

# How to sell your house fast in a time of pandemic

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The South African residential property market is a great place for sellers to be for at least the next three months, thanks to a perfect storm of circumstances - and to make the most of the opportunity, it's vital that sellers tick the right boxes to sell their houses as quickly as possible.



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There's been a clear uptick in demand for properties following the reduction in Covid-19 alert levels as people reassess their housing needs to accommodate future plans to work from home.

Combined with historically low interest rates and people looking to relocate to be closer to schools for the new year, it's a seller's market right now. However, when you decide to put your house on the market, it's always in your best interests to sell it as quickly as possible. Our data shows that the faster you sell, the better the price you will get – not to mention the saved time and stress.

## Find the right estate agent

Every agent will tell you the same thing: hire an agent who knows your area, who's committed to getting you a quick sale and who will do all the legwork for you. That's all fine.

But if you want to sell your house fast, you really need three things from an agent: one, certainty: you need to know exactly how much you're going to pay upfront. Two, transparency: will you get access to a dashboard that shows you what's happening with your property every step of the way? And three, don't be shy to ask your agent what other value they can bring to the table.

## Get the price right

Everybody wants the highest possible price when selling their home. However, don't fall into the trap of listing it higher than market value as the buyers are going to make a lower offer anyway. If the price is right for the home and the area, serious buyers will make strong offers to secure the property of their dreams.

We see this every day: properties that are priced right will sell quickly. A beautifully presented home with a perfect price tag gets immediate attention on the property portals, while over-priced properties sit on the market for months and end up getting a lower price anyway.

## **Appearances are everything**

Property professionals often use terms such as “kerb appeal” and “staging” – what they really mean is that it’s important to win over buyers by making the house look as inviting as possible. These measures should be taken to increase the odds of selling your home:

- Make sure the garden is neat and tidy – it’s the first thing people see, and often, a small investment in a landscaper makes the difference between a quick sale or not.
- Inside, give tired walls a fresh lick of paint, clean your carpets, and make sure everything is spotlessly neat when people come to view your home. They have to be able to imagine themselves living in this home. And declutter: nothing puts a buyer off like a chaotic house.

## **Take the “no” out of negotiations**

Even the cheekiest offer could be the start of a negotiation that leads to a sale. If you get a lowball offer on a home you have loved and lived in, simply go back with a counter-offer that reflects the value you and your agent have decided on.

Unfortunately, a lot of home sellers are simply not cut out for negotiations. This is why you have an agent: they take the emotion out of the negotiation process, and help smooth over obstacles to reach outcomes that will make both the seller and buyer happy at the end of the day.

## **Be safe out there**

Opening your house to strangers will always carry an element of risk, especially in a time of rising crime and Covid-19. Make sure you have a verification process of booked viewers in place, or consider creating a virtual tour of your home that yields quality leads for the next round of physical viewing. And when people do come for a viewing, it’s important to exercise all necessary precautions, including wearing face masks, regular hand sanitising and social distancing.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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