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## Real Estate

### 10 Unorthodox Ways Your Real Estate Agent May Market Your Home

Your listing agent might employ these strategies to make a tough sell a big success.

By Devon Thorsby

#### Time to get creative



When it comes to marketing your home, real estate agents have started taking it up a notch. In an age when the grocery store home listing book is just about dead and **social media marketing** is the new norm, listing agents are coming up with increasingly different and out-of-the-box ways to intrigue buyers without having to resort to the dreaded tactic of price reduction. "If you go to the doctor and something hurts, you don't cut off somebody's leg – you take a look and see if something else may be causing the pain," says Mickey Conlon, a licensed associate real estate broker at Douglas Elliman in New York. Here are unorthodox ways real estate agents are marketing properties today.

## Skipping the MLS for now



A [real estate agent's](#) first move in listing a home is often to put it in the multiple listing service, a database of properties on the market in the area. It may seem counterintuitive, but keeping your home off the MLS for a few weeks gives your agent the chance to entice buyers with what seems like an early peek at the property, explains Greg Hague, CEO of Real Estate Mavericks, a real estate coaching firm based in Scottsdale, Arizona. "It gives the seller – you – a chance to test the price. Then if you decide to put it in the MLS, you can put it in at the right price, not the wrong price," Hague says. Reducing the asking price on a property already on the MLS can make an agent or buyer wonder what's wrong the property.

## Marketing for another type of use or property owner



For a property that's proving tricky to drum up interest in, your real estate agent may look beyond the standard homeowner when attracting potential buyers. Conlon and his business partner, Tom Postilio, also a licensed associate real estate broker with Douglas Elliman, are listing a townhouse on East 64th Street on the Upper East Side of New York that they market not just as a home for a new buyer but as an embassy or consulate, as well. "We've put all of those efforts out at once, and we're waiting to see what sticks, and what's very interesting is we're getting responses from parties that have never shown interest before," Postilio says.



## Making a video that does more



Property videos are quickly becoming a must for homes on the market nowadays, but it requires more than just a compilation of photos strung together – it needs to entice buyers to come tour the property. For the New York townhouse, Postilio and Conlon cut down a longer film the seller had previously made and added a personal touch. "We coupled that with a piece of music that the homeowner wrote, because he's a song writer," Conlon says. Videos should be short to keep viewers from zoning out halfway through – a minute-long clip featuring the best rooms and views would suffice.

## Hosting an above-and-beyond open house



An [open house](#) is considered an old standard of the real estate marketing world to pull in people who are driving by or buyers who may not have an agent yet, but they're getting a revamp to bring more people through the door, particularly in the higher end of the market. Incorporating a theme to fit the home, entertainment or other activities will attract more people that may have been on the fence about viewing the home. "You find that a broker's open on a luxury home could easily become a \$15,000 to \$20,000 event," says John Aaroe, owner of Los Angeles-based real estate firm John Aaroe Group.

## Packing Saturdays with showing appointments



An open house to kick off a property's emergence on the market can be a good way to bring in interest, but Hague recommends setting up appointments ahead of time instead and filling every Saturday with scheduled showings. By scheduling the showings in half-hour increments, Hague says the buyers see one another going in and leaving, which generates a sense of urgency because of the interest in the home. "It creates social proof ... people can see other people coming and going," he says.



## Inviting the neighbors over



Neighbors showing up to an [open house](#) just to take a look around can be the bane of a real estate agent's day, but there's another way to let the neighbors take a peek with the potential for some interest as well. Hague coaches agents to host a neighborhood event – not just for the neighbors down the street but throughout the area. "Sometimes people see the home and they like it better than the one they're in, and you're not even trying to sell it to them," Hague says, adding that he's seen a lot of deals come about from neighbors who decide to put in an offer or pass the word on to a friend or relative.

## Staging on the next level



[Staging a home](#) with either existing furniture or pieces brought in to give a more appealing and less lived-in look to a space is a widely accepted practice for homes on the market nowadays, but that doesn't always mean it can be done well. Postilio and Conlon recall a home they listed for actress Joan Collins a few years back. She didn't like the idea of staging at first. But they brought in designers and high-end furniture dealers who lent pieces, including ornate rugs and a Steinway piano, and what would have been a \$1 million home makeover came free of charge. The staging paid off, and interested buyers got into a [bidding war](#) over the home. "That's another case where simply changing the perception can renew the life of an older listing," Postilio says.



## Using drones and other gadgets



Technology is constantly reshaping marketing strategies, and real estate sales are no different. Filming or photographing a home from the air with a drone, for example, has gained a fair amount of attention from real estate agents and photographers alike. Hague says it doesn't hurt to use a drone in this way, but it's not necessarily going to be a selling point: "Would it make a difference in terms of a person paying a nickel more for a home? No, no chance, no way. Now, might it make a difference in a person seeing that and wanting to see the home as opposed to not see the home? Maybe."

## Using your motivation to your advantage



Traditionally, sellers try to keep any urgency for a quick sale quiet to avoid low-ball offers because then buyers feel they have the upper hand in negotiations. But Hague says that motivation can be used to the seller's advantage by pairing it with a higher price at the top of the home's value range, explaining how it would be a great deal for the buyer because the property could easily fetch a higher price with more time. "We build that and work that story to make it a huge, big deal, and we use that to justify why you've got such an amazing price on the home," Hague says.



## Finding a buyer that may not be looking

Especially for a luxury or more unique home, it's possible the right buyer isn't necessarily looking yet. But that doesn't mean your real estate agent will just sit on the listing. Aaroe says his firm puts in special effort to think proactively about who may be moving to the Los Angeles area but hasn't necessarily started looking for a home, like rising tech industry leaders, for instance. "It's about reaching out to the firms that are being relocated to LA; it's not waiting for them to reach out to you," he says.