

# HOME YOUR

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BUNBURY  
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## REAL ESTATE BLOOPERS

You've replaced the light bulbs, scrubbed the floors and touched up the walls in preparation for your open house. If you think you've got everything under control, think again. When sellers put their homes on the market, they often make mistakes that can become serious obstacles to a sale. Make sure you don't fall into any of these traps.

**Not hiring an agent.** People who sell by owner (FSBO) may think they're saving themselves money by going at it alone. But in the long run, if owners let their homes linger on the market for months — or even years in some cases — they are wasting time and losing money.

**Not recognizing a good offer.** You may have heard an agent say, "The first offer is the best offer." But often, sellers want to hold out for bigger and better. So they pass on the first offer and then, down the road, when the bigger number doesn't come through, they regret turning down the first one. So the rule of thumb is, if you get an offer and it's close to or above your minimum sales price, do your best to close the deal.

**Not leaving your home during a showing.** No prospective buyer wants the seller looming over his shoulder or following him around the house. It is much easier for a buyer to imagine living in a place if the current owners aren't there. Go see a movie, shop or visit friends — do anything but hang around the open house.

**Not deodorizing a home that smells.** After living in a home for years, you may not notice subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) smells, whether they're from pets, smoke or food. Odors tend to cling to carpets, curtains and furniture and once you've grown used to them, you think the smell is neutral. This is where a second opinion is critical. Have a trusted

friend or neighbor come to your house and tell you if there are any odors. If there are, make sure to eliminate them before your open house.

### 4 Not making your last mortgage payment before closing.

Even if you're closing on the second day of the month, and your mortgage is due on the first, you must send in your payment. Sometimes sellers erroneously think that they can skip that final payment once they have signed a contract to sell their home. If you skip this last payment, you may incur late fees and missing it may affect your credit history. Don't worry about losing money for the weeks you're not living in the house. When the escrow officer or attorney produces the closing documents, the numbers will be calculated based on the payments that have been received by the lender.

