



Sunday Column

By Kim Bragman, 2020 Chairman

5/24/2020

Top do's and don'ts when you start real estate negotiations

Buying or selling a property is one of the biggest transactions you can make, and many people find themselves overwhelmed trying to get the best deal. Since everything is negotiable in a real estate transaction—from price to the closing date to who pays to refinish those wood floors—it's worth some extra effort to come to the negotiating table prepared.

Your San Antonio area REALTOR® has a lot of experience helping buyers and sellers take on negotiations, so start by asking for her advice. Then, consider these six do's and don'ts to help you seal the deal with confidence.

Don't take it too personally. Many people let emotions dictate their negotiations. Don't get angry when a buyer presents a low offer for your home. Didn't you try to get a good deal on your house, too? The buyer isn't trying to insult you and is simply starting negotiations. He may be trying to see how low you'll go. Or his negotiation tactics could have been formed in a country where negotiating is handled differently. If you see the offer as an insult and don't counter because of emotions, you may be cutting off the process that would have resulted in a sale.

When buying, don't get upset if a seller rejects your offer or counters with his original asking price. You may think you presented a fair price for the house, but the rejection isn't personal. You can try again or move on.

Don't be afraid to say "no". Keeping emotions out of a deal also means not feeling sorry for the other side. Everyone has burdens, so don't allow others to dump theirs on you. If the seller rejects your fair offer based on "needing to save more money for my retirement fund," ask for a reason why that's relevant to the property's sale.

Don't exceed your own limits. What's the lowest price you'll accept for your home? What concessions, if any, will you make? Answer these questions before you put your home on the market. For buyers, what's your highest limit on what you can afford? How close are you willing to come to that number?

Do pay attention to the market. That means that you shouldn't low-ball sellers and ask for lots of concessions in a seller's market. Likewise, don't dismiss every less-than-perfect offer for your home in a buyer's market. How do you know what the market's doing? Ask your REALTOR®.

Don't split the difference. Meeting in the middle doesn't mean that both parties get a fair deal. If a buyer offered \$70,000 for your \$100,000 home, you countered with \$90,000, and the buyer

offered to split the difference at \$80,000, would you feel like you both won? Whether you're buying or selling, don't allow an extreme offer to affect your counter.

Do think about the big picture. Are you willing to jeopardize the sale of your house because the buyer wants the refrigerator and microwave to convey? As a buyer, how will your monthly payments be affected if the seller won't drop the price another \$5,000? Sometimes you have to take a step back to make sure you're not overemphasizing one detail that is standing between you and your objective.

Remember, your REALTOR® can help you analyze the current market and identify an appropriate buying or selling strategy for you.

For more information on buying, selling, or leasing your home visit SABOR.com and use a San Antonio area REALTOR®.

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