

How to Get a Great Deal By Jeff Cooper

Everyone wants to negotiate well when purchasing a home. Use these suggestions to become better at real estate bargaining:

1. Have other options. Locate several homes that you're interested in buying. You'll feel free to negotiate harder if you don't have your hopes set on just one house.
2. Set the stage. Avoid becoming too obviously excited about a home that you're strongly considering. If you do, you might lose your perspective and not consider the property's shortcomings.

A house that looks great may not meet your everyday living needs. You also could lose a negotiating edge if the owners or their real estate agent see how enthusiastic you are about the house.

Avoid being too negative, as well, since that can establish a harsh negotiating environment. Making comments such as, "I like the house, but they'll really have to come down on their price!" tends to make sellers dig in their heels.

3. Find out why the home is for sale. Often people need to move because of an important life event – ranging from a child's birth to reaching retirement. Understanding a seller's goals allows you to fashion your offer to make it more appealing.

Someone who is moving because of a job transfer may be in a hurry. Going to a new position quickly then is their objective, and obtaining the highest possible price on their home is a secondary matter.

Any seller who has another home picked out is likely to want to move quickly, as well. Having their current house under contract makes it easier for them to make an offer on a move-up property.

A sale resulting from a divorce could mean you'll be dealing with two parties who aren't getting along. One may be more eager to sell than the other, so understand the deal isn't final until everyone has agreed to it and signed the purchase contract.

4. Never make a concession without asking for something in return. Some sellers won't budge on their price. You can agree to that, but then negotiate for them to pay some of your closing costs.

5. Money isn't the only issue. A household moving a long distance or to a much larger or smaller home may not want some of their furniture and appliances. They could be happy to leave them for you, if you simply ask.

6. Sellers will treat your offers seriously when they know home financing is assured. You'll strengthen your negotiating power by being pre-approved for a mortgage before you start looking at houses.