

Module 8 : Performing Viewings

- Setting up for a viewing
- When to arrive for a viewing
- Prepping the house, triple checking
- Working to a plan

Topics covered in this module:

- Setting up for a viewing
- When to arrive for a viewing
- Prepping the house, triple checking
- Working to a plan
- End of tour meeting and what's next

Performing Viewings – 4m 51s

8.1 Introduction

All your effort up to now has been aimed at securing properties to show to prospective buyers.

Now you have a home to show, what happens next?

The art of showing homes to buyers is not confined to estate agents on the sales side of the property market. It is also necessary for property negotiators and rental agents to show properties. It is something that has to be done correctly if the agent is going to maximise the use of his or her time.

Although you may think that showing a house to someone who is interested in buying it is a no-brainer, that could not be further from the truth. It is one of the most essential parts of the process. Showing a house badly is as much a waste of time as having a shop selling shoes or clothes and refusing to display the goods where people are able to see them.

There is a structure to the process of showing a house. Rooms have to be shown in the correct sequence for the buyer to get the best impression of the place. The viewing must also end correctly if the people viewing the house are to be given the best chance of making a decision.

8.2 What are you trying to achieve?

Presenting a house to an interested buyer is not just a case of throwing open the front door and saying: "Right, mate. Take a look and let me know what you think!".

There are strategies involved. You need to present the house in its best possible light and give the people viewing it the best chance of seeing what they have to consider.

Look at it from the buyer's point of view. On average, buyers will look at between eight and twelve properties before they think about putting in an offer. They need reasons to distinguish the house you are showing them from the nine or ten they might have already looked at. You have to make sure that nothing stands in the way of the best possible experience in the house you are showing.

Put it another way, you want to make the potential buyer fall in love with the house. You want them to feel as if the house is waiting for them to move in. They must be able to see themselves relaxing in the lounge, working in the kitchen, having fun on the patio that overlooks the pool.

Not every property you market will have lounges, pools and luxury fittings. Depending on the area you work in, the houses may be very basic, but to someone, they will represent home.

8.3 Who Are You Selling What to?

Now that you have the concept that every time you show a house, it will be to help the people viewing the house to move in psychologically, we move on to exactly who you will be dealing with.

After speaking to the client on the phone, you should have extracted the following information:

- Who will be coming along for the viewing
- Whether they are in the process of selling an existing house or they are ready to buy immediately
- Where they are moving from and why
- The most important features that they are looking for in a new house
- How long they have been looking for and how many houses they have seen in the area.

You are confident that they will be interested in this house as it has the requisite number of bedrooms, a study, modern kitchen and an outdoor area with a lovely patio and garden. Being on the outskirts of town, it also has a wonderful view of the adjacent farmland. Access to the local shopping centre is easy and the junior school is a five minute easy drive through traffic.

The way you set up the viewing of the property should allow the family the space to sell it to themselves. They need to discover aspects about the house and see themselves living there.

Depending on how you show the house to them, they will either see the aspects you want them to see, or they will miss them.

FACT

The most popular months for searching for a home are January, February, March, August

Source: zoopla.co.uk

8.4 You and the Viewing

Viewings may be part of your day, but they are a big deal.

They represent the culmination of all the work you have done on the house up to then. Sure, you may not get a sale, you may have shown it ten times before, but you never know when the right people will arrive. If you are not putting everything into your house showings, the right people might slip through your fingers.

Your attitude has to be correct. Even if you have shown this particular buyer seven properties before this one, you are still at your professional best. You are dressed for work, your clothes are neat and clean, your shoes are spotless.

You arrive before they do. Not at the same time or thirty seconds after them. You arrive before they do.

Tips for your successful property viewings

Before actually viewing the property, clients often drive-by to view the property from the outside. Sellers should keep the exteriors clean, clutter-free. If you have a garden, trim the grass and keep it well-maintained. Avoid piling up garbage or overfilling the garage with clutter.

In general, clients will spend about 10 -15 minutes on a property. Those that gush too much usually have no intention of buying but may not want to offend the agent or the owner.

If you have other clients interested in the property, let others know. While you shouldn't invent lies, people tend to close deals faster when there is a subtle sense of urgency.

Advise owners to get rid of musty, dank odours from attics, cellars and closets well before-hand. Also, you may want to pay a visit prior to the viewing to ensure that light fixtures and switches are in working condition.

Keep an eye on children to ensure that they don't accidentally break something on the premises

How to dress for professional property viewings

It's a good idea to wear formals along with smart flat shoes. A pencil skirt, trousers or a patterned blouse or shirt is ideal for women while men can sport a shirt, tie or dark-coloured trousers.

In general, dark colours work better for viewings as you may have to walk through grass, mud or basements. Wear flat shoes as you may have to navigate stairs and walk a lot. Keep a jacket or blazer handy in the car in case of cold weather and always keep a bottle of water.

Do avoid wearing graphic tee-shirts, leather jackets and sneakers. Also avoid ripped jeans, mini-skirts and visible tattoos, nose-rings and flip-flops. Men should avoid untidy facial hair and preferably sport short hair and neat hair styles

8.5 Flight Check

The seller knows that you are showing the house.

He knows what time and he knows that the place must be spotless. At the end of the day, it's his house and his sale. But you need to give the property a quick once over before the showing.

You have to check every single room and cupboard. Make sure that the place is organised and spotless.

Remember: The people viewing the house must feel that they could move in right away.

Dog mess on the front lawn, toys strewn around in the third bedroom, a plate with sandwich crusts left in the teenager's pad, the cupboard under the stairs stuffed with the fruits of a last-minute tidying session are going to sink you.

Before the people arrive, make sure that the house is aired and the temperature is comfortable.

During the viewing, you will lead the people through the house in the sequence that you think shows the house off best.

Again, remember your "listening to speaking" ratio, although you will need to be involved in the discussion during the showing, you still need to give the potential buyers the space to think, express their views on the place and ask questions.

Be careful not to offer opinions on anything and don't meet trouble half way, let it come to you. If there are aspects of the house you particularly like, ask what the viewers think of this feature. You don't want to sing the praises of the gas stove with an electric oven only to be told that they have had one of those things and they hate them. Rather, encourage the people doing the viewing to comment and ask questions.

If there are any defects, be they obvious or hidden, these must be brought to the attention of the buyers at the time of the viewing.

If you tell them before, they will be expecting the worst and will start the viewing with a negative opinion. If they are well into the house and are informed that there is a patch of damp on the wall in the garage, they can assess the information in context. They can see that it either will be a major drawback to their deciding to take the house or that in the scheme of things, it is really nothing to be worried about. But whatever you do, don't try to hide it.

8.6 The Viewing Begins

The best time to view a house is during daylight hours.

A viewing that starts too late in the day is bound to run into one of the family's time and cause problems. If the people viewing the house are on a bit of a schedule, they will start feeling pressured and will not want to stay to discuss the house after they have seen it. The tension will be worse if the

seller and their family are in the house at the time of the viewing, which is more likely at the end of the day.

The biggest advantage of a daylight viewing is that one can see the house and its surrounds. Tremendous views cannot be seen in the dark.

As we mentioned earlier, you will arrive at the house well before the people who will be viewing it. Check through the entire house to make sure that nothing is out of place. You will not be the first estate agent to surprise a bleary-eyed teenager under a pile of blankets on the spare room couch. It's better if everything is checked carefully beforehand.

With everything in order, you await the arrival of your clients. Be at the entrance to the property so that they can identify you from down the road. If possible, make sure that there is parking conveniently close by if they cannot actually park on the property.

Make sure that you are familiar with the workings of the gates, doors and alarms to the property. You don't want to lock yourself out at the crucial moment.

8.7 Entering the House

When you did the assessment of the house, you got a very good idea of the layout.

It is at this stage that you should have worked out how you would show the house to prospective buyers.

Rule one for showing houses: You lead the tour. Literally, you enter the house first and take the people from room to room, always entering ahead of them. The reason for this is that they don't know the house and will wander off into rooms that you don't want them to see before they have seen other rooms. This will make more sense in a moment.

On entering the front door, you lead the way into the best room on the ground floor. This will probably be the lounge, but it could equally be the very well-appointed kitchen that has a conservatory extension looking out onto a breathtaking garden.

This must be a slick operation, no fumbling for keys, triggering the alarm or causing the dog to bark hysterically. All that should be sorted before the people arrive.

Apart from the obvious distraction clumsy errors will cause, you have fourteen seconds to escort your clients into the best room on the ground floor. That is the average time it takes a person to get a sense of a new house. They will decide in that time if they like or dislike the ambience of the house. If it's positive, half your battle is won.

Again, the emphasis is on you leading the way. If you have to pass along a passage to get to the room you have selected for the start of the tour, shut the doors to any rooms you don't want the people to go into just yet. People are inquisitive and will disappear if you are not prepared.

Once in the best room on the ground floor, hand the clients any literature that you have prepared for them so that they have it as a reference as they look through the house. This should be a professionally prepared brochure with the essential details of the house clearly laid out. Facts like energy ratings, the age of the house, floor area and property area, proximity of the house to

amenities and major roads and schools and so on.

8.8 The Tour

Once your clients have had time to have a glance at the literature you have just given them, start the tour.

The pamphlet is more for them to refer to as they see the house, as opposed to information they need before they start the viewing.

Work through the lower level of the house in the order that you decided. Don't let anyone distract you from your plan or insist that you show them the house in any other order than the one you decided on. You need to show the house as you think it will be most appealing. Stick to your plan. As you move from room to room, don't try and push the pace. Let the people feel the rooms as you go. They need to have time to think and ask questions. If you rush them, you will probably make them either feel unwelcome or that you have something to hide.

The more they think and consider, the more likely they are to see themselves moving into the rooms they are in and into the house in general.

Once you have completed the ground floor, take the tour into the garden and allow them to inspect any outbuildings and garden features.

After touring the garden, take the viewers back into the house and upstairs to the bedroom area.

Show them the smallest bedroom first. When people don't have actual dimensions, they will judge the size of a room by comparing it to the other rooms in the house. If you start with the master bedroom, all the other rooms will feel small or even tiny by comparison and that impression will stick.

Again, remember that apart from leading the group on the tour, you take a back seat and give them time to think and reflect; allow them as much space as possible to move into the house and imagine themselves living there.

Phase Two

When you have shown the whole house and the garden, end the conducted tour where you started, in the best room on the ground floor. You should, by now, have a reasonable idea of how the people

feel about the house. But don't rely on your feelings: Ask them!

A discussion should follow. Let it run for a little while as it will probably centre on any concerns they may have. You will be able to pick up some valuable insight into how the house appears to outsiders and into what this particular client and their family are looking for. They might well be a family from the group of people who don't really know what they want until they see something they don't want. It sounds convoluted, but hearing the issues they have with the house will give you a more focused idea of what will please them.

Before the conversation dies down, ask the people if they would like to take a look around the house on their own. Give them their privacy; tell them you will be in the lounge or study or in the garden if they need you. If their initial reaction to the house seems positive, they will want to look for reasons to confirm their feeling that the house is right for them.

Having free rein of the house will give the clients time to have a private chat and take a closer look at aspects they might have doubts about. They may also appreciate a chance to peep into cupboards and nooks that they noticed the first time around. After all, they aren't going to fall victim to a landslide of ironing boards, bicycles and hoverboards when they open the closet under the stairs. You checked that and the other storage spaces before they arrived, didn't you?

8.9 Wrapping it Up

At the end of the viewing, you are going to need feedback for your seller.

When the people have finished viewing the house, ask them directly what they think of it; how they feel about it. If their reaction is positive, ask them if they are considering making an offer.

This may seem blunt, and it is. Now is the time to sort the serious players from the people who are still dithering.

If you get a positive response, establish when they will be ready to proceed. Confirm that you will call them to arrange an appointment to put their offer in writing. You need to keep the upper hand and make clear arrangements.

In the event that they would like to put an offer in immediately, by all means settle down and get the matter finalised.

Take a Quick Recap Test

[viralQuiz id=207]

Summary

Viewings are a critical part of the sales process. You need to take them seriously and you need to have the person who is selling the house fully behind you. Although the house and premises cannot be absolutely perfect, it must be as close as possible. You may have to talk to the owner about clearing out years of accumulated stuff from the attic or the cellar and clearing out musty corners to make sure that there is no damp lurking.

You need to have clear lines of sight for the people viewing the house. They must be able to see where a room begins and ends. An attic full of old boxes and memorabilia is not helpful. If the owner feels that they cannot part with anything, then a good tidying will probably suffice. As long as the people viewing the house can leave with a good idea of how much space there is and what sort of condition the structure is in, then you should be okay.

Remember that you are in control of the viewing and that there must be a sequence, right up to the point where the people either are not interested, or they would like to go over the house again on their own. Don't be afraid to manage the first walk through of the house, closing doors to rooms that you want to reveal later and to prevent the viewers wandering off on their own. Last, but not least, remember the fourteen second rule. As with everything in life, you only have one shot at making a first impression - use it well.

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