



FOR SALE

So Your House Didn't Sell...Now What?

Why Most Homes Listed for Sale Don't Sell and What to Do About It

By Thomas Carder

Charles Rutenberg Realty

Table of Contents

1. It's Probably Safe To Answer Your Phone Now!	1
2. Should You Even Relist Your House At All?	3
3. Should You Relist Your House Now Or Wait Some More?	5
4. Before You Meet With Me... Or Any Other Agent	6
5. How Did The Market React Last Time?	7
6. Was It The Price? Maybe... Maybe Not	9
7. Was It The Market?	11
8. Was It The Marketing?	12
9. Was It "Conditions"?	14
10. Was It Accessible?	16
11. Was "Homelessness" An Issue?	17
12. Was It Motivation?	18
13. Be Careful... You're Creating A Digital Footprint	19
14. Your First Two Weeks Back On The Market	21
15. I Hope This Helps!	23

1. It's Probably Safe To Answer Your Phone Now!

When you first listed your house for sale, you were probably excited to receive tons of calls from agents who wanted to schedule an appointment to show your house.

What you probably didn't expect, and probably weren't happy about, is that you got more calls from agents *after* your listing expired than you did *while* it was on the market.

And all of them were promising they could get your house sold, or they "may have a buyer" for your house, or some other line from a script they learned in training.

So you probably got tired of it pretty quickly and then got pretty good at screening your calls and not answering your door when an agent knocked. (And you probably also filled a garbage can or two up with all the letters you got.)

Well, at this point, I think it's safe to say you can answer your phone and door without fear! You've been "expired" long enough at this point that agents have forgotten about you. Or at least given up hounding you.

Anyhow, I didn't call, knock, or mail you anything back then for two reasons...

1. **Courtesy.** I knew you were being pounded by more agents than you could shake a stick at. So I just didn't want to add another person for you to have to deal with.
2. **I thought you should wait to relist.** Well, not *just* you. I kind of feel like most people whose house "expired" should take a breather, regroup, and give it a little time and thought before going back on the market.

Too many people rush to get their house back on the market. Some get rushed into it by agents who sell them on doing so. Either way, it isn't necessarily the best decision. In fact, waiting to go back on the market for a period of time can be the smartest move you've made.

I created this guide to specifically help the few people like you who *do* pause and think things through before going back on the market.

The fact that you didn't rush to relist is a good sign that you're thoughtful about what you're doing, and I hope this guide will help you think it through as thoroughly as possible.

So give it a read, and feel free to call me with any questions you may have as you read it!

And of course, if you're leaning toward relisting your house soon or in the near future, I'd love the chance to meet with you and discuss how I can help you. Hopefully this guide will give you a good sense of who I am and how I conduct business.

2. Should You Even Relist Your House At All?

You ever hear that saying, “To a man with a hammer, everything is a nail”?

So it is with many real estate agents and expired listings. You’re the nail to a bunch of people with hammers.

Here’s the basic logic...

- ▶ A real estate agent wants to list houses for sale.
- ▶ It’s hard for the agent to find enough people who want to sell their house.
- ▶ Your house was listed, which is an indication that you want to sell your house.
- ▶ Your house didn’t sell.
- ▶ They figure you probably still want to sell your house.
- ▶ Therefore, you should relist your house and let him or her list it.

Nowhere in the typical line of logic is there any room for questioning whether you actually *should* relist your house.

But to me, that’s a huge question you (and any agent you consider working with) should be asking.

Should you relist your home at all, let alone with me or with any other agent?

We’ll be getting into this in more detail as we move along in the booklet, but for now just let that question simmer a bit.

Too often I see people simply go through the motions without ever stopping to assess and consider why they’re doing what they’re doing.

So take a few moments and truly think about why you want to sell your home.

Here's an even better idea—don't just *think* about the reasons...**jot them down**. It'll come in handy as you read through the rest of this guide and decide how to move forward.

3. Should You Relist Your House Now Or Wait Some More?

OK, if you're like most people, after you've read the last section and gone through the exercise of jotting down why you want to move, you've regained some perspective and motivation.

So now the question becomes: Should you relist your house right away or keep it off the market for a while before relisting?

There's no absolute answer to that question. It will vary from one person's situation to another and one market to another. And it can even vary within a real estate market. For instance, it might make sense to relist a house right away in the \$200,000s in your area but not in the \$300,000s. It takes some analysis and thought to make that decision properly and thoroughly.

The problem many homeowners (whose house has expired) run into is that most agents will push for them to relist their house *immediately*. This is because they're afraid that if they don't get you to relist right away, you may relist your house with someone else. (Which is why you probably felt like every agent you heard from was pushing you to relist.)

It's obviously human and natural for an agent to do, but it isn't necessarily the *best* advice for *every* owner whose house has expired.

So, if you're leaning toward putting your house back on the market, I'd be glad to help you take a look at the market and help you decide if the timing and market are good for you and your situation right now or if it makes sense to hold off for a while. No pressure. I'll make sure you get an objective perspective.

4. Before You Meet With Me... Or Any Other Agent

This is along the lines of the exercise I recommended two sections ago...

Before you meet with me or any other agent to discuss whether you should relist your house or not, take some time to think about (and jot down) some things about your last experience.

It's been a little while, and you've had some distance from the experience, so here are a few questions to help you remember and come up with a good, thorough list.

- ▶ What frustrated you? (About the process, the market, your agent, etc.)
- ▶ What did you wish happened differently?
- ▶ What do you hope doesn't happen again the next time around?
- ▶ What did you wish your agent did better?
- ▶ What did you like about your agent or how they did things?

This will come in handy and help you stay focused and not forget to mention things during the conversation.

With that said, don't expect (or even want) an agent who simply agrees with you and says "yes" to you just to get you to relist your house with them. There may be certain things that you didn't like, or would like to change next time around, that are a matter of reality. For example, you may say you want to see more showings. That's hard to promise. That will depend on a lot of factors, like the overall number of buyers in the market, their motivation, and your price.

On the other hand, if you experienced very little communication from your last agent and say you'd like to hear from your next agent more consistently and frequently, an agent can (and should) be able to accommodate that.

5. How Did The Market React Last Time?

Another thing that will be helpful for you to have handy is a decent summary of how the market reacted last time you were on the market.

How many showings did you have?

Some people are extremely meticulous and actually keep records of how many buyers came to see the house. Some people just have sharp memories. But don't worry if you don't have either of those or an exact number.

An approximation or a "feel" is fine. For example, "I had probably eight showings in the first couple of weeks. Then it died down to one or two per week for a couple of months. Then there was nobody for a while. And in the last week or two we had a few showings come out of the blue." (Which is actually a pretty typical arc for someone to see.)

Were any of the showings "repeats"?

This means a lot. So try hard to recall if any of the buyers who came to see your house came more than once. If so, how many buyers did that?

Did you have any offers?

Some people whose house has expired didn't receive any offers, but quite a few did.

- ▶ Sometimes the offers were legitimately too low (AKA "lowball offers").
- ▶ Sometimes a seller got a great offer but didn't accept it at the time because it was a little lower than they wanted, only to wish they'd accepted it as time passed.
- ▶ Other times they actually accepted an offer, and it fell through for one reason or another.

What was the typical “feedback”?

Hopefully your last agent was able to get some “feedback” from buyers and / or their agents after you had showings. (Not every buyer or agent will give feedback, but hopefully you got *some*.)

So, what did they typically say? Did they say the house needed work? Did they mention price as an issue? Or did they give vague and general feedback like “It’s just not for them...”?

It’s important to go over exactly how the market reacted to your listing the last time around in order to analyze your situation and advise you appropriately. So, take a moment or two to jot down a summary of what you experienced.

6. Was It The Price? Maybe... Maybe Not

In the last section, when I brought up feedback, I asked whether buyers or their agents ever mentioned your price was an issue.

Nothing makes a homeowner cringe more than hearing their agent, or anyone else, say that their price is too high.

In fact, if you actually spoke to every single agent who's approaching you now that your house has expired, almost all of them will say that your price was an issue. Basically put, the way most agents look at it is this: If it didn't sell during the entire course of your last listing period, it had to be that price was too high.

To be fair, sometimes (OK, maybe a *lot* of times) it *is* the main reason a house didn't sell.

But not always!

Sometimes the price is fine, and it was something else entirely that caused the house not to sell. But many agents just presume that price *had* to be the issue.

Here's another way of putting it...

In real estate, price isn't *always* the issue, but it's always a *solution*...

...a solution too many agents go straight for, rather than analyzing what else it could've been.

Because, yes, ultimately you can always price a house to sell and sell quickly. And sometimes that makes the most sense and is warranted. Sometimes, though, it's not the solution, doesn't make sense, or isn't warranted.

So, be open to a solid analysis and reason for lowering your price if necessary, but don't just accept it blindly because it's the easy and popular thing to advise.

7. Was It The Market?

Like I was just saying, sometimes it isn't your price that was the problem.

Just because buyers didn't leap at the chance to buy your house doesn't mean that it isn't worth what you were asking. It could've just been that there weren't actually any buyers in the market in your particular price range while you were on the market. Some price ranges have lower demand than others, so getting what your house is worth can be a matter of patience.

It could also be that it was a matter of timing.

For instance, perhaps you put your house on at a fair price, but the market was slow during the critical first few weeks and months, and your house became "stale." So as buyers came into the market, they may have seen your house with more days on market than others causing them to think, "Something must be wrong if nobody else has already bought it," and they just didn't even come to see it. Silly, but it happens.

Which is why timing when you go on the market matters—and why you shouldn't *necessarily* jump right back onto the market.

Before you do relist, make sure you have a thorough market analysis and assess whether it makes sense to relist right away or not. Also, consider whether your price was really an issue at all or whether it's more of an issue with the current pool of buyers and their motivation. It could just be a matter of supply and demand...and patience.

8. Was It The Marketing?

Marketing is a very broad term when it comes to real estate. What one agent or company offers to the homeowners they represent will often differ from another. Yet, at the same time, almost all do similar *types* of marketing for all of their listings.

The question becomes how *well* they do it.

Truth be told, while marketing is important, a lot of the heavy lifting is now done by simply being on the local multiple listing system. Once it's on there, your listing usually auto-populates to many other real estate sites. It's almost impossible for a buyer in the market to miss your listing, and most buyers actually see what has come on the market within minutes or hours of it being listed. The Internet has done much for getting your listing in front of every buyer in the market as thoroughly and quickly as possible.

So while print advertising, flyers, postcards, or signage all are still worth doing, the most important marketing boils down to great pictures and a great listing description that will get buyers' attention the minute they see it pop on.

And a lot of times, I'll see listings with too few photos...or ones that are dark and blurry. Heck, I've even seen photos of the front of some houses where the agent snapped a pic from the front seat of their car...catching the all-important view of their side-view mirror.

The point here is that it isn't so much about the *quantity* of marketing...or even *where* your house is marketed. Rather, it's *quality* that matters most when you consider that most true buyers in the market will see your house right on their phone or computer screen.

So, take a look at the pictures and description of your house in the last listing... (You probably already have, but you'd be amazed at how many homeowners I've met who

never looked at their own listing once their agent put it on the market!)

Did it show your house in the best possible light? (Literally and figuratively.)
And was the description compelling enough to get a buyer to stop and read more?

If not, that'll be an easy improvement when you relist your house.

9. Was It “Conditions”?

There’s a fine line between making your house “show ready” and over-improving it to make it look like a “show room.”

The last thing I want to see is a homeowner putting too much time or money into renovating or improving their house just before selling. Too often it doesn’t increase the value as much as it cost. So, while it may sell for more than it would have before improvements were made, the owner won’t actually make more—they’ll actually make *less* than they would have if they did nothing at all.

With that said, a lot of homeowners don’t do enough of the simple stuff like:

- ▶ Decluttering
- ▶ Cleaning
- ▶ Minor painting
- ▶ Carpet cleaning
- ▶ Eliminating odors
- ▶ Some simple “staging”

While you don’t need to make your house look like Martha Stewart came in and “Pottery-Barned” your house for you, it’s really important to make sure the house looks tidy, bright, and well kept.

Life gets busy, and it can be really tough keeping your house ready to show day in and day out...especially if it’s on the market for an extended period. It’s easy to get a bit lazy and let it look “lived in,” but that can also lead to buyers deciding it’s not a place they care to live in.

Hopefully you kept your house decluttered, clean, tidy, and bright for all showings...but if not, that’s an easy-ish* trick for you to improve your chances next time around.

(*I say "easy-ish" because I know how hard it is to keep a house ready to be shown!)

10. Was It Accessible?

It's tough having to always be ready for someone to call and want to show your house at what seems like a moment's notice.

Ideally, an agent or buyer would give you a good amount of notice. But the reality is that many buyers and agents will "schedule" a showing mere minutes before they actually want to walk through the door.

One of the most important things an owner can do is make their home as easily accessible for a buyer to come see as possible. Yes, even if that is in the next half hour.

But that gets tiring, especially if you've had dozens of buyers come through after short notice, leave, and you never hear *anything* back from them (let alone an offer). It starts to get discouraging, aggravating, and it can lead to owners saying no to future showings or making it very difficult for a buyer or agent to schedule to come see.

When that happens, the perfect buyer could bypass ever seeing your house simply because of the rudeness of previous buyers.

When that's the reason an owner makes their house harder to show, it's at least understandable. But some homeowners simply make it difficult to see from the first day it's even on the market. I'll often see owners who will only allow showings on certain days and within certain hours. (Usually not very convenient days or times for buyers, mind you.) And *that* is what has gotten in the way of their house selling.

Now, there are certainly valid reasons to limit when someone can show your house. However, for the most part, my best recommendation is to make your house as "show-ready" as possible...for the entire time you're on the market.

11. Was “Homelessness” An Issue?

One of the trickiest things for most people who are selling a house is lining up their next home before they actually sell the one they own.

It’s a big (and natural) fear!

What if your house sells quickly and you can’t find another house to buy (or at least one you want) in time?!

This is one of the biggest reasons many houses “expire.” Yet most people, and even agents, never realize it since it isn’t an obvious thing that they can point to or identify. It takes experience to know this.

Basically, an owner who’s worried about where they’ll move once their home is sold will make some basic mistakes. They will:

- ▶ Overprice their home
- ▶ Turn down great offers
- ▶ Make it difficult to see their home

While it’s a natural and understandable concern, these mistakes can cost them the ability to ever be able to find the next perfect home and actually move.

There are several solutions to ease this concern, but it depends so much upon a person’s circumstances and qualifications. Therefore, I can’t give you all of the ways you might be able to ease this concern if it is, in fact, a concern of yours. (It’d be an entire booklet in and of itself!)

But if this is your biggest concern, and you feel like it might’ve been a subconscious reason that led to your house not selling, just reach out to me. I’ll help you figure out the best way to line up the perfect next home and avoid “homelessness.”

12. Was It Motivation?

Most people think that if a house is on the market for sale, the owner really *wants* to move.

“Want” is the crucial word in that sentence.

If someone has their house on the market, they probably want to sell their house to *some degree*. But not all sellers are *absolutely motivated* to sell their house.

Sometimes one spouse or significant other really wants to move, while the other doesn't.

Other times, there may be kids involved who don't want to move.

Or, it could be that an owner doesn't really want to move but has to for financial reasons.

Those, and so many other reasons, cause people to do things that get in the way of the house selling, just like in the last section.

Another reason I've seen is that an owner was more or less sold on the idea of selling by a real estate agent. Perhaps the agent sent a mailing, cold-called them, or maybe even just chatted them up at a party. Next thing you know, their house was on the market, but they didn't really want to sell.

This all goes back to one of the first sections where I suggested you take a moment and think through why you want to sell. Hopefully you have good reason to sell.

If you do, make sure you and anyone else involved in the move are all on the same page. If not, it may be best to just not even put your house on the market because...

13. Be Careful... You're Creating A Digital Footprint

OK, at this point you should have a pretty good handle on what *might* have been and what might *not* have been the reasons your house didn't sell when it was previously listed for sale.

Whether it was something you could have avoided or not, the next time you list your home for sale should be the last time.

First of all, having your house on the market isn't a picnic, right? So it isn't something you want to do more times than you have to.

But more importantly, even if you absolutely love having your house on the market and disappearing everytime someone wants to come see it, you should keep the number of times your house is listed for sale down to a minimum.

Back in the day, it was pretty hard for a buyer, or even an agent, to figure out how long your house had been on the market or how many times it was listed for sale. Maybe a neighbor could let the secret out because they saw a sign on the lawn for months or years. Or maybe an agent in the know would be able to tell a buyer that your house had been on the market for quite some time.

But nowadays, all a buyer or an agent needs to do is open their eyes. It'll be almost impossible for them to not know how many times you've listed your house for sale or how many days it's been on the market. (Thanks a lot, Internet...)

While the Internet has certainly made selling and looking for a house more enjoyable and easier in certain ways, it's also made it impossible to hide how long you've been on the market.

Not every real estate website shows these stats, but enough of them do...especially the

ones most visited by your potential buyers.

And since the multiple listing systems are now all digital, as opposed to big clunky books that used to be published every month or so, all an agent has to do is click their mouse a couple times. They can then see how long your house has been on the market...and then share that info with their buyers. (And they usually will even if their buyer doesn't ask...)

Why does that matter?

Because buyers (and agents) form opinions—whether right, wrong, or somewhere in between—about a house and its value based upon how many times (and for how long) it's been on the market.

So while it isn't the craziest or worst thing in the world for your house to have expired (it happens to a lot of people), it certainly is in your best interest to do it right the next time around...and ideally as fast as possible without your days on market getting too high.

How do you do that?

- ▶ Make sure your house is priced appropriately in the market right from the start. (No, that doesn't mean underpricing it or "giving it away.")
- ▶ Make sure it's easy to come and see for buyers.
- ▶ Make sure it's as neat, clean, and bright as possible.
- ▶ Make sure it's findable by every buyer in the market from day one.

14. Your First Two Weeks Back On The Market

Remember back to the last time you had your house on the market...

Did you see the most buyer activity in the first two weeks?

It wouldn't surprise me if you did—that's *usually* the case.

That doesn't mean your house (or any house) should sell within the first two weeks though.

But the first two weeks on the market are very important...and very telling.

- ▶ If you see a good amount of buyer activity in your first two weeks, that probably means you've priced your house well within the current market.
- ▶ If that's the case, you should see some offers or at least hear that there is interest in your home.
- ▶ If you see repeat buyers coming through, that's also a good sign and an indication that you're priced well within the market.
- ▶ If you see good activity but receive *no* offers, that probably means the price is a little high. You might want to reduce it slightly.
- ▶ If you see a low amount of showings, it's probably an indication that your price is too high for the current market.
- ▶ However, as stated earlier, it could also just be that the current market has few active buyers and you should just be patient.

Those are all more or less "rules of thumb." There is no absolute answer or assessment. It will take an educated and experienced eye to truly assess and advise you of the best course of action.

One of the things I see all the time are owners who do see good activity (and even solid

offers) in the first two weeks on the market and then ignore the signs and just stay put...or don't accept a good offer (because they feel it happened too quickly), only to regret it a few weeks or months later.

So just be aware of these typical signals from the market as you re-enter the market so you don't find yourself wishing you could turn back time a little while later.

15. I Hope This Helps!

I hope this booklet was helpful to you as you move forward with the sale of your house, whether that's soon or at some point in the distant future.

Of course, *whenever* that time comes, I'd love the opportunity to work with you!

Even if you're not quite ready, or especially if you're on the fence about listing right now, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. I'll gladly help you analyze and assess whether it makes sense to go back on the market now or wait a while longer.

The best way to reach me to set up an appointment, or even just pick my brain for a few, is to call me or text me. You can find all my info on the back page of this booklet.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Compliments of:



Thomas Carder

Charles Rutenberg Realty

Cell: 407-919-3952

Hablo Español

www.CFHomeGroup.com

Skilled in Real Estate Transactions For Sale, For Rent, Short Sales, Foreclosures, Bank Owned, Government Hud homes, VA Homes Zero Down. RELO Relocation Expert, 1st Time Home Buyers, Down Payment Assistance. For Sale By Owner's, Expired Listings. Experience With New Construction, Luxury, Estate Homes, Million Dollar Listings, Single Family Homes. Condominiums, Townhouses. Adult Communities, Senior Living, 55+ plus.

