

Hints *For* Homeowners

Do The Math: Selling Your House In A Tough Market

(NAPSA)—The key to selling your house in today's tough market might be to think like a retailer.

Store owners, unlike most of us, are used to using all the little "tricks" that get buyers to part with their cash. You know, things like pricing something at \$49.95 instead of \$50. That nickel won't buy a stick of gum, but there's tons of evidence that it works.

Experts say many of those same tactics can help move a home. Try these tips:

Price Pointers

Homeowners considering dropping their asking prices to attract bids should understand how buyers perceive those cuts. A recent study found that if the left digit of two prices remains the same after a discount—say the "9" in \$9,111, slashed from \$9,222—buyers hone in on the right-hand numbers. And they tend to assume the discount is greater if those right-hand numbers drop from two to one, rather than nine to eight or seven to six. The decline is the same in real dollars, but "people think they're getting a better deal," Robin Coulter, a marketing professor at the University of Connecticut, recently told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Numbers Game

Trying to settle on an asking price? Vicki Morwitz, a marketing professor at New York University's Stern School of Business, says round numbers, such as \$495,000, convey quality and prestige, while a specific number, such as \$494,863, makes buyers think "deal." If you're after that quick sale, she told *The Journal*, "you want to go for a precise number."

Stand Out

This tactic—differentiating your house from the flood of others on the market—has the added advantage of heightening your



Thinking like a marketer could help you sell your home.

own positive feelings toward your home in the (entirely possible) event that you wind up staying put for however many years to come. But remember: In this environment, a new coat of paint on the front door won't cut it. Instead, *Consumer Reports* recommends improvements like adding a new roof to enhance the value of your home.

For instance, GAF-Elk's Timberline roof shingles have become North America's best-selling architectural shingles because homeowners love the wood-shake look they provide without the cost and issues of real wood. And with a Class A fire rating from Underwriters Laboratories (the highest rating possible) and warranties that cover high winds, homes are further protected from nature's elements. As for "curb appeal"—all-important whether you're looking to attract buyers now or in the future—selecting from colors like slate, weathered wood and charcoal can only help increase the value of your property.

To learn more about these shingles and other GAF-Elk products, visit www.gaf.com. While there, you can use the Virtual Home Remodeler to get more ideas on design elements for the outside of your home.