



Team Service



Target Marketing



Maximum Results

THE SELLER BOOK

Your Guide to Selling Property in Northern Virginia



Our Mission Statement

We will be more knowledgeable, more informative, and give more value than anyone else in the marketplace. Our ethics, experience, and attention to detail will consistently provide the highest quality experience to every client we work with.

Long & Foster Realtors®
Tom & Cindy and Associates
HelloVirginia.com

703-822-0207



Welcome to Tom & Cindy and Associates!

It is our pleasure to present you with this detailed guide to selling your property. We have earned our reputation for excellence in real estate marketing and client service through creative innovation, distinctive quality, market expertise and passion for what we do. We invite you to experience our definition of real estate.

A Passion For Excellence



The real estate industry as a whole is changing rapidly. The days of the general practitioner are vanishing and recent studies predict that 97% of the business will soon be handled by only 3% of the agents. These elite agents are approaching the real estate business in an entirely different manner. They understand that consumers today expect and deserve a higher level of service and accountability. Top agents recognize that the best way to provide this level of service is through a team of specialists.

In that same vein, Tom & Cindy's passion for excellence and desire for serving their clients at the highest level led them to establish the Tom & Cindy team. Recruiting a dynamic group of creative and highly skilled professionals has allowed them to create an organization that thrives on challenges and exceeding clients' expectations. They will give you the personal service and attention you expect and deserve.

Why Northern Virginia?



Because it's where we live, work and play. We're proud to say we love our area and we know every back road, nook and cranny. In fact, you'd be hard pressed to find any community in Northern Virginia where we have not been involved in a home sale.

We have been one of the very top teams in Northern Virginia for well over a decade.

That's what this Seller book is all about. In it we will give you an overview of how we work and the advantages our team brings you in:

- Marketing
- Internet Exposure
- Advertising
- Pricing
- Service

Our team consistently proves that "It Doesn't Cost More to Use the Best!"

Why Choose Us?



When you are trying to sell your home, the professional guidance of a Realtor® is an absolute necessity. Unfortunately, many people think all Realtors® are the same. The fact is, they are NOT. No single Realtor® can begin to match the dedication and results that a team produces.

An individual Realtor® needs to wear many hats. They need to be proficient in sales, marketing, customer service, administration, follow-up and a number of other skills. They need to be out and about showing homes, meeting clients and attending settlements and inspections. All of this while still keeping up on industry changes, market trends and legalities and many other business items. There are simply not enough hours in the day for a single agent to do all these things and handle any significant sales volume.

Tom and Cindy have adopted a different approach that puts their clients in the hands of not just one agent, but rather an entire team of experts. While Tom and Cindy handle all negotiations and contracts, and are in constant communication with their clients, each member of their team has a specific role in the selling process and fill that role better than anyone else. Their collective effort not only allows them to provide more and better service, but allows them to have a definitive edge over everyone else through the sheer volume of sales they handle.

How Our Team Works For You

After you have chosen Tom & Cindy to represent you, your signed listing is turned in to the listing department. The listing managers order signs, take photos, write descriptions and put a customized marketing plan into place that will sell your home for top dollar. They are constantly maintaining and tweaking things to showcase your home and give maximum exposure to potential buyers and their agents. They do this for more than 200 clients every year!

Once the listing managers have all of the marketing in place, the field technician steps in. He will place the signs, install an electronic lockbox, keep brochure boxes filled, assist with contractor access and even keep an eye on your home when you are out of town.

Once your home has been contracted for, Tom & Cindy turn the process over to one of their closing managers. They handle scheduling and communication between inspectors, appraisers, agents, clients, lenders and title companies and you to make sure that the closing goes smoothly and on schedule. In the past three years alone, they have handled well over six hundred closings, which brings a wealth of experience to the closing process.

This becomes especially important when challenges arise. In real estate, as in life, nothing goes exactly according to plan 100% of the time. Our clients know and appreciate that “when the train looks like it might come off the tracks” they are represented by experienced agents that know just what to do in every situation to make things right.



What is the bottom line benefit to you? Experience pays off. Last year, Tom & Cindy netted their sellers 4.5% more for their homes than the average Northern Virginia Realtor®. And they did it in than half the average market time. And they served more clients in one year than most other Realtors® do in their entire career.

We Put You in the Center of Everything We Do.



The traditional model for real estate has one agent trying to be all things to all people. The general practitioner provides all of the necessary services alone, thus serving only a small number of clients at any one time. This business model allows for limited service at best. Our team structure places you, the client, in the center of our operation, with a specialist serving you during each phase of your real estate transaction.

Our team of specialists each performs a different task in serving our clients. Every member of our team goes above and beyond to do whatever it takes to satisfy you!

**The power of the team enables us to do more for you.
More experience, more attention, more knowledge, more value.**

Up Close and Personal with Tom and Cindy



Tom Pietsch – Tom lived in New York until 4th grade, when his father was transferred to Washington with the FBI. He’s lived in Northern Virginia ever since. After graduating from Virginia Tech, Tom worked as a ski instructor, then on Capitol Hill, and then in the airline industry where he got to travel extensively before settling into real estate. With his circle of friends and interest in marketing and advertising, Tom and Cindy were a perfect match. Tom had a friend’s home newly on the market and was called out of town. Cindy was the top agent in the office. Tom asked for her help and naturally she did her usual great job – and with that a team was born. Tom concentrates on setting up and constantly upgrading the marketing plan that assures their sellers’ maximum exposure. In his free time he likes to travel, watch sports and movies and play his Fender Stratocaster guitar.

Cindy Schneider – Cindy was born in Ohio, not far from Wheeling, West Virginia and just across the river from Pittsburgh. She moved to Northern Virginia in the early 1980s and began her real estate career. If there ever was a person born to be a Realtor[®], it would be Cindy. No one works harder. She is ethical in every way, and is fanatical with follow-up and customer service. Her multi-tasking skills are impressive. Even after 25 years, she just plain loves her job and the people she meets and serves. Cindy has two children, five grandkids, and an orange cat named Harley, named after the motorcycle she and her husband, Ray, ride when the weather is nice and they have a little free time. They are also passionate Redskins fans.

Tom & Cindy formed a group of top Realtors that has become one of the preeminent teams in Northern Virginia. *The Wall Street Journal* recognized them as #27 of all the agents in the country in 2010. They sold 277 homes that year, during what many would consider a very challenging market. While national recognition is nice, they still consider the happiness and appreciation of their clients the highest award they could receive. They are always professional and known for their core values of integrity and exceptional customer service.

They are described as friendly, approachable, energetic and enthusiastic.

Personal Service



When a buyer calls our office, they reach a live person seven days a week during business hours. This is important for two reasons: The first is you don't get voice-mail. You are immediately directed to the right person who can handle your request. We hate the impersonal nature of endless automated voice-mail systems, just like you probably do.

The second and more powerful reason is that one of our agents is actually always available to respond to potential buyers. Most of our calls go something like this: "How much is that property on Ballycastle Circle?" Most of the time the caller is actually in front of the house with a brochure in their hand. Our agents have already been through that home and know something good to say about it. Their reply will be something like "Oh, that's the one with the hardwood floors and new granite counters. That is priced at.... If you would like to see that property I can be over in 5 minutes." This results in more showings of your home and quicker response to inquiries. So, seven days a week we are able to show your home whenever opportunity allows.

Because we sell so many properties, buyers come to us to find out about homes that will be coming on the market in the future. Sometimes we may have a seller who is not quite ready to list their home actively on the market, but will let a serious buyer come through a little early as a "sneak preview." That home may not be "the one" for that buyer but, because we've established a relationship, we can cross sell them other homes we have available. Our agents are masters at determining buyer needs and matching them with our listings.

Full-time Listing Manager and Assistant

Our Listing Department's main responsibility is to make sure that your home looks great in all of our advertising and that each detail is correct. They also monitor publication dates of print materials and are continually refreshing Internet ads to put them at the top of the pages. They set up open houses and coordinate with our field tech to maintain all



directional signs. They monitor showings and, each time your home is shown, they obtain feedback. Our feedback system sends a digital survey to that Realtor[®] and requests information, including personal comments, about what the clients thought about the home, both inside and out, including the price and condition. Our goal is to see if there is any interest and see how your home stacks up against the competition. If the clients have real interest, Tom or Cindy will follow up quickly. We also use our feedback system to notify all agents that have shown a property whenever there has been a price adjustment, which may encourage an offer.

Open Houses

While we know some homeowners don't want open houses and certainly respect their wishes, we will hold open houses for those owners that do. Our feeling is that we are getting paid to do everything possible to sell the property. An open house is just one more way of attracting potential buyers and every year we can attribute sales to that effort. We advertise our open houses in many different places online, through the Washington Post, by putting up special early signage that has been effective in increasing exposure and attendance.

Front Desk Agents

We have a highly trained agent working at our front desk seven days a week. If a potential buyer calls in about your home they will always get a live person to answer their questions and show them the home quickly, if desired.

Brochures

Our full-color brochures include high resolution photos of your home, as well as important details and a full description of your home's features, upgrades and benefits. We place brochures in your home and on the yard sign outside. Both inside and outside brochures are of the same color and quality paper. Our field technician makes sure the brochures remain stocked until your home is sold. Our pet peeve is empty brochure boxes and crooked signs, so we are vigilant about both.

Interior and Exterior Photos

The photos of your home that are presented on the MLS, in print, or in digital advertising, are critically important. Too many times we have seen homes featured online with either no photos, or poor photos. Our job is to present your home in the best way possible. We use professional camera equipment and lighting. If we have to come back on a better day to photograph and get blue sky in the background, we will. In real estate, it's quality AND quantity. We post the maximum photos allowable by the MLS and various web sites.



Directional Signs

We place directional signs from the entrance of your neighborhood all the way to your home. If a buyer is driving around, there is not a chance they won't find your home. Our field tech constantly is checking on the signs each week to make sure they are there and in good shape.

Yard Signs

Our yard signs cannot be missed. They will get a buyer's attention when driving through your neighborhood and will also let neighbors know your home is for sale, in the event they know someone looking to move to the area. They are tall, easily seen over cars, and have clearly visible contact information, including our web address.

Electronic Marketing

According to every recent survey, over 90% of buyers are using the Internet in their home-search process. Therefore, it is critical to maximize the exposure of your home online. We offer the best, most comprehensive web-based marketing program available in the entire area. Our Internet syndication controls distribution of real estate content to multiple destinations on the web, which powerfully enlarges the potential audience for your home.



HelloVirginia.com

Our flagship website is one of the most advanced in the country and is a tremendous source of buyers. These buyers frequently visit our site after seeing one of our yard signs. After that, they stay and use our site as their primary search tool, which allows us to expose them to our other featured listings. To see how our listings are presented online, click Featured Properties on our home page and then click Current Listings. Choose a property and click “Full Property Details”.

With its constantly updated content, thousands of community photos and our “Coming Soon” section, HelloVirginia.com consistently ranks highly with Google and Yahoo for Northern Virginia searches. When buyers go to our web site, it means great exposure for your home.

WELCOME TO HELLOVIRGINIA.COM

Tom & Cindy and Associates at Long & Foster is #1 among all Realtors for the 10th year in a row in our region of Northern Virginia.

This site is a celebration of the area where we live, work and play. The Alexandria, Kingstowne, Springfield and Lorton area is our backyard and we're happy you stopped by. We've amassed a ton of real estate information, helpful links, and a huge library of personally taken photos of the communities and neighborhoods in which we specialize.

On our site, you will find everything from our cutting-edge database of homes for sale to local restaurant and shopping guides. If you're trying to find the perfect neighborhood then check out our community pages. In addition to thousands of pictures there are also descriptions, facts and lists of amenities. Know that we can show you any home for sale listed with any agent or company anywhere in Northern Virginia.

If you are going to sell your home, we've included a good introduction to the marketing we do that has made sellers thrilled with their results and given us recognition as #72 of the top 100 Realtors nationwide by the Wall Street Journal, Lore Magazine and Real Trends. In 2009 we helped 279 families achieve their buying and selling goals.



We not only put our listings on Realtor.com, the industry's most visited website, but we upgrade them to Featured Properties which allow us to add more pictures and a full description. We have their Enhanced Showcase for each home we list with banners and scrolling text. Your listing will be highlighted and displayed so that it stands out from the crowd, both visually and in our comments. Here are some of our syndicated websites from Realtor.com:

- MSN • AOL • Tampa Bay Online • Wall Street Journal • Juno
- Compuserve • Netscape
- Netzero • Chicago Sun • Digital City • Excite • Monster Moving
- Earthlink • iWon • Homestore.com



Trulia is rapidly rising to the top of the viewed real estate websites. We upgrade all of our homes to featured listings so that they are highlighted and at the top of the search results.



With Long & Foster's dominant market position, and so many signs throughout our region, the company's website gets major traffic. In addition to placing detailed information about your property on over 13,000 Long & Foster agent sites, all listings get syndicated to other real estate websites. We frequently get contacted by someone that has seen one of our listings on a website we've never even heard of. That's the power of syndication.

RealEstate.Aol.com
BaltimoreSun.com
ChristiesGreatEstates.com**
Cyberhomes.com
Enormo.com
ErealInvestors.com
ExtraordinaryProperties.com*

HomesDatabase.com
InvestorLoft.com
LacazeMeredith.com
LakeHomesUSA.com
ListingsToLeads.com
LuxuryPortfolio.com*
LuxuryRealEstate.com*

PropBot.com
PropertyPursuit.com
PropertyShark.com
Realtor.com
RealtyTrac.com
ReloHomeSearch.com
Roost.com

FrontDoor.com
Google.com
Hotpads.com
HomeAway.com
HomeFinder.com
HomesandLand.com
Homes.com

MyNewPlace.com
MyRealty.com
OpenHouse.com
OpenHousesInc.com
Oodle.com
Overstock.com
Philly.com

SecondSpace.com
Trulia.com
Tweetlister.com
Vast.com
WashingtonPost.com
RealEstate.Yahoo.com
Zillow.com
ZingHome.com



Started in 2006, Zillow made home valuation services available to the general public. Since then it has become one of the most popular real estate search sites on the Internet. We upgrade our listings to include multiple photos and a full description.



We create a customized ad for your property that includes a full description and more photos than other property ads. We refresh ads weekly so that our listings are always found.



Postlets.com is a website that allows homes to be presented in a very attractive large-photo format with a full description and a virtual tour. It also gives us the HTML code to make your home's ad on Craigslist.org much more polished and professional. Postlets also widely syndicates our listings to a huge variety of other sites that buyers are exposed to. We closely track the source of buyer inquiries, and this site is a winner.

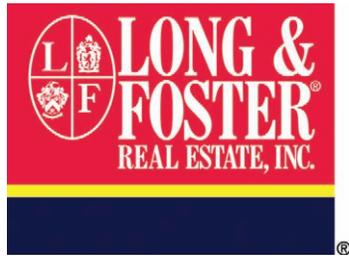
Multiple Listing Service (MLS)

The Multiple Listing Service (MLS) is a shared database used by Realtors[®] to get the word out to other agents about the properties they have for sale. We create the most comprehensive MLS listings possible and use as many photos as permitted. There are typing character limitations in the “remarks” section of each listing. Our listing team is uncanny in crafting appealing remarks, cramming the most important details of your home into a limited space so that Realtors[®] want to include it in their tour.

Virtual Tours

We create an eye-catching virtual tour to make your home stand out when buyers are searching online. The combination of the photos and the virtual tour will have a positive impact on whether the potential buyers viewing your home online request their Realtor[®] to show it to them.

The Power of Our Company



An aggressive and professional marketing strategy includes being affiliated with a company that offers local, national, and international affiliations.

Founded in 1968, our parent company, Long & Foster, has grown from a single office in Fairfax into the largest independently owned real estate company in the country. Founder, Wes Foster (above with Tom and Cindy), is one of the industry's most respected and admired leaders. His core values of integrity, innovation, honesty and customer service still drive the company forward today.

We are also proud to be one of The Leading Real Estate Companies of the World. This is a powerful network of nearly 700 top real estate companies, with over 5,500 offices and 170,000 sales associates. Last year our network sold nearly \$370 billion in homes, more than any other national network or franchise. What does this do for you? The magnitude of this affiliation insures that your listing will be seen on over 400 websites locally, nationally and internationally.

Print Advertising

Our marketing plan includes a comprehensive print advertising campaign that attracts buyers in a variety of ways and successfully complements our massive Internet presence. At a time when most agents are abandoning print, we are finding that fewer competing ads get ours noticed more. Our strategy is to create ads that motivate buyers to call us or visit our web site. In addition, most of these publications have an on-line presence that complements their hard copy issues.

Here are just a few that we use:

The Washington Post, Alexandria Gazette, The Mount Vernon Gazette, Springfield Connection, South County Chronicle, Kingstonian, Cameron Station Compass, Laurel Hill Letter, Lorton Station Platform, Island Creek Informer, Beulah Corridor, Manchester Laker, Daventry Community Newsletter, Villager, Pentagram, Workhouse Insider, Real Estate Book, The Homebuyer's Journal



Sellers' Roadmap



Are You Ready To Sell?

Owners decide to sell for a variety of reasons. Some folks just had their second child and need more space. Others have had a job transfer or are retiring to a different area of the country. Some people are downsizing from a large home, while others are doing a Starker Exchange on an investment property. Due to the economy, we've seen many people struggling with paying their mortgage payments for a home worth substantially less now than the loan balance. For these "short sellers," as well as with our divorce cases and estate sales, our customary professionalism is accompanied with a special sensitivity, confidentiality and discretion.

We also proudly serve our many military clients. Some may be able to take advantage of what's called the HAP (Housing Assistance Program), which may be a huge benefit to those who qualify.

While we sell homes for a living, sometimes our advice may be to rent instead of sell. Our property management division is ready to assist clients who choose that option.

"Our goal is to serve all different needs our clients have."

Timing Your New Home

At any moment in time, we are working with sellers who are also purchasing another home. The question of timing usually comes up early in our consultation. We recommend that, as you are starting to make your home ready for market, you also begin the initial search for your next home.



First, we will provide you with an estimate of what your net proceeds will be from the sale of your current home. You can then give that information to your lender to help identify the loan you will qualify for and the general price range of your the new home. You want to know the closing costs involved and what your monthly payments will be. Then you begin your search. At this point you are not looking for the exact home you are going to buy, but to just pinpoint the areas and neighborhoods that are most appealing to you.

Because most sellers will not accept a contract contingent on the sale of your house, we must take one step at a time. To make you more comfortable with moving forward with your sale, as part of your sales contract we can add a HOC (home of choice) contingency so that you can make the contract contingent upon finding a suitable replacement home. Generally this condition allows for two weeks to thirty days, depending on your purchaser's flexibility. Also, we can negotiate a short rent-back, if necessary, so that you only have to make one move. During our consultation we will answer all of your questions and concerns.

In a nutshell the timing goes like this: Get your house ready. Begin your search for new homes. Put your existing home on the market. Put it under contract. Then find and negotiate a contract on your new home. Go to settlement on your current home. Go to settlement on the new home. Move in!

What's My Home Worth?



Some quick questions for you:

1. Are you asking because you are thinking of refinancing?
2. Are you going to sell now, in six months, or in a year?
3. Will you make improvements to your home before it goes on the market? If so, what kind?
4. Will you de-clutter and have the home staged well to present to the market?
5. Is it going to be easy for Realtors® to show your home or will you want it to be “Appointment Only?” Will existing pets be an issue?
6. Are you going to introduce your property to the marketplace at the correct price or are you going to build in excessive “negotiating room”?
7. Are you just testing the market or do you have a compelling need to sell?

The answers to all these questions and more will have a real-world impact on the offers you will receive for your home from buyers and the price an appraiser will assign to it.

How do we determine the current market value of your home?

We use what is called the Sales Comparison Approach to help you price your home. This analysis involves searching for similar homes in your area that have sold recently (within the last 3 months) and comparing them with yours. We also use both homes that are currently available (it's important to know the existing inventory...your competition) and homes that are currently under contract. We may not know the price those homes are under contract for, but we do know where they were priced when they received an offer that they accepted. We also know how long they were on the market.

Pricing Your Home is like Hitting a Moving Target

One of our most important tasks is to help you price your home in the marketplace.

How do we choose comparable homes? Obviously square footage is very important. The number of bedrooms and baths also matter. Then we consider what upgrades or lack of upgrades exist. How old is the kitchen? Are the counters granite or laminate? New appliances or old?

What is the condition of the carpet? Are there hardwood floors? What size is the garage? Is the yard landscaped beautifully or does it need work? Is the townhome an interior or an end unit? Many factors are considered.

Market conditions also play a major role. Are prices trending upward, downward or flat? Real estate is a very localized product, so a nationwide or even statewide overview is not adequate for proper pricing. You need someone in tune with the specific micromarket you live in.

We analyze the competition. How many homes are on the market? Can a buyer find a home the same size or larger, with more upgrades and better community amenities for less than yours? Buyers WILL do their homework. So we need to do ours.

Think of it this way: At any moment in time the homes we are selling are like “little thermometers” testing the temperature of the marketplace. With dozens of listings, we always have a pulse on which way the market is headed. **We have more homes under contract at any given time than most Realtors® sell in a year, so we have better knowledge than other agents in the market. This gives our clients the ability to lead and not just react. It also serves to strengthen our negotiating hand.**



Preparing Your Home for Presentation to Market



The idea is to hit the ground running. When you go “active” on the MLS, the first visitors to your home should see it in the best shape possible. Buyers have already seen all the other homes in their price range and now you are the new kid on the block. The old adage is true: you only get one chance to make a first impression.

We go through our clients’ homes room by room with them and offer suggestions that will increase the odds of receiving better offers in a shorter amount of time. Note that each sale is different and we are sensitive and flexible. Not every seller wants to, or can afford to, make every improvement possible. We get it.

For starters, light and bright, neutral and de-cluttered sells real estate. Light and bright because it makes your home look larger and more cheerful. We have a lot of sunny days, but we get our share of gloomy ones too. If all the shades are drawn, the house isn’t welcoming.

Neutral sells. It may be boring, but everyone’s furniture goes with eggshell white, but not with pink walls or carpet. Right now up to 90% of buyers begin their search online. If every room is painted bright orange or has boldly patterned wallpaper, you may lose interest from those who feel they would have to do too much work to make things to their liking. Paint and carpet are the two things that earn sellers more of a return on their investment than anything else. Buyers usually overestimate the cost of paint and carpet. We see purchase offers come in less on homes that require a lot of cosmetic work. So it pays to paint.

De-Clutter. You want buyers to look at the rooms and space, not all of your things. The appearance in photos of homes online with lots of clutter, versus those without, are night and day different. Visit our website, www.HelloVirginia.com, for a detailed list of ideas for preparing your home to be in prime showing condition.

Negotiating an Offer

Well, you've made your house look it's best, priced it right and opened it up to the entire real estate community and now you have an offer. Maybe more than one if you are very lucky. What to do now?

First of all realize that the buyer's job is to get the best home for the best price possible, given market conditions. Our job is to sell your home at the best price and terms for you, given the current marketplace. Don't be angry if an offer comes in at a price less than what you were hoping for. An offer is good and usually it is just a starting place.

We have gone through many negotiating classes and seminars. Between that training, and all of our real world experience gained by selling hundreds of houses every year, we are experienced when it's time to negotiate your best contract.

Although the purchase price is usually the biggest concern people have, sometimes the terms and other details become very important as well. Does the settlement date work for you? Will they allow you to rent back so you don't have to make two moves? How many days will it take for the home inspection? How significant is their earnest money deposit? Do they have a pre-approval letter for their loan? Are they asking for the chandelier that was given to you as a wedding present? The entire contract is important and must be carefully looked at before crafting a response.

Sometimes keeping a dismal offer alive leads to a better offer coming in from another party who has been told that another offer exists. So even a bad offer can be very helpful. The old saying is, "Don't be angry with the person who wants to buy your home and steps up with an offer. If you are going to be upset, be angry with all of those buyers who saw it and did not even bother."

We believe the negotiation process does not have to be stressful. We are on your side. However we do our best to be respectful of everyone involved while we are trying to reach an agreement so that the end result is successful and all parties are satisfied.



Inspections



Once buyers and sellers have agreed to price and all terms and changes have been signed off, the contract is considered “ratified”. Now we’re entering a new stage of the roadmap.

A copy of the contract is sent to all parties, including the mortgage company and the title company. There are a myriad of details (from small to large, but ALL important) that happen in this stage.

There are often contingencies that have to be met by certain deadlines. One such contingency is the home inspection. The purchaser will usually have an inspector come to your home and conduct an inspection that could last two to three hours. After that, a copy of the inspection report will be sent to us along with an inspection request, asking you for repairs to be made or to approve the condition “as is” and waiving the contingency. Inspections often open up another round of negotiations. In most cases the seller is bound by the contract to have the “systems” of the house in working order. Systems refer to heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, appliances and smoke detectors. Anything that is not covered specifically in the contract is a “wish-list item” and totally negotiable between the parties.

A termite inspection is another requirement for mortgage companies for most properties. The property has to be free and clear of wood destroying insects. Generally this is easy, but over the years, we’ve seen everything from minor damage to major work needing to be done.

The home inspection is often a sensitive time. Sellers know what price they got for their house and now they feel the buyer

is trying to get into their pocket for more. On the other hand the buyer thought they were buying a perfect house and are finding out that there are repairs needed that will cost them more money. We are here to help facilitate the process and help all parties work together to reach their common goal, which is the sale.

Appraisal

One of the most important contingencies is the appraisal. This is handled by the bank directly. The appraiser's job is to come up with a valuation for the property. The bank will only lend money based on the appraised price of the property, so if the appraisal comes in low, one of four things happen: Either the seller brings the price down to the appraised value, or the buyer brings cash to the table to make up the shortfall between the appraised price and the contract price, or the seller and buyer meet somewhere in the middle, or the contract falls apart.



Recently appraisers have been very conservative in their valuations, and we've seen appraisers come from outside our market area and lack local knowledge. Through our experience, we can be very helpful in providing the appraiser with up-to-date market data, comparable sales, and showing the important upgrades to the property.

There are many other details that our closing department handles behind the scenes. We oversee the title company to make sure the owner's lender has been contacted for the payoff, that the title search is clean, and that all pro-rations of taxes, homeowner association fees, and closing costs are accurate. We review the HUD-1 settlement statement prior to settlement for accuracy.

We also coordinate with the lender throughout the settlement process to make sure all deadlines are met. Any closing costs or credits agreed to by the parties must be sent to the lender for approval. Sometimes there are additional conditions that are required to be met once the loan comes back from underwriting. We make sure this is complied with and the loan process goes smoothly.

Communication and trouble shooting any glitches are what we do best. Doing this three hundred times a year gives us the experience to help you have a smooth transaction!

Settlement Process

Settlement takes place when all of the details come together and you actually sell your home and the purchaser buys your home. In the state of Virginia, when you drive to settlement you own your house. After settlement the buyer owns it.

Typically both parties attend the closing with their agents. The settlement is conducted by the settlement agent, who is often an attorney. The settlement agent represents the contract rather than either the buyer or seller. They follow the terms of the agreement.

For you, as a seller, there are only a few documents to sign. In fact, often our sellers are out of town. The title company can get the documents to you prior to the settlement so your attendance is not mandatory.

We often do what's called a "limited power of attorney" for our clients, if that is something they desire. That way, if there is a leaking faucet or something amiss at the final walk-through inspection, we can sign any agreed-to remedy for them. We just ask them to be available so we can get their approval for any minor changes.

The settlement usually starts off with the settlement agent asking if everything was ok with the final inspection. If all was acceptable, we move on. If there were issues, we resolve them.

Then the settlement agent goes over both sides of the HUD-1 settlement statement, which is a federally mandated form that is two sided with columns of credits and debits for each party. If everyone agrees with the numbers and has no questions, then we're on our way.

There are some common papers to be signed by both parties (deed, termite certificate, etc.), but since the seller has no loan documents, their side of the closing is completed before the buyers. After exchanging keys, congratulations and best wishes, they are free to go.

The seller's money is usually wired to them the afternoon of the next business day following settlement. In Virginia, the title needs to be recorded before the funds can be disbursed.

If you are doing what's called "coinciding settlements", you can settle on your house and also on the home you are purchasing in the same day. This is actually quite common, but much easier if the same title company is handling both transactions.

During settlement, we are there to offer support, any necessary explanations, and facilitate anything out of the ordinary. At settlement, people are often frayed from all the last minute details involved in getting ready for the move. So if there are challenges, sometimes emotions can run high. We are there to settle things down and make sure you are represented fairly.



Our Partnership

The marketing and sale of your property requires us to work together to get the job done.



Here is what we ask from you:

- Price your property competitively.
- Prepare your property to be in the best possible condition for showings.
- Cooperate in making access for showings as easy as possible for Realtors®.
- Provide all pertinent information and documents related to your property as requested.
- Complete and sign property disclosure forms.
- Be candid with your recommendations and suggestions at any time during the marketing process.
- Notify us when travel plans take you away from home so we may stay in touch.
- When an offer comes in, listen to our advice. Be timely and diligent in your response. Expect to honor reasonable contingencies.
- Consider all offers individually. Be prepared to make reasonable compromises when necessary.
- Return all paperwork promptly.
- Take care of any repairs and maintenance required.
- Plan to close and vacate the property on schedule, per the contract.
- Deliver your property in the condition required at closing.

The Power of Networking

Our business is built on referrals all around the globe!

We are fortunate to have a large network of real estate brokers across North America and around the world. Much of our business is from referrals from other agents who have clients looking to buy and sell in Northern Virginia. Our group can also serve clients and friends, not just when buying or selling in Virginia, but anywhere else on the globe. Why not be tapped into the very best real estate agents in the business? Take the guesswork out of who to call and let us make the connection for you. While each client's complete satisfaction is the only true test of the daily job we do, we have been recognized by our peers and the real estate community for both the sales volume we've achieved and the advanced education our agents have received.

Here are just a few of our awards and powerful networks that benefit our clients:

- #27 in the nation among all Realtors and companies – *Wall Street Journal, Lore Magazine, and Real Trends 2010*
- #2 of the Top Ten Teams 2006 All Companies – NVAR (Northern Virginia Association of Realtors)
- Life Time Top Producer and Million Dollar Club – NVAR (Northern Virginia Association of Realtors)
- Top Producing Agents in Long & Foster's Kingstowne office ever since that office has been open
- CDPE (Certified Distressed Property Expert)
- SFR (Short Sale, Foreclosure Resource)
- ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative)
- GRI (Graduate Realtor Institute)
- Star Power Listing University
- Star Power Buyer University
- Star Power Team Training University
- Star Power Leadership University
- Sandler Sales Institute Negotiation Training



We've helped more than 2,700 families with the sale of their home. Will your property be the next addition to a history of success?

“We would like to express our appreciation to the team who made our journey of selling and purchasing a home a very positive experience. From the first meeting we felt like we were in very capable and trustworthy hands. We'll recommend you to everyone we know.”

Amreen and Omar Alvi

“We chose you because of your location, signs and flyers. You gave us the best advice on the initial interview. You gave us sound advice to limit improvements. Your staff was responsive and helpful. We sold in a rocky market at the right time at a reasonable price.”

Bob and Joan St. Onge

“It was really great working with your team – everyone worked well together and really knew their stuff. Your quick and accurate knowledge of the real estate market was key. I strongly feel that without that pulse, we would still be on the market.”

Phil Hagen

“Jason and Cindy were fantastic to work with. Their knowledge of the industry really put us at ease. The sale and purchase went very smoothly because of their efforts. You offered us peace of mind and were always available.”

Melissa and Nat Wolpert

“Cindy was very encouraging from the beginning and gave us updates and always kept in touch. When the time is right, I will call Cindy to help us sell our current house and find something larger.”

Bonnie Junkins

“We had a great experience with you last time, but this was the best ever! Outstanding, pleasant, professional and attentive. Being long distance, we had peace of mind. A 10++”

Carol Fitzgerald and Clyde Newman

“My experience was excellent. You offered great advice on what to do to sell my place in the time period I wanted.”

Carol Robinson

“Thank you very much for all your help. You were great to work with and were always available for consultation and questions. You provided excellent service and a successful result.”

Mike and Denise Saunders



We know that the selection of an agent to represent you in selling your home is a major decision. We invite you to compare us to the rest. We think you'll discover having our team on your side will be the critical difference.

We welcome your business!

Tom Schulz *Cindy Schulz*



Long & Foster Realtors®
Tom & Cindy and Associates
HelloVirginia.com

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