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Use the MLS to Help Sell Your Home

When selling your home you want to make sure as many potential buyers as possible are aware of your property. The best way to ensure that "maximum exposure" is through the services of a Realtor and the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).

Realtors are experts, trained and licensed in the field of real estate, who service the needs of the public in the buying and selling of homes. All are members of local real estate boards and have access to the MLS - an extensive network of listings across the country.

What is MLS?

The MLS is a central registry of properties used by Realtors to match buyers with homes on the market. MLS is described as a "cooperative marketing system" to ensure maximum exposure of properties for sale.

The MLS is very effective. Last year, sales across Canada from MLS listings totalled an amazing \$58 billion.

In addition to being distributed in printed catalogues, MLS is also a sophisticated computer database of properties indexed by price, location, type of home, number of bedrooms, amenities and so forth. Photos of homes may also be available on-line and, over the past year, many real estate boards have added their MLS listings to the Internet through www.mls.ca.

The advantages for the consumer

The major benefit of MLS to consumers is that it allows the Realtor to use his or her skills to full advantage. Realtors are experts at determining what it is a potential buyer wants in a home--and a large part of the Realtor's job lies in finding properties that suit these criteria.

With MLS, a Realtor can search the database for homes that suit budgets, location preferences and family requirements, and quickly put together a short list of suitable homes. Many consumers will find themselves first viewing MLS material at their Realtor's office to preview potential properties and narrow the list further. When it comes time to view in earnest, they know exactly what homes they want to see, what their options are and what types of properties the market has to offer.

Through the MLS, Realtors can literally view details of thousands of homes. In fact, in 1997, over 300,000 properties new to the market were listed in Ontario alone.

This gives the home buyer an extraordinary amount of choice and flexibility. The search for homes doesn't have to involve driving around neighborhoods looking for "for sale" signs. Nor will it mean relying on homes listed only in newspapers or real estate magazines. With the MLS, an entire spectrum of available properties is at your Realtor's fingertips.

Even if you're moving across country or to a distant part of the province, the MLS can be used to scout homes in advance, greatly reducing the worry that often comes with relocation.

The bottom line is that what's good for the buyer is good for the seller. This is because the main obstacle for any seller is to find qualified, motivated buyers. The only way to overcome this is to match your home to the requirements of as many potential buyers as possible. Using the MLS cuts through the complexities, exposes your property to those most likely to purchase it, and makes sure you won't waste time showing your home to those who aren't truly interested.

So, when you've made the decision to sell, make sure you ask your Realtor about an MLS listing. It could be that your Realtor will already know of a number of potential buyers, but in most cases, an MLS listing will open up a broader range of interested parties.

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