THE TEAM HOWE

Home Seller's Guide

How to Maximise Your Sale Price Without Guesswork

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Welcome

Selling your home is one of the most significant financial decisions you'll make. Naturally, you want the best possible result.

Over more than thirty years selling homes across Sydney's Lower North Shore, I've learned that outstanding results are rarely accidental. They come from careful preparation, accurate pricing, strategic marketing and disciplined negotiation — applied in that order, every time.

Markets change. Buyers change. Technology changes. The principles behind achieving a premium price do not.

This guide isn't a sales pitch. It's the playbook I'd give any vendor — whether they ever chose to work with me — because better-informed sellers make better decisions, and better decisions produce better outcomes.

> *Good decisions are built on evidence, not opinion.*

It Starts With One Question

Every seller asks the same question. “What’s my home worth?”

It’s understandable. It’s also the wrong question.

The better one is: *What is the market prepared to pay?*

Those aren’t always the same number. Hope doesn’t determine value. Agents don’t determine value. Buyers do.

The role of a professional agent isn’t to invent a price. It’s to uncover the price the market will support, then engineer the competition that gets you there.

Everything that follows is built around that single objective.

1. Preparation

Preparation isn't about spending big money. It's about removing the small distractions that quietly cost you bigger dollars in the negotiation room.

When a buyer walks through your home, they should be picturing their future there — not noticing the dripping tap, the chipped skirting, the dated light fittings. Every visible defect they spot gets priced into their offer twice: once for the item itself, and once for whatever else they assume must be wrong.

Practical actions before you list

- **Declutter every room.** Buyers need to see space, not stuff. If you haven't used it in twelve months, store it or remove it.
- **Depersonalise.** Family photos, religious items, strong colour preferences — anything that anchors the home to your life rather than the buyer's.
- **Fix the visible faults.** Leaking taps, sticking doors, chipped paint, cracked tiles, scuffed walls. None of these are expensive. All of them undermine your price.
- **Paint where it counts.** Tired walls in living areas and main bedrooms are the highest-return paint job. Neutral palette, professional finish.
- **Refresh the entrance.** First three seconds form the first impression. Clean the front door, replace dead plants, mow the verge, wash the path.
- **Light it properly.** Replace dim or yellow bulbs with cool, consistent lighting. Open every curtain and blind before inspections.
- **Handle the garden.** Edged lawns, mulched beds, pruned hedges. You don't need a landscaper — you need it to look cared for.

A note on sustainability features

Solar systems, batteries, water tanks and energy-efficient appliances now influence price on the Lower North Shore, not just enquiry. If you have them, make sure they're documented and visible in the campaign. If you've been considering installing them, the question isn't whether they add value — it's whether you'll recover the install cost before settlement. Talk to me before you commit.

2. Pricing

This is where most campaigns are won or lost — usually before the first inspection.

Some agents win listings by quoting the highest price. The market eventually delivers the truth, and the vendor pays for the optimism with extended days on market, multiple price reductions, and the slow erosion of buyer confidence that comes with a stale listing.

I've always done the opposite. Price built from evidence.

The five inputs

- **Recent comparable sales.** Sales in the last 90 days, in your suburb, with comparable land size, condition and aspect. Older data is decoration, not evidence.
- **Current competition.** What's on market now, what's selling, what's sitting.
- **Buyer enquiry.** Volume and quality of enquiry at the price point we're testing.
- **Days on market.** What recent comparables took to sell, and at what discount to original asking.
- **Inspection feedback.** Direct, unfiltered comments from buyers who've walked through the home.

When enough independent pieces of evidence point to the same range, the honest number reveals itself. That's the number we work from. Not because it's conservative — because it's defensible.

> *A price set on evidence attracts buyers. A price set on hope chases them away.*

3. Bringing Your Home to Market

Marketing doesn't sell property. Buyers do.

What marketing does is create the competition that allows buyers to compete. The more qualified buyers who discover your home and the more confidence they have in what they see, the stronger the bidding position you end up in.

What each element does

- **Professional photography.** Sets the perceived value before anyone walks through the door. Get this wrong and the rest of the campaign is uphill.
- **Drone and video.** Adds dimension stills can't — outlook, position, flow between spaces. Particularly important for viewing homes, large footprints, or significant land.
- **Floorplans.** Buyers shortlist on layout almost as heavily as price. A clear floor plan converts curiosity into inspection bookings.
- **3D walkthroughs.** Useful for interstate, expatriate and overseas buyers. Pre-qualifies serious local buyers before they take the time to attend.
- **Digital advertising.** Geo-targeted social and search campaigns built around your actual buyer pool — not a generic broadcast.
- **Buyer database.** My own network of active buyers and the broader Raine & Horne database. Often the first contact a serious property receives.
- **Buyer's agents.** Increasingly active on the Lower North Shore. We engage them directly when the property suits their clients.

More qualified buyers create stronger competition. Stronger competition creates better outcomes. Every element of the campaign is built around that equation.

4. Understanding Buyers

One lesson has held true through every cycle of my career: buyers don't buy houses. They buy certainty.

Every buyer, consciously or not, is asking themselves the same question. *Is there any reason I shouldn't buy this home?*

Our job is to answer that question before they must ask it. Every doubt left unaddressed is a downward level on your final price.

What that looks like in practice

- **Pre-listing building and pest reports.** Sharing them upfront removes the most common negotiation lever buyers use to lower your price.
- **Strata and council documentation ready.** Buyers who can move quickly bid with more confidence.
- **Maintenance issues resolved before launch.** Cheaper to fix than to discount.
- **Honest disclosure on known issues.** Surprises kill deals. Disclosed issues become a non-event.
- **A clear, well-told story about the home.** Why it was bought, what was loved about it, why it's being sold. Buyers respond to specificity, not generic copy.

The fewer questions buyers carry into the negotiation, the stronger their offers tend to be.

5. Presentation

Markets rise and fall. Human psychology doesn't. Presentation continues to influence emotion, and emotion continues to influence price.

For most homes, professional styling pays for itself several times over in the final sale price. It's not about disguising the home — it's about showing buyers how to live in it.

Three options, depending on your home and budget

- **Full property styling.** Stylist replaces furniture, soft furnishings and art across all main rooms. Strongest impact; typical investment recovered many times over at sale.
- **Partial styling.** Focus on the rooms that matter most — living, master bedroom, outdoor entertaining. Lower cost, still effective.
- **Virtual styling.** Digital staging of empty rooms for online photography. Cheapest option; useful for online presentation but not as powerful as physical staging when buyers attend.

Buyers don't just purchase floor area. They purchase a lifestyle. Presentation helps them see it.

6. The First Two Weeks

The opening fortnight of a campaign is when buyer interest peaks. Serious buyers have often been waiting for the right property to appear. When it is launched, they show up immediately.

That window is irreplaceable. If pricing is accurate, presentation is strong and marketing is well-executed, the campaign builds momentum quickly. If any of those three is off, momentum stalls — and waiting too long to act on what the market is telling us costs more than acting early.

What we monitor

- Listing views and click-through rates across every portal
- Enquiry volume and the quality of the enquiry
- Inspection numbers and inspection-to-second-inspection conversion
- Buyer feedback after every inspection, recorded and reviewed
- Competing listings — new launches, price changes, sales

If the evidence is telling us something we didn't expect — about price, presentation, lead image, headline or target audience — we change course quickly. The market rarely rewards hesitation, and it never rewards stubbornness.

7. Negotiation

Most people think negotiation begins when the first offer arrives. It begins much earlier — in how the property is positioned, how enquiries are managed, how inspections are run, and how buyer interest is communicated back to competing parties.

By the time an offer lands, the strategic work is largely done. What remains is execution.

The levers we work with

- **Price.** Obvious, but not always the most important.
- **Settlement period.** Some buyers will pay more for a 30-day settlement; some vendors prefer 90 days. Matching the right buyer's timing can be worth significant money.
- **Deposit.** Larger deposits signal commitment and reduce risk.
- **Contract conditions.** Subject-to-finance, building-and-pest, sunset clauses — each is a risk allocation that's negotiable.
- **Timing of communication.** When and how we go back to buyers matters as much as what we say.

The objective isn't to accept the first offer. It's to create the conditions in which buyers compete to improve their position.

I negotiate hard, and I do it without theatrics. Vendors who hired me for the relationship hire me again because of the result.

8. Technology Meets Experience

Real estate has changed more in the last three years than in the previous fifteen. Used properly, technology now gives us better comparable analysis, faster buyer feedback loops, real-time campaign metrics and sharper targeting than was ever possible before.

I've built that capability into the way every campaign is run.

What that looks like in practice

- A proprietary appraisal model that combines current comparable sales, micro-market days-on-market, buyer demand signals and presentation factors into a defensible price range
- A campaign tracking system that benchmarks performance week by week, so we know within days — not weeks — whether the campaign is on track
- AI-assisted buyer profiling sharpens digital targeting and reduces wasted marketing spend
- Detailed weekly vendor reporting that shows you exactly what we're seeing, what it means, and what we recommend doing next

> *Technology provides better information. Experience provides better judgement.*

The strongest outcomes come from combining both — which is what every Team Howe campaign is built to do.

9. Working Together

Every seller has different priorities. Some want the highest possible price. Others value certainty of sales. Some have firm timelines. Others have complete flexibility.

There isn't one perfect strategy for every home — only the strategy that best fits your circumstances. Which is why every campaign I run starts with the same conversation.

Four questions I ask every vendor

- What does success look like to you?
- What's the timeline you're working on?
- What outcome would you accept, and what would you walk away from?
- What parts of the process are you happy to leave to me and which do you want close visibility on?

Once those are clear, everything that follows is built around them.

Our Promise

After more than thirty years in real estate, one thing has never changed: people deserve honest advice.

I'll always tell you what I genuinely believe the market is saying, even when it's not the easiest conversation. Every recommendation comes with the evidence behind it. I negotiate with discipline. And I treat the sale of your home with the same care I'd want if it were my own.

> *Selling your home isn't about finding the agent with the highest opinion. It's about finding the buyer prepared to pay the highest price. Those are rarely the same thing.*

Let's Talk

If you'd like an honest, evidence-based appraisal of your home — or simply a conversation about where the market is sitting and what your options look like — we'd welcome the call.

There's no obligation, and you'll walk away with information you can use whether you decide to sell now, later, or not at all.

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