

Dickerson & Nieman

Smart Moves for Home Selling

When Dickerson & Nieman plants a sign, things really begin to happen!



Choose the #1 Sign in this area:

We are the area's largest real estate firm

Our five offices Rockford, Roscoe, Belvidere, Byron, and Oregon closed over 1326 transactions in 2009, totaling over \$197 million in sales volume.

We're independent and locally owned

Each of our offices is locally managed and locally staffed. We're not part of a national franchise. WE ARE the largest real estate firm in our area and one of the TOP RATED residential real estate firms in the country. We've been serving the real estate needs of Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties for over forty years.

We're #1 in area listings and sales volume

We're proud to have a majority of this area's Top Producing and Award Winning agents on our team, keeping Dickerson & Nieman at the forefront of the real estate profession. One out of every five listings or sales closed has a Dickerson & Nieman agent involved.

We sell more than 68% of our own listings

Every week after each office business meetings, our agents get into cars and actually tour our new listings. For sellers, this is like having many private showings. Touring our new listings, allows our agents to become familiar with your property so they can quickly let their buyers know that your home is on the market. It's one of the reasons we're able to bring more buyers to your door, which is why on average, 68% of Dickerson & Nieman listings are sold by Dickerson & Nieman agents.

Over \$800,000.00 is spent annually promoting our listings

We believe in the need to aggressively advertise and market our listings. We prominently advertise open houses, new listings, and feature homes in the Sunday newspaper. In addition to newspapers and the real estate homes magazines in the area, we advertise in several publications in Northwestern Illinois, Southern Wisconsin and the Chicago suburbs covering approximately 90 communities throughout the area.

Dickerson & Nieman is ranked at the top on the internet

Our nationally recognized internet website is one of the finest and most comprehensive anywhere. Just a few of the websites that will feature your home include dickersonnieman.com, realtor.com, raarnet.com, rrstar.com, msn.com, trulia.com, aol.com, google.com, oodle.com, lycos.com, HGTV as well as on every one of our agents own websites.

At Dickerson & Nieman your listing will have its own personal web address allowing buyers to go directly to it on the internet!

In addition, our superior technology is able to reach out to consumers who are looking for properties that match your home. With just a click of a button, we are able to let these buyers know that your property is for sale!



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How to Get Your Home Ready to Show

First impressions are the most lasting

Remember that when a potential buyer comes to look at your home, the first impression (Curb Appeal) is vital. Your front lawn and other landscaping should be neatly trimmed and mowed. Make certain that your yard is clean of refuse and leaves. The walk should be swept and, in winter, ice and snow should be removed from the walk and steps. The front door should be clean and fresh looking, the doorbell in working order.

Decorating for quicker sale

Faded walls and worn woodwork will reduce the appeal of your house unless you are selling as a “fixer upper” or house needing “TLC”. Why describe how your house *could* look... when you can *show* how it actually looks with just a reasonable amount of redecorating. A minor investment in paint and “sprucing up” should pay dividends to you in the form of a better price and quicker sale.

Let the sun shine in

Open the drapes and curtains. Clean the windows so that a buyer can see how bright and cheerful your house is. Dark and dreary rooms do not appeal to most home-buying prospects.

Don't be a drip

Fix leaky faucets. Dripping water suggests faulty or worn-out plumbing (major repair bills). Discolored rust-stained sinks are also warning signs, so they should be properly cleaned.

Little things mean a lot

Loose door knobs or cabinet pulls, sticking doors and drawers, wobbly hinges, stuck or cracked windows are all negative factors. Take a few minutes to check and repair all these seemingly minor flaws since they will detract from the value of your house.

Safety first

Keep stairways and corridors clear and clean of clutter. In addition to being unattractive, clutter causes accidents. Make sure smoke detectors are in place and working properly. Change the light bulbs throughout the house.

Top to bottom

Let prospective buyers see the full value of your attic, basement, garage and other utility/storage spaces by removing junk, cartons and other articles. Neatly stack and organize boxes and cartons, etc. If the storage spaces are dark and dreary, a coat of paint or extra lighting can do wonders.

Love big closets

We all love having lots of closets. You can make your closets look even bigger by having them clean, neat and well organized. Get rid of old clothes and cartons that take away from a spacious look. It's a good time to get rid of the stuff you no longer want or use.

Bathrooms sell homes

Make the bathrooms sparkle. Clean stained sinks and bowls, repair any damaged or discolored caulking around bathtubs and showers, and make sure towels and area rugs are bright and sparkly. Make sure all light fixtures and bulbs work.

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Wake up your bedrooms

Keep bedrooms bright and cheerful. Open the drapes or blinds. Remove excess furniture to avoid a crowded look. Use attractive and colorful bed linens and spreads. This helps the buyers to visualize how their bedroom sets will look in the room.

Can you see the light

Illumination in your home can be the “welcome sign” for every potential buyer. Turn on all the exterior and interior lights – including accent and picture lights when showing your home at night. Don’t forget the basement. Make sure bulbs are new and bright. Have as many lights on for showings as possible.

Avoid Crowds

When seeing a home, many buyers feel like intruders and will naturally want to hurry through the showing, if there are people around. It’s best that the owners and the family not be home for showings. We want buyers to take their time and enjoy your home!

How your home sounds is important

When showing your home, have some soft background music playing. Make sure all radios that are on, are tuned to the same station. Turn off the television sets. Let the salesperson and buyers talk freely without having to yell over the noise of a blaring radio or television. Remember soft easy listening background music is acceptable.

Put Fido outside

A dog may be man’s best friend, but not when showing your house. Keep all pets out of the way and not underfoot.

This is not a social call

If you have to be there...stay in the background

If you must be at home during a showing, be courteous and friendly, but don’t try to force conversation with potential buyers or their real estate agent. They are there to inspect your house, not to be social. Let the salesperson do the talking, remember, the salesperson knows what the buyers need and are looking for and can best describe and emphasize the features of your home. DON’T TAG ALONG! You do not need to be there to answer questions, do not volunteer information without being asked. If there are any questions, the salesperson will handle them or will contact your listing agent for information.

Be it ever so humble...

There’s no place like your home. You live in it, so don’t apologize for the appearance of the house. If something out of the ordinary should happen to alter the appearance, inform the agent or scheduler when you are first called to set up the showing appointment. They will prepare and inform the showing agent. Should any negative comments or objections be offered, back off (you don’t need to reply) and let the trained professional salesperson answer them.

This is not a garage sale

Don’t try to sell the potential buyers furniture, furnishings or personal property, that you don’t want to take with you. You could foul-up the sale. These types of details can be discussed afterwards.

Let a professional do it

Let the professional salespeople talk to the customer about selling price, terms, possession date, and other factors. Real estate agents have the experience and training to bring negotiations on your house to a satisfactory conclusion.

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Follow this checklist to get the best price for your home.

Buyers probably have dozens of homes to consider in your area. How can you make yours stand out? Here's a list of specific repairs and key updates. Follow it, and your home will look so good you might even want to take it off the market.

- **Repair exterior elements.** Nothing turns buyers off faster than what they notice first, such as cracked sidewalks, loose gutters, peeling paint or curled shingles. Most of these exterior repairs can be done over a few weekends by you or a contractor.
- **Freshen up the basement.** It has to be dry, neat and odor-free. If you've had leaks or flooding, arrange for a water-proofing company to take a look. Cracks often can be repaired with a method called epoxy injection. Whatever the method, contractors usually offer a lifetime warranty that's transferable to the new owners.
- **Freshen up the interior.** A new coat of paint goes a long way. But remember that 90% of a good paint job is in the preparation. Take the time to patch holes and nicks on the walls and in the woodwork before getting out the paintbrush. A poor paint job can be worse than old ugly walls.
- **Look at the floors.** If your bedroom carpet has a path worn in it that resembles the road to Morocco, consider replacing it. Tile floors with loose grouting should be touched up or re-grouted. Worn wood floors should be re-sanded.
- **Pay attention to how your home "feels".** Make sure doors don't stick, doorknobs are installed tightly and kitchen drawers glide easily. All your windows should open, and every light switch should work. Railings on porches and staircases should feel sturdy when you try to wiggle them.
- **Spruce up the bathroom.** It should be spotless: no mildew; mold or funk (that's a professional term). If the caulk line around the tub looks like a child's science experiment gone haywire, replace it. Buy a new shower curtain. Make sure the pipes under the sinks aren't dripping and the faucets work like new.
- **Kill the clutter.** Rent a storage locker if necessary, and organize your garage and closets. Look at your home from an outsider's point of view. Limiting your personal items will help prospective buyers envision their own valuables in your place. That bobble-head collection of the 1969 Chicago Cubs, although priceless to you, may in fact be a strike against your home.
- **Clean, clean, clean.** Give your house a thorough basement-to-rafters cleaning. If that's too taxing, hire a cleaning crew to scrub the place down. Don't forget the windows, and pull back drapes to allow in as much natural light as possible.

This may all sound like a lot of work, but when your home sells before all the others in your neighborhood, you'll be the "happy seller."

Contributing Editor LOU MANFREDINI is the author of Mr. Fix-It Introduces You to Your Home and a contributor to NBC's Today show.

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Let's get ready to show

What Do You Need to Do for Private Showings and Open Houses?

First Impressions are Important

- Make your home inviting and available
- Keep your grass mowed and shrubs & trees trimmed
- In winter, remove ice and snow from the driveway, walks and steps
- Make your entrance inviting

Prepare Each Room

- Pick up toys, clothes, clutter, papers, etc.
- Eliminate all odors including cigarette smoke
- Clean bathrooms and kitchen, including countertops and stove
- If possible, have fresh flowers in kitchen or bake cookies, bread or pies
- Have lights on – drapes and shades open
- Turn TV off and, if possible, put background music on
- Make beds
- Vacuum carpets
- Keep dishes out of sight
- Remove all valuables, guns, boxes of blank checks, prescriptions, etc.**
- Don't forget to make available the keys or openers for locked outbuildings

Keep Pets Out of the Way

- Keep pets contained
- Remove pet odors, put pet dishes and supplies out of sight

Try Not to be Present for Showings

- Do not let anyone into your home – if a buyer or agent contacts you directly, refer them to your D&N listing agent– all showings must be scheduled
- If you leave town, leave your listing agent a number where you can be reached
- Remember, we feel it is always best that owners NOT be home for showings



Preparing & keeping your home in “show ready” condition will help us achieve our goal more quickly.

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When You Select a Dickerson & Nieman Agent to List Your Property You Get Both a Company and a “Project Manager” You Can Count On!

Professionalism and Experience

Dickerson & Nieman trains our agents to be the best! We provide our agents with the best resources, and the tools to work with to achieve that goal.

Market Knowledge

As your agent I take the time necessary to determine the current market value (CMA) for your property. I will show you how the figures were determined, and review with you my recommendation for the highest and best asking price for your home.

Proven Techniques and Tips

You will get tips that will assist you in preparing your home for the market. I will suggest techniques and strategies that may better enable you to get your home ready for showings and open house.

Professional Marketing, Promotion and Advertising

No one does a better job advertising, promoting and marketing properties for sale, than Dickerson & Nieman. Using the company’s extensive resources, I have many options available to showcase your home including our exclusive nationally recognized website. You can count on me to select the best marketing plan and options for your property.

Attracting Buyers to Your Property

The minute a Dickerson & Nieman sign is placed in your yard our vast network of communication begins to go to work for you. Our professional award-winning team of agents will tour your property. Your home will be immediately listed in the applicable multiple listing service(s) (MLS). The Real Estate Marketplace Magazine advertising will continue until your property is sold. Your listing will be placed on all of our internet websites. Our agents and our company will begin to network with agents from other companies and with our national relocation service (RELO), bringing to their attention the fact that your home is on the market. Your listing will be exposed to other Realtors® and to the thousands of buyers who are looking for a new home. Everyone in the market will know that your home is listed with Dickerson & Nieman.

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When You Select a Dickerson & Nieman Agent to List Your Property You Get a Company and a “Project Manager” You Can Count On!

Follow Up

When the showings start to happen and buyers begin to express interest, I will follow-up with the agents who have shown your property, checking to see if there is interest in your home, asking how the prospective buyer liked your home and seeing if there are any constructive comments or suggestions regarding our pricing, or how your home showed. If there is an interest, I will discuss with the showing agent his or her buyer’s qualifications and concerns. When I am informed that an offer is on the way, I will contact you immediately. When the buyer’s agent is ready to present their offer, I will schedule an appointment with you and will review with you the process of looking at and considering an offer to purchase contract.

Experienced Negotiating Skills and Contract Knowledge

When the contract or contracts start to come in, you can count on me to guide you and to offer the very best advice on how to proceed. I will advise you on how best to respond to each and every one of the buyer’s points, requests or demands. If necessary, we’ll deal with counter offers and the give-and-take of negotiating. When we have a final accepted offer, I will handle all of the disclosures, contingencies, inspections, approvals and deadlines. You can count on me to monitor each and every issue and all of the details contained within your contract, seeing to it that your needs, expectations and interests are met.

Preparation for a Successful Closing

Dickerson & Nieman believes that a closing should be well organized with no surprises. As your listing agent and “project manager” you can count on me to have everything ready to go. I will coordinate all of the details necessary with the buyer’s agent, title company, lenders, and attorneys to make sure all goes smoothly. You can be assured, that all of the work and coordination that needs to be done in order to have a successful closing, will be done in an efficient and timely manner.



The right move is a move with Dickerson & Nieman Realtors. By choosing the #1 Realtor® you have confidence that you are being represented by an agent and organization that is simply the best.









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Price it right

Advantages of Proper Pricing



-  Faster Sale
-  Brings in more potential buyers
-  More interest and showings by Realtors
-  More response from advertising and sign calls
-  Attracts higher offers
-  Starting too high fails to attract the right buyers






A competitive price will help your property sell in the shortest time possible and attract the greatest numbers of potential buyers.

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How Do You Determine the Correct Listing Price of Your Home?

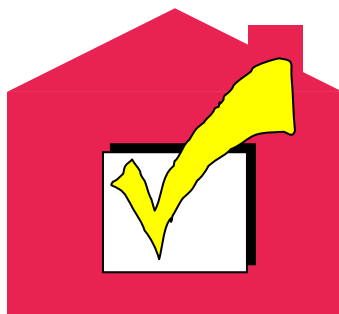
Trust Your Agent's Competitive Market Analysis (CMA)

A CMA will...

-  Show us how competing properties are priced
-  Show us what buyers have paid for similar properties
-  Tell us what buyers will not pay for similar properties

Things That Do Not Increase Your Property's Value

-  What you paid for the house
-  Cost of over improvements
-  How much money you need from this sale to buy your next home
-  What friends, relatives and neighbors think or say your property is worth



According to the National Association of Realtors® if your house is priced correctly, you'll get an offer in the first 10 showings.

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Who controls the market

Who Controls the Marketability of Your Property?

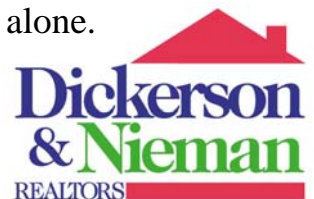


Sadly, sellers are often tempted to choose a listing agent based on which agent suggests the highest listing price or the lowest commission rate.

Remember, your listing agent doesn't control the market. Remember too, that Dickerson & Nieman Realtors is #1, providing the best resources for your agent and bringing more buyers to your door.

Your choice of an agent should be based on what company and what agent provides the **BEST SERVICES, MARKETING RESOURCES, and PROVEN RESULTS!** Successful sellers never select a listing agent based on price alone.

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What I Do for You as Your Listing Agent and “Project Manager”

From the time the listing contract is signed I’ll be handling each and every detail along the way to ensure that we accomplish our goals and achieve a successful closing.

1. Properly and professionally evaluate your property and it’s current value.
2. Prepare a Current Market Analysis.
3. Develop and suggest a pricing strategy and market strategy.
4. Prepare and review with you an “estimated seller’s closing statement.”
5. Advise you on how to prepare your home for showing.
6. Review with you the forms, documents, and disclosures we will be using.
7. “Plant a Sign” – Place a Dickerson & Nieman For-Sale sign in your yard.
8. Take multiple photos of your home for a Dickerson & Nieman internet “grand tour”.
9. Put a lockbox on your door in order to allow easy and convenient showings by agents.
10. Submit your listing to the Multiple Listing Service making your listing available to approximately 1200 area real estate agents and their buyers.
11. Prepare all of the marketing and advertising for your property.
 - Newspapers
 - Real Estate Magazines
 - Brochures and handouts
 - Mailings
 - Internet
 - Realtor networking
12. Schedule Open Houses.
13. Schedule a Dickerson & Nieman office tour.
14. Schedule a Broker’s Open (if appropriate).
15. Schedule your listing to be advertised as a Dickerson & Nieman “New Listing” or “Featured Home” section in the Sunday Newspaper.
16. Contact all potential buyers that I am working with to tell them about your listing.
17. Coordinate with my office staff your instructions for private showings.
18. Follow-up with the agents who have shown your home, asking for comments and suggestions.
19. Qualify buyers.
20. Present and explain offers.
21. Negotiate offers on your behalf, making sure that what you want and expect in your contract is included.
22. Secure and have the earnest money deposited into Escrow.
23. Work with your attorney on contract approval, deed and title work, legal issues, and the closing.
24. Follow-up and see that all contract contingencies are met.
25. Follow-up and track the buyer’s loan commitment.
26. Coordinate and schedule home inspections.
27. Coordinate well and septic evaluations (if applicable).
28. Coordinate and schedule “Clear Water” connection certification.
29. Coordinate the scheduling for an appraisal with the buyer’s agent.
30. Coordinate and schedule all required repairs or replacements.
31. Order title work and deed.
32. Schedule closing with Title Company.
33. Order and schedule home warranty (if applicable).
34. Schedule and attend buyer’s final walk-thru prior to closing.
35. Attend a successful closing.

Lots of things to do

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We're #1 for many reasons.

Home searching is as close as your fingertips online at
dickersonnieman.com!

Reaching home buyers **24/7** through these various search engines.



We're Here,
There &
EVERYWHERE
24/7!



*#1 in Sales in the Rock River Valley
for 11 years in a row!*



Find us on the Web...



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Thank You!

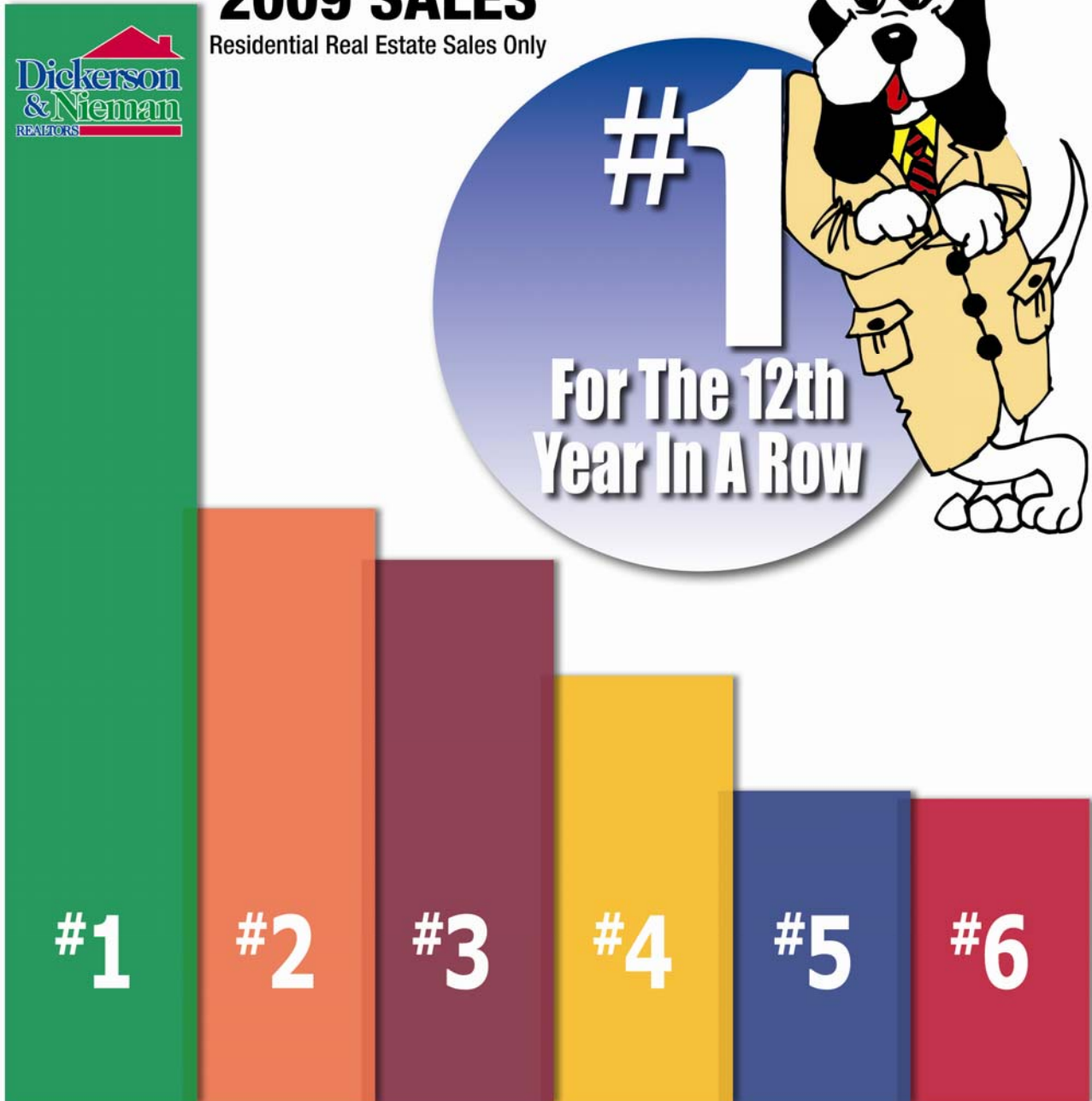
For a GREAT 2009!



Proven facts, proven results

2009 SALES

Residential Real Estate Sales Only



Source: Rockford Area Association of REALTORS®

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