



WELCOME TO CHICAGO'S ULTIMATE **HOME SELLER'S** **GUIDE**



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Who Are We?

Mark Kaplan of Marc Construction and Development, Helaine Cohen of Chicagocondofinder.com, and Ted Widen of ChicagoScene.com have teamed up to help Chicagoans buy, sell or lease a house or condo. Together we have formed an extraordinary team of real estate professionals with many years of experience. We have helped thousands of buyers, sellers, and renters successfully complete their transactions in a timely and efficient manner, while minimizing their stress and anxiety.

Mark has decades of experience and has helped people buy and sell over a billion dollars in real estate. Mark has had the opportunity to develop many residential and commercial developments in Illinois, Wisconsin & a residential development on the top of Bald Eagle Mountain at Deer Valley Ski Resort in Utah.

Helaine is the founder of ChicagoCondoFinder.com, which caters to the downtown condo market. She has consistently been recognized among the Top 1% of brokers in Illinois. Her extensive market and building knowledge, neighborhood insights and dynamic marketing plans capitalize on the latest tech tools, and provide prime exposure to serve the needs of buyers and sellers.

Ted is the founder of ChicagoScene.com, and Publisher of Chicago Scene magazine. His company is well known for producing major events such as the New Year's Eve Party at the Drake Hotel and the Chicago Scene Boat Party, which has been taking place for over 20 years.

We are all affiliated with Berkshire Hathaway Home Service of Chicago one of the top real estate companies in Chicago and the USA.



Agent Responsibilities

- **Fiduciary responsibility:** A duty of loyalty is one of the most fundamental fiduciary duties owed by an agent to his principal. This duty obligates a real estate broker to act at all times solely in the best interests of his principal to the exclusion of all other interests, including the broker's own self-interest.
- **Undivided Loyalty:** The agent must act only in your best interest and put that above their own and those of other people. The agent must avoid conflicts of interest and must protect your negotiation position at all times.
- **Confidentiality:** The agent must keep information confidential, even after your relationship ends. Confidential information includes your personal information, information about the property, and information about the transaction (except information the law says must be disclosed or information you agree to disclose).
- **Full disclosure:** The agent must tell you, in writing, about the services they will provide. They must also tell you everything they know that might affect your relationship or influence your decision in a transaction, even if they don't think it's important. This includes any conflicts of interest, for example when they act (or are planning to act) on behalf of any other person in a transaction. The only information they can't give you is confidential information from another agency relationship.
- **Obedience:** The agent must obey all your lawful, reasonable and ordinary instructions. If you insist on something unlawful, the agent must refuse and consider ending your relationship and the agreement.
- **Reasonable care and skill:** The agent must exercise reasonable care and skill in all their duties. They must meet the standard of a reasonable and competent member of the real estate industry.
- **Full accounting:** The agent must account for all money and property they receive while acting on your behalf. Everything a client puts in the care of an agent – for example, money, keys or documents – is returned when the agreement ends.



Costs Associated with Selling a Home

- **Staging:** Preparing your home to be marketed for sale. You definitely want your home to be shown in the best fashion possible. This could include: thorough cleaning, painting, carpeting, repairing any issues that might detract from the home's appeal.
- **Mortgage:** The biggest cost to most sellers is paying off the remainder of the balance owed on the mortgage(s).
- **Realtor Fees:** As you will see below, we put in an exhaustive amount of time and effort to get your home sold, and obviously at closing you are responsible for paying the realtor fees.
- **Lawyer Fees:** Once an offer has been accepted, the lawyers get involved in reviewing the purchase contract and setting up the closing.
- **Closing Fees:** Before closing your attorney and closing officer will deliver to you the comprehensive list of your costs at closing. This will include any and all Title costs, Municipal fees, proration's for both interest and real estate taxes and any credits due to the seller.



Choosing Your Real Estate Agent

For most people, their home is one of the largest financial investments that they have made. That is why it is exceptionally important to choose an agent that is going to go above and beyond when working to get your home sold for top dollar in the least amount of time. Your agent can make a huge difference worth thousands of dollars in the ultimate sales price of your home. Your agent will act as your quarterback throughout the selling process and will recommend the best team of professionals to help you successfully close your transaction.

All the people involved in a real estate transaction





Real Estate

CMA Report

Analysis of Your Home (CMA)

A thorough understanding of the market, neighborhood, and specific location within your community will assist in determining the real value of your home. The next step is to carefully evaluate your home by utilizing a CMA or Comparative Market Analysis. This analysis will include all homes that are currently on the market. It will also include all homes that have sold in the last 12 months. We believe that you deserve to be well informed and confident in the information that is provided to you. By studying the CMA you can identify the best price for your home to be placed on the marketed.

Reasons for pricing your home correctly:

- The price that you and your agent agree upon has the greatest effect of determining the amount of time it will take to sell your home.
- When your home is priced properly buyers are eager to view your home and a better chance of an offer being presented.
- Today's buyers are more educated than ever, they know when a home is overpriced and will often times wait until the price is reduced.
- If a property is not priced right it can become stale. When buyers see a home that has been on the market for a lengthy period of time, they begin to wonder what is wrong with the property.
- If a home is over priced many buyers will not write an offer. The reason is that offers are typically written close to fair market value, and if the home price is considerably higher than the true value, they do not want to offend the sellers and waste their time.



Let's Hit The Market! Listing Your Home

Once the list price has been agreed upon, it is time for us to get the home ready for the market, which includes (but is certainly NOT limited to) the following:

- Professional photography
- Custom home walk-through video
- Professional measurement
- Generate custom images for online marketing
- Design custom full color sales brochures
- Install For Sale Sign

While Listed

This is where many agents fall short. Historically, many Realtors believe that once the property is uploaded onto the MLS, the job is done. For us, the job is just getting started. Once your home goes Active on the market, we do the following:

- Provide feedback from every showing (many will tell you they will do this, but fail to do so)
- Provide weekly updates on recent sales, new listings, and expired listings in your area.
- Market Watch Report: This shows how many times your home has been viewed online, each day.
- Open houses: We consistently get a larger turn out than most, as we attract traffic by means of online marketing and both door knocking and calling your neighborhood to inform them.

Marketing & Advertising **BHHSChicago.com**

With a widely appreciated strength in marketing, we ensure that your home is advertised using industry leading techniques and technology.

- Berkshire Hathaway Website which distributes your listing to over 350 different websites around the world
- MLS
- Zillow.com, Redfin.com, Realtor.com etc.
- Social Media: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube
- International Websites (We are partnered with the most extensive list of Local & Domestic, International, and Luxury websites for all of our listings)
- Custom Home Video Tour online

Preparing Your Home To Sell

The condition of your home can either detract from or enhance its appeal. This checklist is designed to provide you with an easy and systematic approach to improving your home's sales appeal. Six steps are outlined in the checklist. Please note:

- The checklist is most effective when you review the steps in order.
- Some items (i.e. lawn, kitchen, bath, etc.) appear in multiple categories. However, you will be checking for different things in each category.
- The first three steps involve removing detractions. These are must-do's because they will catch the buyer's attention and leave a negative impression if not corrected.
- The last three steps involve making enhancements. These are suggestions that may help your home shine and stand out from others on the market.

Be sure to consult with your real estate professional and get his or her suggestions for your personal selling situation.

Good Luck — you're well on your way to a successful sale!

Major Repairs

The items in this section may result in substantial expense; but if you have obvious problems, it's important to fix them or they may prevent your home from selling.

Following are the items buyers will perceive as needing major repairs. **Consider replacing, repairing or repainting if they are damaged, defective or worn out.**

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Windows | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Heater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> Screens | <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steps | INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driveway | <input type="checkbox"/> Flooring | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement (moisture) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foundation | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceilings & Walls | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siding | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint & Wallpaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Septic Tank |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof | <input type="checkbox"/> Trim | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gutters/Downspouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Countertops | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Appliances | |

Depersonalizing

Depersonalizing involves removing those items that reflect your family's personal tastes. It is an inexpensive process that will have a great impact on your home's appearance.

Remove and store the following...either out-of-sight or neatly packed up and out of the way.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Vehicles | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening Tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles (put in garage) | <input type="checkbox"/> Trailers | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys & Sports Equipment |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn Equipment | |

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines/Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> Awards/Trophies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Knick-Knacks | <input type="checkbox"/> Collections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magnets | <input type="checkbox"/> Posters | <input type="checkbox"/> Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Valuables | | <input type="checkbox"/> Curios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Photos | | <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork |

Cleaning & Maintenance

A house that is dirty and disorganized will stop a buyer cold. Before putting your home on the market, perform a thorough cleaning and maintenance check. Remember...your home must be ready to show at ALL times, so continue with ongoing daily and weekly cleaning.

MAINTENANCE

Make certain each of the following are operable and in good condition (i.e. secure, not broken or damaged, etc.).

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Hinges | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees & Shrubs | <input type="checkbox"/> Door Handles & Locks | <input type="checkbox"/> Tub and Shower Caulking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windowpanes | INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Drains |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windows (move freely) | <input type="checkbox"/> Walls (spackle & paint) | <input type="checkbox"/> Faucets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chimney | <input type="checkbox"/> Handrails | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Switches & Plugs | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner & Furnace Filters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage Door Opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Fixtures | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doorbell | | |

MAJOR CLEANING

Perform a "cleaning overhaul" of your home. The items on this list should be cleaned from top to bottom and neatly organized or manicured. You may even want to consider professional services.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| EXTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceilings | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen (must be extra clean) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawn | <input type="checkbox"/> Light Fixtures | • cupboards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shrubs & Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceiling Fans | • drawers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garage (grease spots) | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Cords (remove or hide) | • refrigerator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front Entrance | <input type="checkbox"/> Fireplace (incl. chimney) | • freezer (defrost) |
| INTERIOR | <input type="checkbox"/> Closets | • oven |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpeting (steam clean) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sinks (leak stains) | • stove and vent fan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Floors | <input type="checkbox"/> Plants (remove if unhealthy) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom (must be extra clean) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tile Floors (wax) | <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes (store in neat piles) | • regrout tile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drapes (steam clean) | <input type="checkbox"/> Furnace | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Window Sills | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioner | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windows, Glass & Mirrors | <input type="checkbox"/> Attic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseboards | <input type="checkbox"/> Basement | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walls | | |

ONGOING CLEANING

Continue with daily/weekly yardwork (i.e. mowing, trimming) and general cleaning (i.e. vacuuming, dusting, disinfecting, picking up).

EXTERIOR

- Lawn
 - remove pet droppings
- Shrubs
- Driveway
- Sidewalks
- Front Entrance
- Patio/Deck
- Remove Snow (if applicable)
- Rake Leaves (if applicable)
- Close Garage Doors

INTERIOR

- Litter Boxes
 - Trash Cans
 - Ashtrays
 - Laundry
 - Carpets/Throw Rugs
 - Wood & Tile Floors
 - Windows
 - Furniture
 - Woodwork
 - Mirrors & Glass
 - Make beds
- Clutter (picked up, inside & out)
 - Kitchen Counters & Appliances
 - Dishes
 - Bathrooms

5-Sense Appeal

Buyers will discover your home through the five senses... sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. By enhancing your home to appeal to each sense, you maximize the likelihood that buyers will desire your home.

Consider doing the following steps to increase your home's sales appeal... the rewards could be substantial.

SIGHT

- Manicure the front lawn
- Trim low tree limbs
- Prune shrubs
- Remove weeds
- Powerwash the exterior
- Paint or stain the front door
- Polish house numbers, front door handles & mailbox
- Use higher wattage light bulbs
- Turn all lights on for showings
- Open or remove curtains
- Remove unnecessary pieces of furniture
- Rearrange furniture to create space
- Light a fire in the fireplace
- Repaint walls that reflect personal taste

SOUND

- Close windows that back up to busy roads
- Turn off all televisions
- Turn off all appliances (i.e. dishwashers, laundry)
- Fix all squeaks (i.e. stairs, floors, hinges)
- Play soft music (jazz or easy listening)
- Remove yourselves, pets & children during showings

5-Sense Appeal (cont'd from page 4)

TASTE

- Make home appear appetizing. Buyers should be able to visualize themselves eating there.
- Sanitize kitchen sink and counters
- Clean oven
- Clean refrigerator (put fresh baking soda on shelf)
- Display a basket of fruit

TOUCH

- Add soft/padded rugs to hard floors
- Oil drawers, cabinets and door mechanisms
- Set room temperature around 68°-72°
- Run a dehumidifier in the basement

SMELL

Eliminate negative smells:

- Pet odors (may require professional cleaning)
- Smoke (may require professional cleaning)
- Food odors (i.e. garlic, cooking oil, fish)
- Air fresheners (they make it seem as if you are hiding something)
- Trash cans & compactors (add baking soda)

Add pleasant scents:

- Fresh flowers
- Light potpourri (cinnamon or vanilla)
- Candles (they absorb odors)
- Put a lemon down the disposal
- Sprinkle vanilla extract on oven walls, heat to 350°
- Cinnamon or pinch of cloves in boiling water
- Lilac and rose scented soaps in the baths

Detailing

Detailing is the process of adding extra touches and accents that are subtle but have a huge impact on buyers' emotions. These extra touches will make it easier for buyers to see themselves living in the home. **Consider adding the following details:**

EXTERIOR

- Sealcoat driveway
- Replace old storm doors with full view doors
- Replace old house numbers with brass numbers
- Replace old mailbox & outside light with brass
- Add flowers in window boxes
- Add potted or hanging flowers to the front entrance
- Hang a wreath on the front door
- Consider adding shutters painted with contrasting colors
- Clean downspouts/gutters



Moving Checklist

1-3 Months in advance - Book a Mover

3-4 WEEKS PRIOR TO MOVE

- Make an inventory of everything to be moved
- Donate any unwanted clothing or furniture
- Book the moving elevator and confirm parking arrangement for truck
- Contact insurance company to transfer policies (life, homeowners)
- Review Tax deductions on moving expenses
- Request change of address kit from post-office
- Prepare a list of friends, business firms and personal accounts who should be notified of your upcoming move

Arrange cut-off/activation dates for utility companies:

- Telephone
- Cable
- Gas/Electricity/Water
- Garbage

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO MOVE

- Purchase any moving supplies - visit youmoveme.com to access our full catalogue of supplies with free delivery!
- Make an appointment with a service technician to prepare major appliances for shipment (i.e. plumber, electrician)
- Have rugs and draperies cleaned and leave wrapped when returned
- Obtain written appraisal of antique items to verify value

Make a plan to dispose of flammables that can't be transported:

- Aerosol Cans
- Cleaning Fluid
- Ammunition
- Fireworks
- Household Liquids
- Oil Cans/Paint/Thinner
- Propane Tanks

1 WEEK PRIOR TO MOVE

- Check furniture for dents and scratches
- Label items you need to access easily
- Clean out the refrigerator/plan to defrost and dry day before move

- Drain equipment: water hoses, propane tank, gas/oil lawnmowers
- Schedule to have utilities turn on at your new home
- Make a plan to transport house plants
- Confirm travel arrangements for pets and family

DAY OF MOVE

- Designate boxes and items as "last load" items
- All loose items are packed in boxes
- All electronics are unplugged from a power source. Plasma TV's should be unplugged the day before so they are at room temperature on move day.
- All pictures are removed from the walls
- All boxes are labeled with their destination room in your new home on the top and sides of each box
- All heavy and breakable items are removed from dressers and desks
- All contents are removed from appliances
- All items are removed from the top of furniture
- All linens are removed from beds
- All rooms, closets, cabinets have been checked
- Disassemble bedroom sets to save time

Prepare an essentials box:

- Toilet Paper (unopened)
- Snacks/Instant Coffee
- Scissors/Pocket Knife
- Garbage Bags
- Change of Clothes
- Dish Soap and Towel
- Pet Food and Dish
- Flashlight
- Portable Tool Kit
- Towels
- All-Purpose Cleaner (unopened)
- Mug/Plate/Cutlery
- Shower Curtain
- Important Records/Documents

Before you leave the house:

- Water shut off
- A/C shut off
- Lights turned off
- Windows shut and locked
- Surrender house keys
- Check for items left behind



Let us help you sell your current home and
help you find your new home

Contact Ted, Mark or Helaine at : Chicagoscene.com

Please give us a call at: **312-416-3480**

Find us on all of these Social Media Platforms:    

