

7 Tips for a Profitable Home Closing

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Be sure you're walking away with all the money you're entitled to from the sale of your home.

When you're ready to close on the sale of your home and move to your new home, you may be so close to the finish line that you coast, thinking there's nothing left for you to do. Not so fast. It's easy to waste a few dollars here and for mistakes to creep into your closing documents there, all adding up to a bundle of lost profit. Spot money-losing problems with these seven tips.

1. Take services out of your name

Avoid a dispute with the buyers after closing over things like fees for the cable service you forgot to discontinue. Contact every utility and service provider to end or transfer service to your new address as of the closing date.

If you're on an automatic-fill schedule for heating oil or propane, don't pay for a pre-closing refill that provides free fuel for the new owner. Contact your insurer to terminate coverage on your old home, get coverage on your new home, and ask whether you're entitled to a refund of prepaid premium.

2. Spread the word on your change of address

Provide the post office with your forwarding address two to four weeks before the closing. Also notify credit card companies, publication subscription departments, friends and family, and your financial institutions of your new address.

3. Manage the movers

Scrutinize your moving company's estimate. If you're making a long-distance move, which is often billed according to weight, note the weight of your property and watch so the movers don't use excessive padding to boost the weight. Also check with your homeowners insurer about coverage for your

move. Usually movers cover only what they pack.

4. Do the settlement math

Title company employees are only human, so they can make mistakes. The day before your closing, check the math on your HUD-1 Settlement Statement.

5. Review charges on your settlement statement

Are all mortgages being paid off, and are the payoff amounts correct? If your real estate agent promised you extras-such as a discounted commission or a home warranty policy-make sure that's included. Also check whether your real estate agent or title company added fees that weren't disclosed earlier. If any party suggests leaving items off the settlement statement, consult a lawyer about whether that might expose you to legal risk.

6. Search for missing credits

Be sure the settlement company properly credited you for prepaid expenses, such as property taxes and homeowners association fees, if applicable. If you've prepaid taxes for the year, you're entitled to a credit for the time you no longer own the home. Have you been credited for heating oil or propane left in the tank?

7. Don't leave money in escrow

End your home sale closing with nothing unresolved. Make sure the title company releases money already held in escrow for you, and avoid leaving sales proceeds in a new escrow to be dickered over later.

Other web resources

(<http://www.realtor.com/home-finance/sellers-basics/closing.aspx>) Closing costs explained (<http://www.homeclosing101.org/costs.cfm>)

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