

Buying Strategies (continued)

specific house. If you feel confident after that, then put your house on the market. Another strategy is to make the sale “subject to seller finding home of choice”. Adding this phrase to the listing means that when you do find a buyer, you will have some time to find the new place. If you don’t find anything to your liking within the specified contingency time period, you can ask for more time to find your dream home.

3. Play the Game of Nines

Before house hunting, make a list of nine things you want in the new place. Then make a list of the nine things you don’t want. We call this “Nine of This and None of That”. You can use this list as a scorecard to rate each property that you see. The one with the biggest score wins. This helps avoid confusion and keeps things in perspective when you’re comparing homes. When house hunting, keep in mind the difference between “skin” and “bones”. The “bones” are things that cannot be changed such as the location, view, size of lot, noise in the area, school district, and floor plan. The “skin” represents easily changed surface finishes like carpet, wallpaper, color, and window coverings. Buy the house with good “bones”, because the “skin” can always be changed to match your tastes. We always recommend that you imagine each house as if it were vacant. Consider each house on its underlying merits, not the seller’s decorating skills. If you are purchasing with a co-buyer it is vital to be on the same page with regards to this.

4. Don’t Be Pushed Into Any House

Your agent should show you everything available that meets your requirements. Don’t make a decision on a house until you feel that you’ve seen enough to pick the best one. Go to the Multiple Listing computer with your agent to make sure that you are getting a COMPLETE list. In the late 1980’s early 90’s, homes were selling quickly, usually a few days after listing. In that kind of market, agents advised their clients to make an offer on the spot if they liked the house. That was good advice at the time. Today there isn’t always this urgency, unless a home is drastically under priced, and you’ll know if it is. Don’t forget to check into the neighborhoods and school districts of the area you’re considering. Information is available on every school, such as class sizes, percent of students that go on to college, SAT scores, etc. You can get this information from your agent or directly from the school. Calling the local police precinct for the property will give you the crime statistics for the neighborhood which is vital information for any purchaser in any neighborhood. Even better, you can find a wealth of related information on ours and other websites.

5. Stop Calling Ads!

A word of caution - sellers create ads solely to make the phone ring and generate business

Buying Strategies (continued)

for themselves. Many homes have some drawback not mentioned in the ad, such as traffic noise, power lines, or litigation in the community. What's not mentioned in the ad is usually more important than what is. For this reason, be very careful when reading ads. Remember that the person writing the ad is looking for a buyer and not necessarily one for that property! The most important thing you can do is to have someone on your side looking out for your best interests. Your own agent will critique the property with an eye towards how well it meets your needs, and will point out any drawbacks you should know about. So pick a real estate agent you feel comfortable with and enlist the services of that real estate agent as a buyer broker. Then you become a client with all the rights, benefits, and privileges created by this agency relationship, and you're no longer just a shopper. Did you know that many homes are sold without a sign ever going up or an ad ever being put in the paper? These "great deals" go to those people who have agent representation. Those who have THEIR agent out there looking for the best deal.

 **Maggie Altomare &
The A Team**
Results Driven Real Estate Services



Each office independently owned and operated.
Licensed in the state of Virginia.



RE/MAX® Premier



Offices in Fairfax and Dulles
13135 Lee Jackson Highway, Suite #115
Fairfax, Virginia 22033

Tel: (703) 480-2705
Fax: (703) 818-3075
E-mail: mcaltomare@remax.net

www.TheATeamSellsVA.com