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## Should I Take My Home Off The Market During The Holidays?

*by Realty Times Staff*

When you look at your holiday calendars you may find the months already overloaded with seasonal obligations -- shopping, entertaining, children's pageants, charity work, decorating the house, and so much more. If you are also trying to sell your home, you are under extra pressure to keep your home in "showtime" condition. And that could be the last thing you need before the holiday spirit is broken.

It is understandable why you would be tempted to take your home off the market during the holidays. And the list of justifications is long. If you are too busy, buyers may be also, and you may find your efforts unrewarded by enough showings. And what if you do get an offer? You may be faced with the possibility of packing and moving during the busiest time of the year. Besides, you can give your house a rest, and it will have better momentum after the holidays. Better to just pack it in and start fresh in January, right?

But wait! Top-selling Realtor Jennie Ling says taking your home off the market during the Christmas season is a mistake. A vice president of Virginia Cook REALTORS® and the number one sales person in her company for almost every one of her more than 35 years in the real estate business, Ling exclaims, "The house sure isn't going to sell off the market! What is the advantage of that? So you're busy. Let your Realtor do the work. You can leave in the morning, go to work, go shopping, and let your Realtor take care of things."

"The holidays are my best-selling period. Why? Because most people take off work sometime during the season. The husband and wife are both off and want to see houses. I showed homes on New Year's Day last year. I like the holidays because the buyers have more time, and they can look at homes together."

Before you take your home off the market, consider the following points:

- Although buyer activity may appear to slow down, the buyers who are actively looking during the holidays are that much more serious. Ling believes the home market is no more affected at Christmas than during other "busy" period. If that were so, the market would shut down throughout the year as families concentrate on spring weddings, June graduations, summer vacations, and autumn back-to-school activities.
- Many buyers deliberately choose to shop for a home *after* the busy spring and summer rush. They know that it will be easier to look, and that negotiations will be less stressful. They may not have children, or they may have grown children, so moving to accommodate the school

year isn't a consideration. Finding the right home at the right price, however, is.

- Relocating families often don't have a choice in when they can leave for their new destination. Although 68 percent of transferring families have children, many families have to transfer during the middle of the school year. These families are that much more motivated to get their families settled in before either before the January semester begins, or to arrange for the move during spring break in March. If you sign a contract by New Year's Eve, the timing couldn't be more perfect.
- At Christmastime, our culture focuses on family and the home. Preparing for the indoor activities of winter is one of the most enjoyable periods of family life. Allowing buyers to view your home during this most hospitable of seasons lets them better picture their own family life in the attractive environment you have created.
- When is your home ever more beautiful and inviting? You have cleaned and decorated, and your home looks like a picture postcard. If the results are good enough for family and friends, they will surely be good enough to impress your buyers. Get the family team on board to do a five-minute blitz pick-up every morning to keep holiday messes to a minimum.
- With reduced inventories and motivated buyers, you will have all the members of the MLS on your team. You may find you have more showings than you would if your marketed your home during a busier time of the year.
- If you do get a contract, you can arrange the terms to suit your needs. If moving during the holidays isn't an option, you can put in the closing date of your choice. "Most people can close 30 to 60 days after a contract is written, so there is plenty of time," Ling says. "Possession and closings are are very negotiable."

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