

BUSINESS

HOW TO SUBMIT

E-MAIL hopkinton@wickedlocal.com, **FAX** 508-626-4400, **MAIL** Deborah Gauthier, 33 New York Ave., Framingham, MA 01701, **CALL** Editor Deborah Gauthier at 508-626-4332

QUESTIONS? Contact Editor Deborah Gauthier at dgauthier@wickedlocal.com or 508-626-4332.

ON THE MOVE

Why isn't my house selling?

Janice from Framingham writes: Dear Leslie, My home's been on the market with a local Realtor for six months. We've had plenty of showings but no buyers. I'm getting so frustrated. What can I do?



Leslie Mann

Janice, I'm sorry to hear you're having a tough time selling. It's hard to say what the issue is without knowing the home, but here are some common issues that cause homes to languish on the market.

Repair issues. While some homebuyers have the wherewithal to make household repairs, the vast majority want a home in move-in condition. And many are simply scared off by even small maintenance issues.

Ask your Realtor or a trusted friend to walk through your home and make a note of issues they see that are in need of repair. You might even consider having a pre-sale home inspection to uncover and remedy issues that could be holding a buyer back. For example, it's common enough for basements to have tiny settling cracks but I've encountered many buyers who get nervous about these. Having a written inspection verifying that they're not structural issues can help to allay a potential buyer's concerns.

Uninspired photography. Think about how many homes you check out online

when you're shopping for a new home. Online home buyers usually spend just seconds glancing at each home. If your home's photos are dark or just aren't enticing, buyers will quickly move on. Be sure your listing agent invests in professional photography that shows your home at its best. A professional photographer will use the proper lighting and camera lens, and know how to frame each shot to show your home at its best.

Lack of curb appeal. Home buyers often check out a home on Google Earth or by driving by the property before scheduling a showing. That's why it's important to entice homebuyers before they even step in the door. (Check out my previous articles and video at <http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/onthemove> for ideas on making your home look its best.)

Pricing issues. On average, the single family home listings in the area that have expired without selling in the past three months were listed for sale at roughly 126



percent of their assessed value (and many were listed at well above this). Yet on average, single family homes in the MetroWest are selling at just 98 percent of their assessed value. Of course there are exceptions to this. Sometimes the assessment doesn't take into account major upgrades, or has an inaccuracy. However, these statistics do indicate that a good percentage of homes that didn't sell were overpriced.

Staging. It's a rare homebuyer these days who has the vision to look past green carpets and dated-looking curtains. It's amazing how small updates to the layout of furniture and the décor of a home can make a huge difference in a buyer's perception of a home. Check out my home staging articles (<http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/onthemove>), plus some great before and after shots, based on interviews with many successful interior designers.

Location. Some location issues such as a sloped lot or a home's proximity to a highway simply can't be changed and will often deter potential buyers. In many cases, however, there are steps you can take to mitigate homebuyers' concerns about these issues. For example, adding attractive trees or fencing along the property line to minimize noise from a nearby highway, or terracing a sloped yard to create more usable space.

Do you have a real estate question? Write to our real estate blogger Leslie Mann, c/o Hopkinton Crier, 33 New York Ave, Framingham, MA 01701 or realestatequeries@yahoo.com. She'd be glad to answer your confidential questions here. Follow her at <http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/onthemove>.

About the author: Real estate blogger Leslie Mann is a real estate agent with Hallmark Sotheby's International Realty in Hopkinton.