FN Home Group Seller Success Guide

A friendly, step-by-step roadmap to selling your Southern Middle Tennessee home with confidence

LOCAL EXPERTISE. ELEVATED EXPERIENCE.

Faith Nance, REALTOR® — FN Home Group

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IN THIS GUIDE

Table of Contents

Reading Time	Edition	Prepared By
~14 minutes	July 2026	Faith Nance, REALTOR®

1 Preparing to Sell

Selling a home is as much an emotional journey as it is a financial one. Getting your mindset and your paperwork in order early can make everything that follows feel more manageable.

Before a single sign goes in the yard, it helps to get clear on your "why." Are you relocating for work, upsizing for a growing family, downsizing for a simpler lifestyle, or moving to be closer to loved ones? Your reason for selling often shapes your timeline, your flexibility on price, and how much effort you want to put into preparing the home. Take a few minutes to write down your goals and your ideal timeline so you and your agent can build a plan around them.

Selling can stir up a mix of excitement and nostalgia, especially if you have lived in your home for many years. That is completely normal. Try to start mentally separating "your home" from "the product you are marketing." Buyers are shopping for their next chapter, not judging your memories, and keeping that perspective can make the preparation and showing process feel less personal.

- Gather key documents: mortgage payoff information, HOA documents (if applicable), recent tax records, and any home improvement receipts or warranties
- Think through your timeline: are you selling first, buying first, or doing both at once?
- Start a simple folder (paper or digital) for anything related to the sale
- Ask questions early. There are no bad questions when this much is at stake

> 💡 **Faith's Tip**
> Give yourself grace during this process. It is normal to feel a little emotional about selling a home full of memories. A clear plan and a supportive agent can help you move forward with confidence instead of stress.

2 Pricing Strategy

Pricing is one of the most important decisions you will make as a seller, and it is more art than guesswork when it is done well.

A Comparative Market Analysis, often called a CMA, is a tool agents use to help estimate a reasonable price range for your home. In plain language, a CMA looks at homes similar to yours (in size, condition, location, and features) that have recently sold, are currently pending, and are actively on the market in your area. Comparing your home to this real-world data helps establish a realistic starting point rather than relying on guesswork or emotion.

Pricing generally takes into account factors like square footage, lot size, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, age and condition of the home, recent updates, and current market conditions in your specific neighborhood. Because every home and every market is a little different, pricing is typically approached as a range rather than a single fixed number, and that range can shift as new comparable sales become available.

It can be tempting to price on the higher end "just to see," but homes that are priced outside of what the local market supports often sit longer and may require price adjustments later, which can sometimes make buyers wonder if something is wrong with the home. A thoughtful pricing strategy from the start is generally intended to attract genuine, qualified interest.

> 📌 **Did You Know?**
> Home value is not just about the property itself. It is also shaped by what is happening in the broader market at that moment, including how many similar homes are available and how many buyers are actively looking.

3 Current Buyer Expectations

Understanding how today's buyers search and shop can help you prepare your home in a way that resonates with them.

Most buyers begin their home search online, often long before they ever contact an agent or step foot in a house. This means your home's first impression is frequently made through photos and a listing description on a screen, not in person. Strong online presentation can influence whether a buyer decides your home is worth an in-person visit.

Many buyers today are also drawn to homes that feel "move-in ready." That does not necessarily mean a full renovation is required, but homes that are clean, well-maintained, and free of obvious deferred maintenance tend to feel more appealing and easier for buyers to picture themselves in.

- Buyers often browse listings on their phones during evenings and weekends
- Clear, well-lit photos are typically one of the first things buyers notice
- A tidy, decluttered space helps buyers imagine their own belongings in the home
- Buyers tend to appreciate transparency, including disclosure of known issues
- Homes that show well in person as well as online tend to leave a stronger impression

Keeping these general expectations in mind as you prepare your home can help you focus your time and energy on the improvements that are likely to matter most to the buyers who walk through your door.

4 Preparing Your Home

A little preparation goes a long way toward helping buyers see your home at its best.

Start with the basics: deep cleaning, decluttering, and addressing small repairs that may catch a buyer's eye, such as a leaky faucet, a squeaky door, or a burned-out lightbulb. These small fixes are often inexpensive but can make a noticeable difference in how "cared for" your home feels.

Curb appeal deserves special attention because it sets the tone before a buyer ever walks through the front door. Mowing the lawn, trimming bushes, adding a fresh coat of paint to the front door, and clearing walkways are simple ways to create a welcoming first impression.

- Clean every room thoroughly, including baseboards, windows, and light fixtures
- Declutter closets, cabinets, and countertops so spaces feel open
- Depersonalize by putting away family photos and highly personal items
- Address small repairs: touch up paint, fix loose handles, replace burnt-out bulbs
- Tidy up the yard, porch, and entryway for strong curb appeal
- Consider a deep clean of carpets and floors

> 💡 **Faith's Tip**
> Walk through your home as if you were a buyer seeing it for the first time. Take notes on anything that catches your eye, good or bad. That fresh perspective is often exactly what buyers will notice too.

5 Staging

Staging is about helping buyers emotionally connect with your home, not covering anything up.

Staging typically involves arranging furniture, decor, and lighting in a way that highlights a home's best features and helps rooms feel functional and inviting. This can range from simply rearranging your existing furniture to bringing in additional pieces or accessories to create a more neutral, welcoming feel.

The goal of staging is generally to help buyers picture themselves living in the space rather than seeing it as "someone else's home." That often means simplifying, neutralizing color palettes where possible, and making sure each room's purpose is clear and inviting.

- Arrange furniture to maximize flow and highlight the size of each room
- Add soft touches like fresh linens, tidy throw pillows, or a bowl of fruit on the counter
- Maximize natural light by opening blinds and curtains
- Keep decor simple and broadly appealing rather than highly personal

- Pay attention to scent. Fresh, clean air makes a strong impression

> 📌 **Did You Know?**
> Buyers often decide within the first few moments of entering a room whether it feels welcoming, which is part of why lighting, cleanliness, and an open layout matter so much during a showing.

6 Professional Photography

Since so many buyers begin their search online, your listing photos are often doing a lot of the heavy lifting before a showing ever happens.

Professional real estate photography is generally designed to capture your home's best angles, natural light, and overall flow in a way that a phone camera often cannot replicate. Well-composed, well-lit photos can help your listing stand out and give buyers a genuine sense of the space before they arrive.

Depending on the property and the marketing plan, photography may be complemented by additional visual tools such as wide-angle or drone shots for larger lots, twilight photos to showcase exterior lighting, or a walkthrough video or virtual tour. Not every home needs every option, and your agent can help determine what makes sense for your property.

> 💡 **Faith's Tip**
> Finish your cleaning and staging before photography day. Small details like fluffed pillows, cleared countertops, and tucked-away cords make a real difference in how polished your photos turn out.

7 Marketing

Once your home is photographed and priced, the focus shifts to getting it in front of the right buyers.

A well-rounded marketing plan typically uses a combination of channels to maximize visibility. Your listing is generally entered into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), which is the primary database real estate agents use and which syndicates listing information out to many popular home search websites. From there, additional marketing efforts help reinforce visibility and reach different types of buyers.

Marketing Channel	What It Generally Does
MLS Listing	Serves as the central listing record, syndicated to major home search sites
Online Exposure	Puts your home in front of buyers actively searching in your area
Social Media	Extends visibility to a broader network, including potential buyer referrals
Print & Signage	Reinforces local visibility and reaches neighborhood and drive-by interest
Agent Network	Connects your listing with other agents who may have interested buyers

The exact mix of marketing tools used for your home can vary depending on the property, the price point, and current market conditions. The overall goal is consistent, however: creating broad, genuine exposure to qualified buyers.

> 📌 **Did You Know?**
> Because so much of the home search happens online first, the words and photos used in your listing description often work together to encourage a buyer to schedule a showing.

8 Showings

Showings are your home's chance to make a lasting in-person impression.

Showings can happen with fairly short notice, so it helps to have a routine ready. A simple checklist, such as turning on lights, tidying countertops, and making sure pets are secured, can make last-minute showings much less stressful.

- Keep the home consistently clean and ready to show on short notice
- Turn on all lights, even during the day, to create a warm, bright feel
- Open curtains and blinds to let in natural light
- Secure pets and remove pet-related items like bowls or litter boxes when possible
- Step out during showings so buyers feel comfortable exploring and talking freely

It is normal to feel a little anxious waiting to hear feedback after a showing. Not every showing leads to an offer, and that is a typical part of the process. Feedback, when available, can be a useful tool for understanding how buyers are responding to your home.

💡 **Faith's Tip**

Try to make it easy to say yes to showing requests, even short-notice ones. The more buyers who see your home in its best light, the better your chances of finding the right match.

9 Offers

Receiving an offer is an exciting milestone, and understanding the components of an offer can help you evaluate it clearly.

An offer typically includes more than just a proposed purchase price. It generally outlines the offered price, the type of financing being used, the amount of earnest money, requested contingencies (such as inspection or financing), a proposed closing date, and any specific terms or requests the buyer would like included.

- Purchase price offered
- Type of financing (conventional, FHA, VA, cash, etc.)
- Earnest money amount
- Contingencies, such as inspection, appraisal, or financing
- Proposed closing date and possession terms
- Any additional requests, such as included items or a rent-back arrangement

Evaluating an offer is about looking at the full picture rather than price alone. A slightly lower offer with strong financing and a clean timeline may sometimes be more attractive than a higher offer with more contingencies or a shakier financing path. Your agent can help you weigh these factors together.

10 Negotiations

Negotiation is a normal, expected part of nearly every real estate transaction.

Once an offer is received, you generally have a few options: accept it as written, decline it, or respond with a counteroffer. Counteroffers can address price, closing timeline, included items, repair requests, or other terms, and this back-and-forth can happen more than once before both parties reach an agreement.

It helps to approach negotiations with your priorities clearly in mind. For some sellers, price is the top priority. For others, timeline flexibility or a smoother, more certain closing process matters just as much, if not more. Knowing what matters most to you ahead of time can make negotiation conversations feel less overwhelming.

📌 **Did You Know?**
Negotiations do not stop after the offer is accepted. It is common for additional terms, particularly around repairs, to be discussed after the home inspection as well.

💡 **Faith's Tip**
Try not to take negotiation points personally. Buyers negotiate as a normal part of the process, and it rarely reflects how they feel about your home.

11 Home Inspection

From a seller's perspective, the home inspection is a chance to see your home through a professional, unbiased lens.

Most buyers choose to have a licensed home inspector evaluate the property after their offer is accepted. The inspector generally examines major systems and components, such as the roof, foundation, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and overall structure, and provides a written report of their findings.

It is common, even for well-maintained homes, for an inspection report to include a range of findings, from minor cosmetic notes to more significant items. This is a normal part of the process and does not necessarily mean anything is wrong with how the home was cared for.

- Make the home easily accessible for the inspector, including attics, crawl spaces, and utility areas
- Ensure utilities (water, electricity, gas) are on so all systems can be tested
- Consider addressing known, easily fixable issues ahead of time
- Be prepared for a possible request for repairs, credits, or price adjustments afterward

After the inspection, it is common for buyers and sellers to negotiate further based on the findings. This might involve completing certain repairs, offering a credit, adjusting the price, or, in some cases, moving forward with no changes at all.

12 Appraisal

For financed transactions, the appraisal is an important step that helps confirm the home's value for the buyer's lender.

When a buyer is using financing, their lender typically requires a licensed, independent appraiser to evaluate the home and estimate its market value. This helps the lender confirm that the loan amount is appropriate for the property being purchased.

Appraisers generally consider many of the same factors used in pricing, such as the home's condition, size, location, and recent comparable sales, though the appraiser's process and role are independent of the agents involved in the transaction.

- Make sure the home is clean and accessible for the appraiser's visit
- Provide a list of recent updates or improvements, if helpful
- Understand that the appraised value may come in at, above, or below the agreed contract price
- Know that a low appraisal can sometimes lead to further negotiation between buyer and seller

If an appraisal comes in lower than expected, it does not automatically mean the sale falls apart. Buyers and sellers often work together, sometimes with guidance from their agents, to find a path forward, whether that is a price adjustment, a renegotiation, or another solution specific to the situation.

13 Closing

Closing is the final step where ownership officially transfers from you to the buyer.

In the days leading up to closing, there are typically a few final steps to complete, such as a final walkthrough by the buyer, coordinating moving logistics, and reviewing closing paperwork. Many of the numbers and figures involved, including payoff amounts and closing costs, are generally prepared by the title or closing company handling the transaction.

- Schedule your move to align with the closing and possession dates
- Cancel or transfer utilities, and update your mailing address
- Review closing documents ahead of time so you know what to expect
- Leave the home broom-clean and in the condition agreed upon in the contract
- Turn over keys, garage remotes, and any relevant manuals or warranties

At closing, you will generally sign the necessary paperwork to transfer the property, and once everything is recorded and funds are disbursed, the sale is considered complete. It is normal to feel a mix of relief and sentimentality as you close this chapter and move toward your next one.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How is my home's price determined?

Price is generally guided by a Comparative Market Analysis, which looks at similar homes that have recently sold or are currently listed in your area, along with your home's specific features and condition.

Q. Do I have to make repairs before listing?

Not necessarily. While addressing small, visible items can help a home show well, larger repair decisions are personal and can be discussed with your agent based on your goals and timeline.

Q. How much notice will I get for showings?

Showing notice can vary. Some buyers schedule in advance, while others may request a same-day showing. Keeping your home consistently tidy can help you say yes more often.

Q. What happens if the inspection finds issues?

It is common for inspections to reveal at least a few items. Buyers and sellers typically negotiate next steps, which may include repairs, credits, a price adjustment, or moving forward as-is.

Q. What if the appraisal comes in lower than the offer?

This can happen occasionally. If it does, buyers and sellers often work together on a solution, such as renegotiating price or terms, with guidance from their agents.

Q. How long does the whole process typically take?

Timelines can vary widely based on market conditions, financing type, and individual circumstances, so it is best to discuss a realistic timeline for your specific situation with your agent.

Q. Can I still sell if I have a mortgage on the home?

Yes, this is very common. Your mortgage payoff is typically handled through the closing process using proceeds from the sale.

Q. What should I do with my belongings during showings?

Decluttering and depersonalizing ahead of time, then keeping the home tidy throughout the listing period, generally makes showings easier and less stressful.

PRINT & USE

Seller Checklist

- ☐ Clarify your reason for selling and ideal timeline
- ☐ Gather mortgage, HOA, tax, and improvement documents
- ☐ Interview and choose an agent you trust
- ☐ Discuss pricing strategy and review the CMA
- ☐ Declutter and depersonalize each room
- ☐ Complete minor repairs and touch-ups
- ☐ Deep clean the entire home, inside and out
- ☐ Boost curb appeal (yard, entry, exterior paint)
- ☐ Prepare the home for staging
- ☐ Schedule and prepare for professional photography
- ☐ Review and approve your marketing plan
- ☐ Establish a routine for keeping the home show-ready
- ☐ Plan for pets and personal schedules during showings
- ☐ Review offers with your agent, not just the price
- ☐ Understand contingencies before accepting an offer
- ☐ Prepare for the home inspection and make the home accessible
- ☐ Review inspection findings and discuss next steps
- ☐ Prepare for the appraisal and gather improvement info

- [ ] Review closing documents ahead of time
- [ ] Schedule movers and transfer or cancel utilities
- [ ] Complete the final walkthrough requirements
- [ ] Attend closing and transfer keys

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Continue Your Learning

The FN Home Group Resource Library is a growing collection of free guides designed to help you feel informed and confident at every stage of buying, selling, or owning a home in Southern Middle Tennessee. Explore the full library any time at **www.fnhomegroup.com/clientcenter.html**.

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FN Home Group Buyer's Playbook

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FOR BUYERS & SELLERS
Understanding Your Home Appraisal

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FOR BUYERS & SELLERS
Transaction Roadmap

FOR HOMEOWNERS
Home Maintenance Guide
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SAFETY
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FOR RELOCATION CLIENTS
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LET'S STAY CONNECTED

Here for You, Before, During & After Closing

"Whether you're buying your first home, preparing to sell, relocating, or simply have questions about today's market, I'm here to be your trusted resource before, during, and long after closing."

Faith Nance, REALTOR®

FN Home Group — Brokered by Epique Realty

Direct: (931) 332-6089 | Office: (888) 893-3537

faithnance@epique.me

www.fnhomegroup.com

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