

# HOLIDAY HOMESSELLER GUIDE



Your Strategy for Selling Fast and  
for Top Dollar Between  
Thanksgiving and New Year's.



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# Hey there

## Holiday Home Seller

*Selling during the holidays isn't as rare—or as risky—as most people think. While many homeowners wait for spring, you're stepping into a season where buyers are serious, competition is low, and homes feel their most inviting. It's a perfect mix for a strong, fast sale.*

*Inside this guide, you'll find a simple plan to price confidently, prepare without the stress, and use the charm of the season to attract motivated buyers. And keep this in mind—buyers make decisions based on emotion. The glow of a tree, the warmth of a cozy room, and the magic of the season can help your home feel unforgettable.*

*Your best offer doesn't wait for January. Let's help your home shine and get you moving into your next chapter.*

*From your favorite Spokane Realtor® | Mortgage Broker*

*Julie Herrmann*



# Pros & Cons: The Strategic Timing

## Pro (Your Holiday Edge)

**Less Competition:** Fewer homes are listed, making your property stand out in the MLS searches and increasing the visibility of your listing.

**Motivated Buyers:** The buyers searching now must buy (due to job transfers, leases ending, or year-end tax planning). This urgency leads to faster decisions and fewer contingencies.

**Emotional Appeal** Your home is naturally at its coziest and most visually appealing. Tasteful holiday staging creates a strong, positive emotional connection with buyers.

**Year-End Financial Incentives:** Buyers who want tax deductions (like mortgage interest) are driven to close before Dec 31st, putting pressure on them to move quickly and cleanly.



## Con (Your Strategy to Overcome)

**Fewer Total Viewings:** You won't get "looky-loos." Strategy: Focus on quality, not quantity. Every showing is likely a highly motivated, serious, pre-approved buyer.

**Logistical Hassles:** Juggling showings with holiday preparations. Strategy: Set specific, limited showing hours and use high-quality virtual tours (Page 5) to pre-screen parties and minimize disruption.

**Appraisal & Closing Delays:** Banks, attorneys, and title companies face holiday closures. Strategy: We coordinate a tight closing timeline and partner with lenders known for their year-end responsiveness.

**Pricing Perception:** If listed too high, it might sit and look "stale" come January. Strategy: Price strategically and realistically from Day 1 based on data, ensuring immediate interest and a quick contract.



# Pricing for Success



*The biggest mistake a holiday seller can make is overpricing. In a low-inventory market, homes that are priced correctly attract immediate, highly qualified attention, often leading to multiple offers. Homes priced too high often sit, gather "days on market," and look stale by the time January arrives.*

## Three Rules for Holiday Pricing Success

### 1. Know the Buyer's Urgency

The holiday buyer is driven by need (job relocation, school starts, lease ends). They are looking for value and efficiency. If your price is attractive, they are prepared to make a strong offer quickly, avoiding the usual prolonged negotiation process.

### 2. Avoid the 5% Mistake

Pricing just 5% above what the comparable sales data (comps) supports can cause your home to miss the key price bracket searches of serious buyers.

- The Result: You waste 30 crucial days on the market, forcing you to make a reduction in January when competition surges.
- The Strategy: Price competitively from Day 1 to maximize initial views and generate the excitement needed for a fast offer.

### 3. Translate Data into Strategy

Your agent should present comparable sales that closed recently and quickly. This proves that there is demand and velocity in the market. We use this data not just to determine a price, but to establish a minimum acceptable closing timeline based on what motivated buyers have shown they are willing to do.

# Cozy Sells: Staging for Emotional Appeal



## 1. Subtlety is Key

Avoid large, oversized decorations, religious symbols, or highly personal items. These can distract buyers from seeing the architecture of the home or can alienate a potential buyer.

- Do: Use simple greenery, elegant white lights, and small, classic wreaths.
- Don't: Place a massive inflatable snowman in the yard or put holiday cards on every mantelpiece.

## 2. Engage the Senses (Warmth)

The interior feeling is everything during a cold-weather showing.

- Sight: Turn on all lights (switch to warm white bulbs). A bright, well-lit home feels cheerful, especially during shorter winter days.
- Scent: Use subtle scents like vanilla, cinnamon, or pine. Avoid strong floral or chemical scents.
- Temperature: Set the thermostat comfortably high. A warm home is instantly inviting. A cold house will make the buyers presume there's an issue with the HVAC or the installation.

## 3. Master the Curb Appeal Test

A dark, icy exterior is the first—and worst—impression. Buyers will hesitate before stepping onto an unsafe walkway.

- Safety First: Ensure sidewalks, steps, and the driveway are completely cleared of snow and ice before every showing. Shovel and salt proactively.
- Lighting: Ensure exterior lights (porch, carriage lights, landscaping) are on and functioning perfectly for evening showings. A simple wreath and garland on the front door make a great, tasteful entrance statement.

**Seller's Tip:** "Focus the décor on high-impact areas: the front door, the fireplace mantel, and the kitchen island. Keep the bedrooms and bathrooms clear of seasonal clutter to showcase the usable space."

# Marketing Magic: Media That Works Hard



## Your Home, Showcased: High-Quality Media is Non-Negotiable

### 1. Professional Photography (The Foundation)

Do not rely on amateur photos. The quality of your listing photos directly correlates to the perceived value of your home.

- **Winter Light:** Professional photographers know how to maximize natural light during short, gray winter days, ensuring your home looks bright and inviting online.
- **Staging Capture:** They capture the "cozy" staging (from Page 4) perfectly, creating that essential emotional connection online.

### 2. 3D Virtual Tour (The Time Saver)

A high-quality 3D virtual tour (like Matterport) is the ultimate tool for pre-screening buyers.

- **Seller Benefit:** It allows highly motivated buyers (especially those relocating) to "walk through" the home at any hour without physically disrupting your family or schedule.
- **Buyer Benefit:** It gives the buyer a deep understanding of the floor plan and flow, meaning anyone who does request an in-person viewing is extremely serious about making an offer.

### 3. Detailed Floor Plans

Always include clear, simple floor plans with room dimensions.

- **Visualization Power:** Buyers are thinking about furniture placement, especially if they are closing before the end of the year and need to coordinate a move. Floor plans help them make quick, decisive purchase decisions.

Our Promise: "We invest in high-quality media for every listing. This strategy minimizes 'tire-kickers' and ensures that every showing we schedule is with a pre-qualified buyer who is serious about buying a home now."

# Deal-Making Under the Mistletoe: Negotiation Leverage

*1. Demand a Quick Close: This is appealing to buyers who want the year-end tax benefit. When reviewing offers, prioritize buyers who have a firm, fast closing date.*

*2. Insist on Strong Earnest Money: A large, non-refundable Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) shows the buyer is serious and financially committed. A strong EMD reduces the likelihood of the buyer pulling out due to minor issues.*



*Our Agent Strategy: "When reviewing offers, we look beyond the dollar amount. We prioritize the offer with the strongest financing, shortest contingency periods, and the highest likelihood of a drama-free, on-time closing—that's what wins in the holiday market."*

*3. Limit Contingency Timeframes: Since the buyer is motivated, require short deadlines for their inspection and appraisal contingencies (e.g., 5-7 days instead of the typical 10-14). This keeps the process moving quickly and cleanly.*

*4. Post-Closing Occupancy: If you need a few extra days to move out after the closing date, offer a short post-closing occupancy (rent-back) period. While a small convenience to you, this can be the deciding factor when offers are otherwise similar.*





# The Holiday Showing & Closing Plan

## 1. Setting Your Showing Boundaries

*You have the power to control when your home is shown.*

- *Set Specific Windows: Establish set, limited showing windows (e.g., Tues/Thurs evenings from 5-7 PM and Sat/Sun afternoons from 1-4 PM). This tells buyers you are serious but also protects your family time.*
- *Block Off Key Dates: Clearly communicate any dates your home is unavailable (e.g., Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day) to your agent. Buyers will respect these boundaries.*
- *The 3D Tour Filter: By relying on your virtual tour (Page 5), only buyers who are genuinely serious will request a physical showing, dramatically reducing unnecessary traffic.*

## 2. Managing the Closing Timeline

*Holiday bank closures and reduced staffing can cause unforeseen delays. We must stay ahead of the schedule to ensure the deal closes by your year-end goal.*

- *Deadline Watch: We will use the final week of December as the absolute deadline. All contingencies (inspection, appraisal, loan commitment) should be met 7-10 days prior to your target closing date.*
- *Agent-Lender Coordination: Your agent will work closely with the buyer's lender and the title company to proactively address potential holiday delays, ensuring all paperwork is processed before banks close for New Year's.*

**Our Commitment:** "Our goal is to sell your home quickly and ensure your family can enjoy the holidays with minimal interruption. We use a communication plan designed to give you peace of mind throughout the process."

# The Move-In Maintenance Must-Do List

## Clear Walkways

*Safety and Liability. You must keep driveways, walkways, and steps completely clear of snow and ice before every showing. A buyer slip-and-fall could delay or derail your sale.*

## Prevent Frozen Pipes

*Protect Your Investment. Never drop the thermostat below 65 degrees. Disconnect and drain all exterior garden hoses and close the exterior water spigot valves.*

## Furnace/System Records

*Build Buyer Confidence. Have recent maintenance records for the furnace, water heater, and chimney readily available. Showing buyers your systems are well-maintained alleviates cold-weather concerns.*

## Manage Fireplace Use

*If you light a fire for a cozy showing (Page 4), ensure it is safely contained and properly put out well before the buyers arrive. Clear all ashes safely. Do not ever leave a fireplace, or candle burning for a showing.*

## Secure Outdoor Items

*Store or secure any sensitive outdoor items (such as hoses, decorations, or patio furniture) that could be damaged by extreme cold or easily accessible during viewings.*

## Test Smoke/CO Detectors

*Ensure all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are functioning with fresh batteries. This is often required by law at closing and provides peace of mind.*



# The Paperwork Head Start



## Documents to Gather NOW

- **Financial Records** Buyers want reassurance about utility costs, and you may need them for tax purposes. Gather recent utility bills (electric, gas, water) to show cost-efficiency.
- **Repair & Upgrade History** Reduces buyer concerns during inspection. Collect receipts and warranties for any major recent repairs or upgrades (roof, furnace, AC, windows).
- **Home Ownership Documents** Required for the closing attorney/title company. Locate your original deed, current property survey, and any current title insurance policies.
- **HOA/Community Documents** If applicable, locate and organize your Homeowners Association (HOA) documents, covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), and recent financial statements.

- **Appliance Warranties** For any major appliances that will convey with the sale (e.g., refrigerator, washer, dryer), gather the manuals and remaining warranty information.
- **Disclosures** Work with your agent to complete all mandatory Seller's Disclosure forms now. Getting these done early minimizes risk and speeds up the attorney review period.

Pro Tip: "Create a single folder (digital or physical) titled 'Closing Documents' and keep it accessible. A prepared seller is the strongest seller in the holiday market."



