

Kirsten Sharpe, Managing Broker/Owner
574-339-7959 | kirstenjsharp@gmail.com
The BEST Realtor for South Bend, Granger,
and Mishawaka, Indiana.
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When Should You List Your House?

by Kirsten Sharpe

Clients often ask me: “When is the best time to list my house?” My answer to them is: “As soon as you’re ready to sell it.” And that includes being emotionally ready to move. But there are important concepts to keep in mind.

1. Prepare Before You List. Never put your house on the market before it’s ready. Preparation is key, which means decluttering, making minor repairs, and doing a deep cleaning. Pull back the curtains to let in natural light. Open the windows to freshen up the air—especially if you smoke or have pets. These simple steps make a big difference. Buyers aren’t looking for perfection, but they do want to feel that a home has been well cared for. First impressions matter, and you only get one. A clean, clutter-free, well-presented home is far more likely to get offers—and often, better ones.

2. Understand the Seasons of the Market. There’s no “bad” time to list a house, but like the weather, the real estate market has seasons. In our area, homes sell year-round—but the peak months for closings are May through August. Since most closings happen about 30-45 days after an offer is accepted, that means those homes were listed in March through June. Here’s something many sellers don’t consider: If you wait to list until “peak season,” you’ll be competing with all your neighbors who had the same idea. Sure, there may be more buyers—but there will also be more homes on the market, giving those buyers more options and possibly reducing your home’s visibility. On the flip side, I often have buyers looking in the winter months, but there’s less inventory available. The homes that are listed—by motivated sellers who didn’t wait—get sold. Don’t fall into the trap of believing that houses “only sell in the summer.” That’s simply not true. Also, keep in mind that local employers, including universities, hospitals, and growing businesses, recruit talent year-round. Their new hires need housing right away—if your home isn’t listed, they can’t buy it.

3. Life Changes Don’t Follow a Calendar. Sometimes, selling your home isn’t about the market—it’s about your life. You may need to sell now due to health concerns, the passing of a spouse or parent, or simply because your home no longer suits your lifestyle. All of these are valid reasons to move forward with selling, regardless of what the calendar says.

Bottom Line: List When You’re Ready—But Be Prepared

If you need to move, any time of year is the right time to sell—as long as your home is ready. Take time to downsize, clean thoroughly, and present your house in its best light. That’s what will help your home stand out from the competition and get you the offer you deserve.

