**How to Maximize Open House Weekend**

**By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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One of the most exciting steps in the home buying process is walking through the home you might live in one day. Whether it is a new or newly-renovated home, touring a home in person will help you with your purchasing decision.

Sellers and real estate agents often allow potential buyers to explore homes to generate interest through an open house. Potential buyers (or curious neighbors) can walk around the property and ask detailed questions about the home during an open house. If you are ready to attend an open house and want to make the most out of your visit, consider the following tips.

**Meet the Listing Agent**

Introduce yourself to the listing agent and let them know your interest in the home. The agent will provide their contact information, literature about the home and offer to show you the unique features. Fill in the sign-in sheet if available so the agent has your information as well.

**Ask Specific Questions about the Home**

You can learn the details of the home that are not listed online or in marketing materials by asking the agent the right questions. Ask if the home price has changed, how long the home has been on the market and what offers have been made to purchase the home. If the home price has dropped several times or has been on the market for a significant amount of time it could be a sign there are issues with the home. You may have room for price negotiation depending on how many offers have been made on the home.

**Look for Potential Home Damage**

Before purchasing a home, it is best practice to get a home inspection. Before you get to that point, at an open house you can spot problems by looking closely. Warped flooring or a musty smell can be a sign of previous water damage or flooding. Black spots near kitchen and bathroom sinks could indicate mold. The home could have foundation problems if you notice cracks in the ceiling or drywall. Beware of these red flags to avoid significant home repairs in the future.

**Beware of Unfinished Construction**

Sometimes a seller runs out of money to finish a home improvement project. If you see exposed wires or a stack of material in a corner of a room, ask the seller about it. This could also be a sign that a contractor had issues finishing a project due to structural issues. Either way, it’s important to understand the underlying issue so you can be aware of what you may be dealing with. Some lenders may be unwilling to loan money if the house has unfinished construction.

**Explore the Neighborhood**

After viewing the home, walk and drive around the neighborhood. Any new development? How is the curb appeal of the nearby residents? If you notice several for sale signs in the front yards of homes on or near your block it maybe an underlying neighborhood issue. If you’re interested in the home, drive-by at different times on different days to gauge noise levels and traffic patterns.

For more information about upcoming open houses or information about the home buying process, contact **[insert HBA information].**