

# *Have You Sold a Car Lately?*

*by Ron Schildknecht, Association Executive,  
Greater Texoma Association of REALTORS®*

I was thinking about home selling the other day and realized it is a lot like selling a car. There are several big differences, though. A home usually doesn't move, although with our North Texas soil, even houses move without proper care of the foundation. A home usually doesn't depreciate, but cars always do, at least until they become antiques. Finally, we don't sell our homes as often as we sell our cars. Detroit has made a fortune with "new car smell" alone.

Today, people in the market to buy a used car often visit Craig's List on the internet to shop. Buyers shopping on Craig's List see pictures of the cars offered for sale, the prices sellers are asking for the cars and brief descriptions of the vehicles. Based on what they see, buyers will make a quick judgment call and decide to pursue more information or reject the auto as being overpriced, having too many miles on the speedometer, or too poor a condition to warrant further investigation.

Homebuyers use a similar service ... the local Multiple Listing Service, or MLS. They search the MLS, view pictures and descriptions of homes and quickly decide to reject the house or investigate further. If a buyer is interested, they usually contact a REALTOR®, make arrangements to visit the house, and examine it "up close and personal". When purchasing a car, buyers test-drive the car. They do the same when buying a home. They "take the house around the block" in their minds and decide if their furniture, friends and family will comfortably fit. Will the house be able to handle an unexpected emergency like the in-laws visiting for an unannounced weekend? Can they take it for a casual evening "date" and invite friends to a movie at home? Would they be proud to announce they just bought

***... Homebuyers use the local MLS to view pictures and descriptions of homes ...***

the best used car (house) on the market? Although the house may be

pre-owned (no one buys a "used" car anymore; they are all "pre-owned"), will the buyers think it has too many miles on it or that it did not receive the regularly scheduled maintenance?

As home sellers, you must examine your house in the same manner as the used car seller. What can you do to help make your house more attractive to the buyer? Just like the car seller

who has the car's exterior washed and the interior "detailed," you might consider "detailing" your home. Make the extra effort to mow the yard, trim the hedges, and plant some colorful flowers in the yard. Paint the trim or even the whole house, if necessary. Yes, it would be easier to let the buyer paint the trim in their choice of color, but a seller will normally receive a lower house price than the cost of a few gallons of paint. In the interior, complete some more "detailing". Just as the

car seller will clean out the trunk and empty the candy wrappers and soft drink cups

***... Don't leave your house "up on blocks" by missing the details...***

from the back seat, a home seller must minimize clutter in the house for sale. Clean out the closets, pack your personal mementos (after all, you do plan on moving them), shampoo the carpets (who wants someone else's spilled milk stain), and repaint any old, tired, dirty walls. Again, if you wait for a buyer to repaint after moving in, it will usually cost the seller through a lower home sale price. A good, clean, well-maintained pre-owned car (even if it has high mileage) that is priced right will always sell. The same is true of a home. Don't give homebuyers an excuse to "horrible-ize" any defect they find in your home.

**T**here is one major difference between selling a car and selling a house. Selling a house is much more complicated. Besides the physical condition of the house, sellers and buyers need to be concerned with the type of financing being proposed, the qualifications of the buyer to obtain a loan, any lender-required inspections, the appraisal and survey documents, the contract and closing documents, home and title insurance, and many more details.

You wouldn't want to leave your "For Sale" car "sitting up on blocks" because you did not pay attention to the details ... and you sure don't want to miss the details of selling your house and leave it "up on blocks". Miss the details on selling your car, and it could cost several hundred dollars; miss the details on selling your house, and it could cost several *thousand* dollars. That's another reason why it is always a good idea to hire a professional REALTOR® to assist with a home purchase or sale. To locate a REALTOR® to assist you, I encourage home sellers to visit:

***www.TexomaRealtor.com***

