A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR GREATER PHOENIX EAST VALLEY SELLERS

The Greater Phoenix East Valley Seller's *Negotiation* Playbook

How to protect your equity from the first offer to the closing table — and the framework I walk Greater Phoenix East Valley homeowners through before any pressure exists.

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GREATER PHOENIX EAST VALLEY
SELLER NEGOTIATION GUIDE

WELCOME

> *"The sellers who come out best are rarely the ones with the toughest agent in the room. They're the ones who came in prepared."*

If you're preparing to sell in Scottsdale, Gilbert, Queen Creek, Fountain Hills, or anywhere in the Greater Phoenix East Valley — this guide is for you.

Negotiation is the part of the transaction most sellers don't think about until they're in the middle of it. And by then, the decisions that really determine the outcome have already been made.

This playbook is designed to change that. The goal isn't to teach you to negotiate aggressively — it's to help you prepare thoughtfully, so that when the moment comes, you're already ahead.

I've been navigating negotiations in the Greater Phoenix East Valley market for over two decades. Let's get you prepared.

— Tiffany



TIFFANY CARLSON-RICHISON
GREATER PHOENIX EAST VALLEY, AZ

PART ONE

Before the Offer Arrives

01

Most sellers think negotiation begins when an offer hits the inbox. In practice, the negotiation starts before you list.

Know your numbers before any offer arrives.

Before you go to market, you should know three things clearly. When you know these numbers, you stop reacting to offers and start evaluating them against a clear framework. That's where your leverage lives.

1

Your target net proceeds

What you actually want to walk away with after closing costs, payoff, repairs, and commissions. Not the headline price — the number that lands in your account.

2

Your minimum acceptable number

Your true walk-away point. Decide this in calm moments — not in the middle of a counter-offer at 9pm.

3

Your timeline flexibility

Are you in a hurry? Does the closing date matter? Timeline is a negotiation lever in both directions — and only useful if you've thought about it ahead of time.

Understand what you're actually negotiating.

Price is the most visible variable. It's not the only one — and a high price with weak terms can be worth less than a lower price with clean ones.

Purchase price
The headline number. Important — but rarely the whole story.

Earnest money
Signals buyer commitment. A larger deposit usually means a more serious buyer.

Financing & lender quality
The most important question hiding inside any offer: will this buyer actually close?

Inspection contingency
How much leeway is the buyer keeping to renegotiate after they tour with an inspector?

Appraisal contingency
What happens if the home appraises below contract price? Who absorbs the gap?

Closing timeline
Two weeks vs. sixty days isn't a small difference. It can be worth real money to you.

Possession date
When do you actually need to be out? Post-occupancy is a tool — and sometimes a trap.

Repair credits & concessions
Money that moves at closing rather than as a price reduction. Every dollar isn't equal.

A clean offer with strong terms can outperform a higher offer with weak ones. Every seller should understand this before they receive a single offer.

PART TWO

When the Offer Arrives

02

Read it strategically, not emotionally. The first reaction is almost never the right one.

Your first instinct when an offer arrives may be to look at the number and react. *The offer is too low. The offer is great.* Either reaction, if it drives your response, can cost you. Read the entire offer before forming an opinion. Price first, then every other term — and then, if the timeline allows, give yourself space before you respond.

EVALUATING A LOW OFFER

A low offer is an opening position. That's all it is. The buyer who submits a low offer isn't necessarily an unreasonable buyer — they're testing the market and testing your response. How you respond sets the tone for the rest of the transaction.

THE WRONG RESPONSE	THE RIGHT RESPONSE
Reject it emotionally and stop talking.	Counter with data and keep the conversation going.

What makes a strong counter.

A strong counter is clean. It addresses the most important variables — usually price, timeline, and one or two key contingency terms — without piling on conditions that create friction. Every condition you add to a counter is a reason for the buyer to walk. Focus on what actually matters and leave room for the deal to breathe.

Your agent's job during this stage is to keep information flowing in both directions — about the buyer's financing strength, their motivation, their flexibility on terms. The more you know about who is actually on the other side of the table, the more accurately you can counter.

In the discerning buyer range, not all buyers are equal. A high offer with questionable financing can be worth less than a slightly lower offer that closes cleanly.



PART THREE

The Inspection Negotiation

03

This is where unprepared sellers lose the most money. It's not the end of the negotiation — it's the middle of it.

Once the buyer completes their inspection, they typically submit a list of repair requests or a request for a price reduction. Inspection requests are not automatic concessions. Every item carries a cost — and buyers tend to request more than they expect to receive.

Your job is to evaluate each request strategically, not reactively. The framework on the next page is how I categorize them with my sellers.

How to categorize inspection requests.

Four categories, four very different responses.

Safety & code	These should generally be addressed. Failing to do so can create liability and may be required by lenders before closing.
Age & condition	Items noted as "at end of useful life" are informational, not necessarily actionable. Often used as leverage by buyers — not as legitimate repair demands.
Cosmetic	Minor surface issues are maintenance items, not repair demands. They should be declined in writing — politely, clearly, and without apology.
Pre-disclosed	If something was already in your seller disclosure, a buyer requesting it as a repair item has less standing. Flag this with your agent immediately.

PART FOUR

From Inspection to Close

04

The period between inspection resolution and closing is when transactions get fragile. Steady wins.

STRATEGY · 01

Protecting your proceeds at inspection

The strongest approach is usually one of two responses: address the legitimate safety items and decline the rest in writing, or offer a credit in lieu of repairs at a number that makes sense for your position. Credits can work in your favor — they let the deal close without you managing contractors on a tight timeline. But large credits can affect certain loan calculations, so your agent should guide the conversation.

STRATEGY · 02

The appraisal & the gap

If your buyer is using financing, an appraisal is typically required. If the home appraises at or above the purchase price, nothing changes. If it appraises below, you've entered an appraisal gap. Your options: the buyer makes up the difference in cash, you reduce the price to the appraised value, you meet somewhere in the middle, or either party walks if the contract allows.

STRATEGY · 03

The final stretch

Buyers get cold feet. Financing hiccups emerge. Title issues surface. The way to protect the deal is to stay calm, communicate consistently, and address issues as they arise without panic. A seller who remains steady in the final stretch keeps deals together. A seller who overreacts to minor complications creates the conditions for a deal to fall apart.

In some cases, challenging an appraisal with comparable sales data is the right move. Your agent should know when to push back and when to accept the number.

The sellers who close cleanly are not the ones who get aggressive in the final two weeks. They're the ones who stay measured, who let their agent do their job, and who don't introduce new friction into a deal that's already moving toward the finish.

QUICK REFERENCE

Four negotiation mistakes to avoid.

Each one is preventable. None of them are about being tough — they're about being prepared.

Mistake one

Reacting to the number, not the terms.

Read the full offer before forming an opinion. Price is one variable. Learn to evaluate all of them — financing, contingencies, timeline, possession.

Mistake two

Countering with too many conditions.

A clean counter keeps deals moving. Every condition you add is a friction point — and a reason for the buyer to walk. Add only what's essential.

Mistake three

Over-disclosing your motivation.

Your timeline, your reason for selling, your next home — sharing these shifts leverage to the buyer. Let your agent manage the information flow.

Mistake four

Giving in on inspection without a plan.

Know — before the inspection report arrives — how you intend to respond. Categories matter. Costs matter. A strategy protects you. A reaction doesn't.

If any of these feel familiar from a past sale — that's useful. The goal isn't perfection. It's *preparation*, before you're in the middle of it.

YOUR NEXT STEP

The best time to prepare is *before* you need to.

If you're preparing to sell in the Greater Phoenix East Valley and want to talk through what a negotiation strategy looks like for your home specifically — I'm happy to have that conversation early, before any pressure exists.

— *Tiffany*

REACH OUT

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