TONY SOUSA

TONY'S SELLER'S PLAYBOOK

SOLD

My Seller's Playbook is the **ultimate guide** for you to learn how to sell your for more money - stress free! Don't accept imitations!

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STREE-FREE SELLING

YOUR GUIDE TO STRESS-FREE SELLING!

Welcome!!! I'm genuinely glad you're here.

Most people think selling a home is all about luck, timing, or hoping the right buyer magically shows up.

It's not. Selling your home the right way comes down to clarity, strategy, and the truth… not the fluffy advice or half-answers you hear everywhere else. And that's exactly what this Playbook gives you... straight talk, real steps, and zero gimmicks.

You're already ahead of most sellers because you're here, learning how to protect your equity and avoid the costly mistakes so many people make. That tells me you care… and that means you're going to do this right.

Inside this Playbook, you'll find simple, bite-sized steps.

- No jargon.
- No confusion.
- No "industry speak."

Just the honest guidance every homeowner should have, but almost no one gets, stuck, overwhelmed, or just unsure, post a photo or a question and I'll help you.

Everything I teach... on YouTube, in the Facebook group, and in this Playbook... is built around one mission: Telling you the truth to help you sell your home without getting taken advantage of, without the stress, and without leaving money on the table.

Follow the steps. Keep it simple. Ask questions when you need to. You've got this… and I'm right here with you the whole way.

LET'S DO THIS!

Want to know how to get your home ready to sell?

Maybe you don't know where to start. You aren't sure who to call first. Do you reach out to an agent? A decorator?

Should you remodel? Should you paint? You feel like this should be easier than it is!You want to educate yourself on this process, but you have no idea where to begin.

I have worked with thousands of clients. And on every single transaction I have learned something new. The knowledge that I have is not something that you can learn on your own without a plan and guide who is experienced.

And what I know for a FACT, is that sellers who engage and educate themselves early on in the selling process make way more money and sell their home with less stress and trauma. (Yes... selling your home can be traumatic)

If you don't start planning early, you could be costing yourself money because you don't know where to spend your money to get your home ready. And you DO NOT want to make a mistake.

The last thing you want to do is spend tens of thousands of dollars on updates that might be a complete waste and won't get you a dollar more when you go to sell.

I know that sellers who engage with me early in the process (and I'm talking years early) are the ones who make the most money and have the least stress.

Selling your home is really a game. I understand that game and will guide you through the process in a very easy-to-understand way that won't overwhelm you.

I have sold almost half a billion dollars in real estate, and I have been sharing my real-life, honest advice about how to sell your home on my YouTube channel for years.

I have been in thousands of homes. I have seen hundreds of thousands of photos online of both good and bad listings. And from that experience, I've boiled down selling your home into five key steps for success. Get these right, and you're on your way to making more cash when you sell.

WHAT TO KNOW?

Five Steps to Getting Your Home Ready to Sell:

Introducing my Five Step Basic Blueprint. If you stick to these five crucial steps, I'm confident you will add tens of thousands of dollars to your home when you sell!

STEP ONE

Sell with Strategy: Let's balance your need for a good sale price with keeping your stress low. Selling your home can get stressful, and it's vital to decide what's more crucial for you—maximizing profit or maintaining peace of mind.

STEP TWO

Smart Upgrades: I'll show you which upgrades genuinely add value and which ones are just money pits. This way, you'll invest wisely, enhancing your home's appeal without draining your wallet.

STEP THREE

Staging on a Shoestring: I'll guide you through making your home look irresistible on a budget. From decluttering to smart furniture arrangement, you'll learn how to create a stunning first impression online, where most buyers will see your home first.

STEP FOUR

Pricing Playbook: We'll find the sweet spot for your listing price—one that attracts buyers and gets you the profit you deserve. Overpricing can scare off potential buyers, while underpricing means leaving money on the table.

STEP FIVE

Agent Matchmaker: I'll help you find the ideal real estate agent, someone who prioritizes your interests and expertly navigates the selling process.

I designed each step to give you the knowledge and tools you need to confidently and successfully sell your home fast and for a lot of money!

STEP ONE - STRATEGY

Cash in hand, stress in heart; weigh both before you start.

Selling your home can be traumatic, I always say. There's a direct correlation between the stress you feel and the money you make when selling. It's key to figure out what weighs more for you... the extra cash or keeping calm? Sure, everyone likes money, but do you really need it if it means going through an immense amount of stress? You should try and measure the true value of money vs stress. Start by answering these questions with the other decision-makers in your family so you know the path that you are on and you are all on the same page.

Where are you going to move to?

- What part of selling your house makes you feel the most worried?
- Is it okay to get a bit less money if it means you won't feel so stressed?
- hat if buyers aren’t willing to pay your price or if there are market changes?
- re you ready to change your plans a bit to help sell your house?
- What if you can’t sell your home? Will you rent it? Take it off the market?
- ow much money do you think you'd like to spend on updates in order to sell?
- What things do you think need fixing or updating?
- hat things are you not sure about fixing or updating?
- Save you documented your maintenance over time?
- Are you okay with a lot of people viewing your home? How does that make you feel? Will you be ok with that?
- Do you want just a few showings or are you ok with a lot of showings?
- Do you have the right furniture for staging purposes?
- Do you need to paint your house? If so, what color?
- Have you looked at the sold prices and the list prices of homes in your neighborhood?
- What have you noticed about the pictures of the homes that sold in your area? What is the highest-priced home? What is the lowest-priced home?
- What is your “appraised value?” What is your “market value?”
- ow much do you want for your home?
- What is the price you won’t sell less than?
- How will you decide who should help you sell your house?

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

Updating your home might polish its appeal, but without a strategy, it can pour out your profits.

You don't want to flush your hard-earned cash down the drain. I've watched many homeowners invest thousands of dollars into the wrong upgrades. And then they find out that those upgrades don’t get the best return. Don't be that person! I'll help you understand which improvements are worth your while and which ones to skip.

his is probably my most important step to save people thousands of dollars, so don’t skip this lesson on upgrades!

Whether you're sprucing up to sell or simply curious about where your home stands, understanding these five categories of the Tony’s Investment Matrix can help you make smarter, more cost-effective decisions.

1. Restoration Required

First up is Restoration Required. This category is for homes that might feel a bit more like a haunted house than a dream home at first glance. We're talking about properties that need a complete overhaul — from aging plumbing and electrical systems to significant structural repairs. If your home falls into this category, it's crucial to focus on essential repairs (think disclosure items) rather than cosmetic updates. The goal here is to ensure the house is safe and functional without overspending, as the buyer will likely be an investor or someone prepared to undertake substantial renovations.

2. Concealable Condition

Next, we have Concealable Condition. This is a step up but still challenging. Your home might have a relatively updated kitchen or a recently updated bathroom, but the bones of the house, like the mechanical systems, are outdated, and there's noticeable wear and tear. If you're here, focus on deep cleaning and minor repairs that enhance the home's presentation. It's not about a major overhaul but about making the property appealing enough to show well without sinking money into significant updates that won't pay off.

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

3. Surface Shine

Moving on to Surface Shine, the category that's a bit of a double-edged sword. Here, homes look great on the surface — think shiny new kitchen, stylish decor, and modern finishes. However, the essential systems and maintenance might have been neglected. It's tempting to think this home would fetch a high price, but savvy buyers will scrutinize the fundamentals during inspections. If you're in this category, be prepared for potential negotiations post-inspection, where buyers might request concessions for underlying issues.

4. Unpolished Potential

My favorite, Unpolished Potential, represents homes that have been well-maintained mechanically but might look a bit dated. These properties are a treasure trove of opportunity because they offer a solid foundation without the bells and whistles. If your home is here, small updates can yield significant returns. Buyers appreciate homes that are livable and well-cared-for, even if they're not the pinnacle of modern design. It's about maximizing potential without comprehensive renovations.

5. Modern Move-In

Finally, there's Modern Move-In, which is exactly what it sounds like: homes that are up-to-date in every aspect, from aesthetics to infrastructure. These homes are turnkey and are likely to attract buyers looking for a hassle-free move. However, achieving this category can be costly, and it's essential to balance the investment with realistic expectations of return. Not every upgrade will recoup its cost, but if done wisely, can make the selling process smoother and faster.

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

So, which category does your home fall into?

Identifying this can help you make informed decisions about how to approach pre-sale home improvements. Remember, not every home needs to reach the Modern Move-In status to sell!

Circle the age/condition of the item. Add up the total number of points. Results are on the next page:

Component	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points
Furnace	1 - 5 Years or N/A	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
A/C	1 - 5 Years or N/A	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Windows	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Kitchen	1 - 10 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Master Bathroom	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Other Bathrooms	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Paint	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Furniture	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Age of Home	1 - 10 Years	11 - 20 Years	21 - 30 Years	31 - 40 Years	41 Years +
Roof	1 - 5 Years	6 - 10 Years	11 - 15 Years	16 - 20 Years	20 Years +
Cleaning Frequency	Weekly		Monthly		Infrequently
Seller's Market?	Yes		Unsure		No
Foundation	Excellent		Fine		Poor
Layout of Home	Excellent		Good		Poor
Location	Excellent		Good		Poor
Deferred Maintenance	None		Some		A Lot
Outdoor Space	Excellent		Some		None
Landscaping	Excellent		Some		None
Floors	Hardwood	Luxury Vinyl Plank	Tile	Carpet	Vinyl
Is There a Reason Someone Wouldn't Buy Your home?	No. It's perfect.		Maybe. Not Sure.		Yes

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

Please indicate your results here:

TOTAL POINTS = _____

OUR CATEGORY IS _____

Restoration Required: 81-100 points

Significant repairs and updates needed. Focus on essential repairs, safety improvements, and major updates.

Budget: 1-3% of home value

Reasoning:

- Homes in this category often require only basic updates to address essential repairs and safety concerns.
- The goal is to spend minimally on necessary repairs to make the home livable and functional without over-investing.
- Fixing disclosure items, essential repairs, and deep cleaning.

Focus:

- Essential repairs for disclosure items (e.g., roof leaks, electrical issues)
- Deep cleaning and decluttering
- Basic safety and functionality improvements

void:

- Any updates; these buyers are focused solely on price and profit potential.

Concealable Condition: 61-80 points

Some visible issues, moderate updates needed to conceal flaws and enhance marketability. Focus on paint, minor repairs, and cosmetic touch-ups.

Budget: 2-5% of home value

Reasoning:

- Homes in this category need minor updates to improve presentation without extensive renovations.
- The investment focuses on fixing visible issues and making minor cosmetic improvements that can significantly enhance the home's appeal.
- This percentage allows for modest updates, like painting and minor repairs.

Focus:

- Minor cosmetic updates (e.g., fresh paint, new hardware)
- Repair obvious issues (e.g., broken fixtures)
- Cleaning and decluttering

Avoid:

- Spending on cosmetic upgrades; these buyers want to update themselves

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

Modern Move-In: 20-30 points

Excellent condition, minimal updates needed. Features are modern and market-ready. Focus on maintenance, minor touch-ups, and showcasing features.

Budget: Up to 1% of home value

Reasoning:

These homes are already updated and require minimal investment to maintain their current appeal and functionality.

The investment focuses on maintaining systems, enhancing presentation, and minor touch-ups to showcase the home at its best.

Focus:

- Maintenance and minor touch-ups
- Enhance presentation with accessories and staging
- High-quality photos for marketing
- Ensure all systems are in excellent condition

Avoid:

- Leaving any deferred maintenance issues unaddressed, as they expect perfection.

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

Now that you know the condition your home is in, you can figure out which updates will get you the highest return when you sell and which ones won't add much value.

You definitely don't want to be the person who finds out too late that their new quartz countertops or deluxe master suite didn't actually add any real value to their home. This might be the most crucial money-saving advice you'll hear if you're looking to boost your home's value without wasting thousands.

Of course, all of these updates are great if you want to enjoy them while living in the home. But if you're expecting to get a dollar-for-dollar return when you sell, use this chart to see where you'll get the best return on your investment.

High Return, Low Expense

Definitely worth it! These upgrades offer great value for little cost.

- Clean
- Paint
- Update lighting fixtures
- Service the HVAC system
- Pest control
- Septic system inspection and pumping
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Update hardware and hinges
- Regrout tiles & refresh caulk
- rim trees and bushes
- Re-stain or seal wooden decks
- Add a fresh layer of mulch. Clean up landscaping - green grass/ healthy grass Maximize storage and declutter
- Power wash exterior: patio, porch, driveway, home exterior
- Clean carpet
- Repair fencing
- Clean out gutters and downspouts
- Declutter & remove personal items
- Upgrade overhead lighting & old fixtures
- Add potted plants in the front walk and back yard
- Replace or fix the doorbell
- Declutter garage
- Repair the roof (not replace)

STEP TWO - UPGRADES

Low Return, Moderate Expense

Make these repairs, but completing these upgrades will most likely not get a return on your investment when you go to sell.

- Replace the water heater
- Replace siding
- Security system
- Radon testing and mitigation
- Window treatments
- Attic insulation
- Water-saving fixtures
- Foundation inspection and repair
- lean or replace the fireplace
- Generator installation
- Install backup sump pump
- Replace or update garage doors
- Low Return, Expensive

Low Return, Expensive

Avoid these upgrades unless they're essential repairs or you want them in your own home. You most likely won't see a return on this investment.

- HVAC replacement
- Add or upgrade a deck or patio
- Redo cement walkways
- Replace the driveway
- Finish an attic
- Solar panels
- Update or add an irrigation system
- Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances
- Soundproofing

STEP THREE - STAGING

Staging on a Shoestring - Prep for Perfect Showings

Fake It. Take It. Make It.

Your first showing happens online! That's right—before buyers even step through the door, they're already forming an opinion based on what they see in photos. If your home doesn't stand out in those images, you could miss out on thousands.

But don't worry! There are easy, affordable ways to make your home look irresistible for that all-important first impression. With a few strategic updates and clever staging, you can "fake it" by making it look stunning without breaking the bank,

take it" by grabbing buyers' attention with great photos, and "make it" by turning those views into offers so that you make the money!

Why Bother Staging Your Home?

- Staging your home can make a world of difference when it comes to selling quickly and for top dollar. Here's why:
- Sell Faster: Staged homes typically sell quicker than those that aren't spruced up. When buyers can envision themselves in a space, they act fast.
- Get Better Offers: A well-staged home looks well-cared-for, which can lead to higher bids from buyers.
- Make a Stellar First Impression: Most house hunting starts online, and homes that are staged simply look better in photos and listings.
- Connect on an Emotional Level: A beautifully staged home can tug at the heartstrings of potential buyers, making them more likely to make an offer.

Home Staging 101: The Golden Rules

Staging doesn't mean just paying to bring in furniture. It's so much more than that! Follow these simple steps to make your home stand out:

- Deep Clean Like There's No Tomorrow - Buyers notice everything. A spotless, clean home creates a great first impression and shows that your home has been well cared for. Make regular deep cleaning a priority during the selling process.
- Declutter to Impress - Cut the clutter! Store away personal items and keep surfaces clear. This allows buyers to see the space itself and imagine how they would make it their own.
- Furniture Placement is Key - The way your furniture is arranged can make rooms feel bigger, more functional, and inviting. Thoughtful placement shows off your home's potential and versatility.
- Dress It Up - Add stylish, neutral decor for the final touch. A few well-placed pieces of decor can warm up your space without making it feel too personal, helping buyers connect with the home emotionally.

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STEP THREE - STAGING

Comprehensive Staging and Inspection Preparation Checklist

Kitchen and Baths

- Thoroughly clean countertops, appliances, and fixtures.
- Declutter countertops; store small appliances out of sight.
- Clean tile grout and re-caulk where necessary.

Lighting and Closets

- Replace all light bulbs with high-wattage versions for brightness.
- Organize closets, removing out-of-season clothing and clutter.
- Add extra, empty hangers and organize shoes neatly.

Attention to Details

- Tighten loose doorknobs and fix leaky faucets.
- Lubricate squeaky doors or drawers.
- Clean and ensure all switches and outlets are functioning.

Garage and Storage

- Dispose of unwanted items; organize the remaining neatly.
- Organize tools and equipment; clean appliances.

Heating and Cooling

- Clean the fireplace
- Service the HVAC - furnace/air conditioner, and replace filters if needed.
- Insure the water heater is clean and presentable.

Home Inspection Preparation

- Replace any burnt-out bulbs; ensure all lights work.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; replace if necessary.
- Insure utilities are on, including pilot lights.
- Provide access to attic, basement, and electrical panels.
- Repair any exterior damage to siding or foundation.
- Inspect and repair roof and clean gutters.
- Secure handrails and fix locks on doors and windows.

STEP THREE - Pricing

Pricing Playbook

Price Your Home for Peak Profit

Your price is not what you believe. It's what your buyer believes.

This can be tough for sellers to grasp. Setting your price too high could be a costly blunder. Seriously, I've seen folks lose a ton of money overpricing their home by just$25,000 too high. Don't let this be you. I'll walk you through pricing your home perfectly to maximize your profit.

It's vital to grasp that the right price isn't just a number you desire; it's what the buyer is willing to pay. This concept is where many sellers stumble, risking thousands in potential profit. Overpricing, even by just $25,000, can lead to significant losses.

But worry not! We're here to navigate the delicate balance of appraised and market value to ensure you don't fall into this common trap. Click here to watch a video on this that explains this concept.

Appraised Value vs. Market Value: What Most Don't Get

The distinction between appraised and market value is pivotal, yet it's what many sellers fail to understand. Here's the breakdown:

Appraised Value: This is the valuation an appraiser gives your home, primarily used by banks to ensure the loan amount requested by a buyer is justified. It’s based on cold, hard data — square footage, age, condition, and recent sales of comparable homes.

Market Value: This is where things get more subjective. It's what a buyer is actually willing to pay for your home, influenced by its unique qualities, the current market demand, and emotional appeal. Market value can fluctuate more than appraised value, responding to how buyers value your home's specific features and the overall market mood.

Why Is This So Important?

Understanding the difference — and the significance of each — is critical. Here's why:

Setting the Right Price: Your initial listing price can make or break your sale. Aim too high, and you risk alienating potential buyers. But if you're armed with knowledge about your home's appraised value and its potential market value, you can set a more accurate and appealing price.

Negotiation Power: When you know the value of your home, you negotiate from a position of strength. Whether it's dealing with offers below your asking price or discussing terms, understanding these values gives you the leverage you need.

Maximizing Profit: Ultimately, isn't this what every seller wants? By pricing your home correctly from the start, based on a solid understanding of its appraised and market values, you're more likely to sell quickly and for the best possible price.

Let's Do This Right

As we walk through this process together, remember: your goal is to sell your home at the best price possible. By understanding the critical difference between appraised and market value, you're taking a giant step towards achieving that goal.

I'm here to guide you every step of the way to ensure you're not just another statistic in the tales of overpricing woes.