# When is the best time to sell your client's house?

We all know what happened to the housing market over the last decade.

The lingering effect is that homeowners who paid too much are still stuck with houses worth less today than what they paid. Many wish they had sold when they had the chance and are impacted by markets that declined greatly since the peak.

Sellers decide to move for a variety of reasons, and how they price their house depends on a number of factors including: what they owe, what they need to buy another house, a refusal to sell for less than what they paid, assumptions about what they think their house is worth, and other thoughts.

Part of a listing agent's challenge is "qualifying" the seller — determining what their plans are. If their plans are not realistic, such as asking for an unattainable price to balance their desired purchase, a real estate professional should really think about whether to accept the listing. At the very least, listing agents must properly advise their client so that they have appropriate expectations.

Many who plan to buy and/or sell are motivated by need; others by choice. Which is it? Are they motivated by money or time?

If by money, they need to remain patient, as that could take longer; if motivated by time, they need to price appropriately and adjust according to results.

The real estate market is a cold, detached conglomeration of data; you can wait for it to change but you cannot force it. Some key questions to assess with your client include:

- What is the cost of not selling now?
- If you are selling to buy, which happens first?
- Will the seller who owns the house that interests your client accept an offer contingent on your selling or settling your house?
- Are you averse to accepting an offer without having a specific house in mind to buy?
- Will the buyer interested in your house allow you time to find a house?

Unless a client can carry two mortgages, selling and buying are interdependent. Manage that coordination for maximum financial protection.

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