## **SIGNAGE**

Subject to your approval, I will place of a yard sign (a “For Sale” sign) in front of your home

which signals to the market that your home is for sale. Yard signs tells prospective buyers that your home is on the market.

## *(Luxury Marketing)*

For luxury properties that qualify, we use *Re/Max Collection* branding and exclusive *Re/Max Collection* yard signage.



## **PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH**

I am in constant contact with other Real Estate professionals in the area and I make direct calls to my network to let them know of my new listings. Each week I attend the Bonsall/Fallbrook Realtor® caravan tour, where new homes are put on exclusive tour for other area real estate professionals. During the caravan’s pre-tour announcement session, I will take the opportunity to highlight your home and provide each agent with a professionally prepared flyer and information sheet. During the entire listing period, I make sure that I stay in touch with other professionals, remind them about your home, and always promptly follow-up on questions and inquiries.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH**

I am always networking in my marketing areas, promoting my listings, building business and keeping my pulse on the market. I’m always promoting your home.

## **OPEN HOUSES**

Professional Realtors® are divided on the value of holding open houses, sometimes because it means more work for the agent, but I can personally attest to the fact that open houses really do sell homes. Getting buyers inside your home is major step in the process of selling. So, while I don’t require you to allow me to hold open house showings, if you agree, I’ll be more than happy to schedule dates.

## **CRAIGSLIST ADS**

Craiglist is fast becoming a powerful tool for creating additional exposure for your home. In particular, I like to use Craiglist postings to announce “Open House” dates that we may have scheduled for your home.

## **FEATURED LISTING ON MY WEBSITE/ BLOG**

I’ll post a dedicated announcement in my blog, showcasing your home.

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