

Best Advice

Ensure that you have done your homework and that you have a good estate agent, solicitor and, if borrowing money, financial adviser. Tell them clearly what you want to achieve and listen to their advice

Preparation

Get your house ready for viewings. If it's a cold day, some background heating will be welcoming. On a dark day, low energy light bulbs may need to be turned on before people arrive. If you have limited parking, ensure that it is kept clear for viewers.

Get Paperwork in Order

Ensure that any changes you have made to the property has all the necessary planning or listed building consents. It may be possible to gain retrospective consent, but if any paperwork is missing and the buyer is borrowing money, it is highly likely that the lender will not lend. Ensure that the Title is registered. If you have a private drainage system, ensure that it is emptied prior to any surveyor visiting.

First Impression

This is important, whether it is topping up the crunchy gravel in front of the house or freshly painting the front door. You only have one opportunity to make a good first impression,

Cleaning and Decluttering

A cluttered house will generally look smaller and can give a poor impression. When you sell you will need to empty the house; it is better to make a start before viewers arrive. Cleaning is also important, particularly in a competitive market. Buyers like to see a well kept house. Kitchens and bathrooms are particularly important, so clean and clean again.

Floods, dogs and heating

The smell of stale or wet dog can be off-putting and, indeed, some people are unsure around dogs so it is best to do what you can to remove the smells and find someone to look after your dog during a viewing. Don't send out negative signals such as leaving free-standing radiators in rooms, which normally indicates that the heating is not up to the job. Sandbags in the garage tend to alarm buyers who are concerned about flooding.

Choose your Agent Carefully

Ensure you choose an agent who is successful with your type of property in your area. Check out their websites, make sure they are well optimised and that they also feature their properties on the leading property search portals. Websites are more important than ever with over 80% of buyers searching for property this way.

Negotiation

Leave the negotiation to the professionals. Be helpful when you are showing viewers over the house but don't be drawn into any negotiations. If they are interested, refer them back to your agent.

Pricing

Ask your agent to show you comparables so that you can be confident your asking price is right. Also, do your own research. Nethouseprice.com will show you what has sold for what price in your area.

Persist

If at first you don't succeed, try again, but ensure the particulars are updated. This is particularly important with photographs as buyers are suspicious if a property hasn't sold within four or five weeks of being in the market place.