

## GET READY FOR AN OPEN HOUSE



**A**s the new president of the Toronto Real Estate Board, I am looking forward to representing the GTA's more than 45,000 realtors over the next 12 months. I am a passionate advocate of the value that a professional realtor brings to a real estate transaction and I hope to share the knowledge I've acquired throughout my 35 years with you.

It goes without saying that homeownership is a great investment and, for many, whether you are selling or buying a home, it will undoubtedly be one of the largest financial transactions we'll ever make. Realtors are obligated to help protect the consumer and their investment.

A TREB realtor is equipped to help home sellers and buyers understand their unique situation and are trained and skilled professionals, with one of their strongest assets being their network. The realtor connection with industry-related professionals is priceless. Realtors may not always have the answer, but they sure know where to get it.

Realtors are constantly engaging in professional development so they can keep their competitive edge in this reputation-based business. TREB members can help buyers and sellers comprehend the transaction and everything in between, such as zoning laws, government programs, home inspections/repairs and project management.

Helping you prepare your home for an open house is just one example of how a realtor can help you. Here are some tips to help get the most out of an open house and to help it run smoothly.

First, you and your family should be prepared to leave for the duration of the open house. Prospective buyers will be distracted by your presence, and the same can be said for pets.

Also, make yourself reachable should your realtor have any questions from prospective buyers. Following the open house, your realtor may have gathered some feedback that you may wish to address before you host another open house. Keep an open mind, and remember to be patient, it can often take 24 to 48 hours before a buyer will express interest in the property following their visit.



Declutter your home as much as possible. Keeping both inside and out clean and clutter-free will help make your home look as spacious and inviting as possible. For example, you might remove some clothing from your closets so buyers can envision hanging their latest purchase, or wash your windows and plant some flowers for added appeal.

It's important that you never let others into your property without a realtor present. And even with one present, it's best to take extra caution and secure or lock away your valuables. When you return home following an open house, ensure all your doors and windows are locked and all your valuables are safe.

It might also be a good idea to remove or lock up any prescription medication, extra sets of keys and pets. Perhaps have a "go bag" of items that can't be locked away so you can easily remove them from the home in the event of an open house or showing.

You may also want to take precautions to protect your personal information. Google your address to ensure no one has posted a fake ad about your property, and don't leave your passwords, mail or bills out in the open. It might also be a good plan to remove any family photos to protect you and your family's personal identity.

So, there you have it. Hopefully these tips will help you be more prepared for your next open house or showing and help sell your home a bit faster this summer.

*Larry Cerqua is president of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 45,000 professional realtor members in the Greater Toronto Area. You can contact him at [TREBpres@trebnet.com](mailto:TREBpres@trebnet.com). For updates on the real estate market, visit [TREBHome.com](http://TREBHome.com). If commercial property is what interests you, contact a TREB realtor by visiting [TREBCommercial.com](http://TREBCommercial.com).*