

If you are reading this because you want to save money on commissions... good for you!

If you are reading this because you want to understand how the selling process works... also good for you!

If you are reading this because you are not sure whether you should sell your home the traditional way or try something new... then this book is definitely for you!

You will learn the smartest strategy for selling your home. It's foolproof and is, in fact, how many real estate agents sell houses.

These aren't particularly secrets, more tricks of the trade, or perhaps proven techniques by professionals. In some cases, it will just be common sense ideas that will make you say, "Ah, I should have thought of that."

Selling a home seems daunting to most people. And, unless you make your living in advertising, marketing, or sales, you're likely not cut out for it. But, like most people, if it means you'll save several thousand dollars, you'd like to at least investigate the possibility.

I have been in the real estate business for the past decade. I have made a lot of money helping people buy and sell properties, but it was not my first job.

I have been a newspaper editor, a marketing executive, and the owner of an advertising agency. As a result, I am not a seasoned veteran in real estate. If anything, I've spent the better part of my life in advertising and marketing, industries that thrive on finding better ways to do things that have been done the same way for decades.

Thus the reason for this book. Most of my colleagues were hoping I wouldn't write this. But what I reveal is not really an industry *secret* but rather a decade of insights into a slow-moving, self-absorbed industry that has a lot of weaknesses. My strategy certainly exploits some of those weaknesses, much to the chagrin of my peers who make their living protecting what is essentially a monopoly.

In my experience, progress always wins out. In the case of organized real estate, progress is slow in coming because the current leaders are extremely adept at self-preservation. Teams, mergers, and new brokerage models abound as the industry tries to act entrepreneurial when in fact, it's very bureaucratic nature hinders out-of-the-box creativity.

I mean them no harm. As an entrepreneur, however, I can't help but want to fill the gaps with new ideas.

This book is one those ideas.

And it works. I've proven it over and over.

And now it will work for you.

The process of selling a house is actually very systematic. Yes, it involves the computer, and yes, it involves dealing with people--all kinds of strange and wonderful people. But if you follow proven methods, there is no reason why you can't sell your home yourself and save thousands of dollars.

Will it cost nothing?

No. If you think that, then you're really asking too much. When you book travel online, don't you still have to pay airline fees and taxes? What you save is an agent's fees, and hopefully a few bucks on better pricing.

Same with selling your house. You're still going to have to get the product in front of the customer. And your home is a big product. You can't take it to them; they have to come to you. That's called marketing. And marketing costs money.

Yeah, I've heard the stories of people who stuck up a sign and had multiple offers on their house in a couple of days, selling for more than their asking price. No promotion, no open houses, nothing.

Do you know how often that happens?

I've been in the business a decade and it's happened once in my geographic area.

Once.

Those odds aren't something I'd be counting on if you really want to sell your house.

"So I'll try it privately, and if it doesn't work, I'll get an agent," you say.

There's a problem with that. It's called being on the market too long. If you put a sign on your lawn and maybe even price your house a couple thousand more than you think it's worth, just to see what happens, one of two things *will* happen:

- 1) The house will sell within a week and everything will be right with the world

2) The house will sit for 2-3 months, after having tons of showings, but no offers.

If the first thing occurs, you're that one in a million Seller who got lucky. But don't count on it. More likely the second thing will happen. Why?

Because you didn't spend time preparing the house for market before putting it up for sale. You didn't create flyers, you didn't advertise, you didn't use a recognizable and reputable sign on the lawn, and you likely annoyed one or two people who came in and said your house was priced too high and there were too many things to fix.

How do I know this?

Because in the past ten years, about 98% of the Sellers who tried to sell privately told me some variation of that story.

Then they became my clients.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

If you plan properly, understand what it is you're planning, and then execute in a timely and professional manner, you'll sell your house. And you'll save thousands. But remember the adage: "You have to spend money to make money." I think organized real estate came up with that. If not, they should have.

Real Estate Today

In order to understand how to sell your home yourself, when you're competing with a very competitive and highly organized industry, a little history lesson is needed.

The Canadian Real Estate industry has seen tremendous change since the early 1950s, nothing more dramatic than the advent of the computer and the slow, painstaking process of making all real estate searches occur online. In the early days of modern real estate, thick binders held listings of homes and a Buyer would come into a brokerage office and physically search through books... kind of like what you do at the hairdresser or barber when you're looking for a new hairstyle. It was a very slow process, which suited the industry fine because there were a lot of plodders in the business back then.

There was a process by which someone bought and sold a house. It was very precise, very organized, and very systematic. More importantly, it was a monopoly.

Much like Bell is to telephones, the MLS®--Multiple Listing Service--was to real estate transactions. There was only one way to buy or sell a house, through the MLS® system, a paper system. It was owned by a national association, administered by local boards, and controlled by individual brokerages and brokers.

Then Gates, Allen, Jobs and Wozniak changed the world.

The computer, of course, revolutionized many industries in the early 1980s. Back then, any business that relied on paper, lists of products or customers, or any other form of ritualistic performance, was easy prey for those who understood and manipulated computer programs.

In all fairness, organized real estate did try to keep up. The national body--The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA)--continued to progress by creating an online MLS® system. Those wanting to buy homes could now easily access hundreds of homes in a matter of minutes, and Sellers had a medium that allowed their homes to be in full view of Buyers instantly. But for years, it was just the same paper system designed to work on a computer. People couldn't search homes themselves, they still needed a brokerage, and an agent, to get access.

The MLS® system was a private-and closely guarded-network and you had to be a licensed real estate agent to access it.

That is still true today in Canada and why I have to put the ® after MLS® every time I use it in print. It's trademarked, owned, and very seriously protected by CREA. It's not like that in other countries but more on that in a bit.

What the industry has feared for decades is what happened to the travel industry. Once hotel, flight and vacation packages became accessible and searchable online, no one felt they needed travel agents anymore. Oh, the travel industry adamantly disagreed and was determined to survive (and still does though it was forced to change in order to accommodate progress). Ads depicting hazardous vacations experienced by those who booked their own flights and hotels were abundant and though scare tactics worked for a while, once the online travel industry grew and attracted

dominant players, security became less of an issue. The real issue was cost savings. It was simply cheaper to book online than to go through an agent.

Eventually, the travel industry accepted progress and came up with a way to work with Canadians and their travel activities. Now the industry, though much smaller, still thrives and offers a valuable service to those who determine they need it. However, the online travel industry has grown in leaps and bounds also.

And that's what organized real estate fears... progress. That fear has translated into an even stronger monopoly of real estate transactions, held tightly by CREA and supported by the government through provincial bodies like RECO (The Real Estate Council of Ontario) these provincial legislators force brokerages and agents to adhere to intense rules and regulations to maintain the monopoly. It is done so under the guise of protecting the consumer, as are many government-backed systems, and arguably, has merit because of that.

If the agents don't comply, strict measures are levied upon them, including hefty fines and possible imprisonment. The upside is that the industry is very ethical and legal. Not surprising. I've never been threatened with jail time if one of my TV commercials pushed the limits, and I'm pretty sure doing so would stifle creativity somewhat.

This doesn't mean there isn't a place for the licensed real estate agent. There is. I have been an agent for the past decade and my services have value for people who can't be bothered to waste their valuable time doing my job (by selling privately), or simply don't understand how to sell a property that isn't selling (what a professional salesperson does).

But, as with the travel industry, there are those who insist on doing things all by themselves--because they can--and are convinced they will save money in the process.

You are such a person.

And if saving money is your goal--not beating an agent out of commissions, or sticking it to the industry--then read on.