

**Realistic Expectations for Changing Times**  
**Submitted by the Richmond Association of REALTORS®**

It's no secret that today's real estate market is a departure from the market of years prior. Gone are the days of 24-hour listings and multiple offers on a property. In the current market, inventory outnumbered buyers. This shift means that sellers in today's market need to approach the task of selling their home with realistic expectations, and take extra steps to ensure that their property appears desirable to potential buyers.

For those looking to sell a home in this slower market, the best way to approach the situation is with a positive, but realistic attitude. Homeowners need to be prepared for the fact that their home might be on the market for several weeks. Whereas in the past a home would often sell in days, having a home on the market for two months is a more likely scenario now. Knowing this from the beginning will help you plan adequately when listing and pricing your home.

Now more than ever, it is important to price your home reasonably right when it goes on the market. Your REALTOR® will be able to guide you in the right direction, and offer advice based on what other homes in your area are selling for. Setting a reasonable price upfront is the best way to reduce days on market and ensure that your home will get plenty of traffic from potential buyers. Remember, buyers have more choices than ever; if your home is unreasonably priced, they will be more likely to discard it as an option before ever stepping inside.

Having your home in move-in condition can also be a crucial factor in influencing a buyer's decision. Buyers may not be interested in a home they see as a "fixer-upper" – especially if there are similar houses to choose from that have already been upgraded. Again, your REALTOR® may have suggestions about home improvements and repairs that you can make before putting your house on the market, such as repainting walls or replacing hardware. Anticipating what the buyer will ask for in advance cuts down on the time that would be spent making improvements before a new owner can move in.

It helps to "neutralize" your home as much as possible before agents begin showing it. Removing personal items and excess clutter makes it easier for potential buyers to envision the home as their own. Create a canvas that allows buyers to imagine their furniture and belongings in the space from the first time they walk through the home. You may even want to consult a professional home stager to assist in arranging furniture and décor in an appealing way.

Although the market has slowed, there will always be buyers looking for homes. With a positive attitude, a little preparation, and the help of a REALTOR®, you can set your home apart from the rest and do what it takes to get your property sold.