How homesellers can take cues from online dating

It’s no secret that the internet has revolutionized real estate. Many also agree that online dating sites have transformed the process of finding partners.

In fact, because the methods for both are very similar, homeowners looking to sell could take some cues from platforms such as eHarmony and Match.com.

Before the internet

Prior to the worldwide web becoming the backbone of modern society, people met face-to-face in traditional ways: They attended the same schools, churches, clubs, work environments and more.

With increasing mobility, the ability to foster meaningful relationships decreased and the speed of life escalated as society shifted from being rural-based to urban-centric.

As better employment opportunities unfolded, workspace competitiveness increased, encouraging many to pursue careers before finding life partners.

Correspondingly, recent U.S. Census data revealed an increase in the average marrying age. With less access to face-to-face dating environs, the degree of difficulty in locating partners multiplied exponentially.

Enter online dating sites.

Why so popular?

Initially ridiculed, online services have become accepted avenues for hopefuls to find relationships.

Saddled with excessive career obligations, busy singles have embraced dating sites en masse. They’ve discovered that any prospect is only as viable as his or her profile: the better the information and pictures, the higher the probability of a match.

Having watched many find wonderful mates through online sites, there’s no doubt it is working in ever-increasing numbers. And once couples connect and cement their relationship, the next logical step is to go back online and use the same process — to find a home.

Why home sales?

With time compressed in every aspect of life, couples no longer have time to randomly go out looking for open houses. Instead, they scour online sites for potential digs.

Properties with extensive preparation, high-quality pictures and detailed information are those most likely to get a “date.” With a short list in hand, the couple heads out to find a match.

Sellers who do not understand this new reality find themselves disadvantaged, with no idea why no one is showing up to view their home.

Image matters

Although it’s clear many seller wannabes are fully onboard with homes that have been upgraded, staged and feature professional pictures and 3-D tours, a casual glance at any property website reveals many — that aren’t.

With the numbers of buyers looking for move-in ready homes steadily increasing, properties that shine get swiped right, while the remainder — well, you get the idea.

Not all agree with the new rules.

Recently a friend, searching for a spouse, refused to “play the game” (his words). Posting a grungy picture, he also limited his profile details.

An agonizing number of weeks went by without a single hit before he gave in and updated his profile. He immediately got a number of replies, including one from the girl who is now his wife.

My top three recommendations:

1. **Properly prepare**

Most people wouldn’t dream of showing up for a photo shoot in a stained T-shirt with unkempt hair.

Homes are the same. Homeowners should do everything within their budget to make their home look as good as possible.

2. **Hire professional help**

Want to make an impression on a dating site? Don’t cut your hair yourself, hire a professional.

Want your listing to sizzle? Hire a property prep professional who will help establish a budget and then coordinate the process so the home sizzles.

3. **Take professional pictures**

Keep your selfies on your phone. Get studio-quality shots and a 3-D tour, if possible.

Not all sellers are interested in the new reality. Unfortunately, like it or not, how a home looks online dictates whether your seller ends up with a match, with the buyer of your dreams.

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