

Minor Changes, Big Impact for Kitchens That Dazzle

When selling your condo, one of the rooms that prospective buyers hone in on is undoubtedly the kitchen. While it may not be feasible or necessary to do a complete reno, there are many minor ways to upgrade your kitchen's "wow" factor, such as:

Cabinets – A fresh coat of paint can do wonders, as can replacing your cabinet handles.

Countertops – If you already have a popular top like quartz or granite, just make sure it's sparkling clean. But, if it's seen better days, consider replacing it with an affordable granite. Also, declutter your countertops by storing away food and small appliances.

Faucet and sink – For an updated option, consider a farmhouse sink (exposed front over the counter), and a pull-down or touchless faucet.

Matching appliances – For a cohesive look, if your appliances aren't all the same finish, consider changing them so that they coordinate.



Flooring – If it's damaged or outdated, replace it with something water-resistant that matches the rest of your kitchen.

Since condo owners tend to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, if you invest in a single room, it's definitely worth focusing on this one.



The Art of Lowball Offers

Generally, lowballing refers to offers 10 percent less than a condo's asking price. Knowing when and how to make a lowball offer is key to whether this strategy works out or not.

Some reasons for making a lowball offer could be when it's a **buyer's market**, and you believe the **price is inflated** against comparable listings; when the unit has been **on the market for a long time**; and/or when the seller is **eager to sell**.

If you believe you have good reason to lowball, **be reasonable and have an explanation for your offer**, such as the condition of the condo, location, or days on the market.

To sweeten your lowball offer, **you can drop the conditions**, but a home inspection before buying is recommended.

Of course, the seller could reject a lowball offer and **refuse to entertain further offers, or you may lose out to another buyer**. Financing may become an issue if the condo sells for too low, as the lender may be suspicious of a below market price.

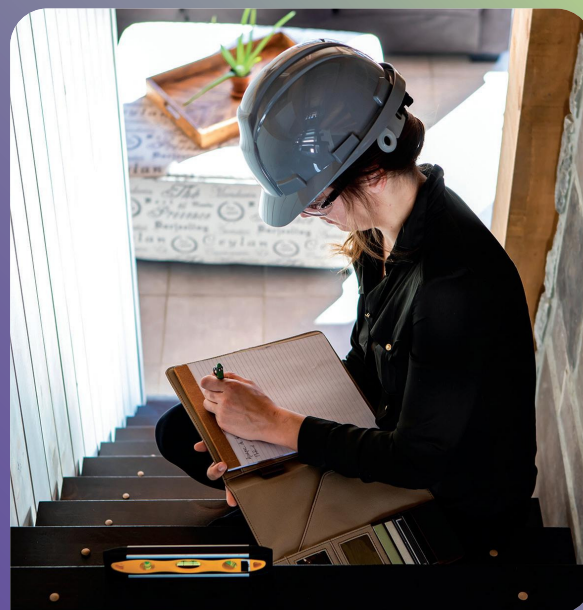
If the idea of potentially not getting the condo doesn't sit well with you, lowballing will be riskier, but if you are willing to take your chances, and believe you have good reason to do so, go for it.

Hiring a Home Inspector

Before purchasing a condo, it's always recommended to have a home inspection done, but not all home inspectors are created equally. To ensure you are hiring the most thorough inspector possible, look into the following:

- **Their background** – In some jurisdictions, you don't have to be certified, affiliated, or insured to be a home inspector. A background in the trades (e.g. plumber, electrician), as well as formal education is beneficial. Ask how many inspections they have done.
- **Ask for a past sample report** – Notice if it's just checkboxes, or if there are thorough explanations and graphics.
- **Length of the inspection** – The average home inspection should take 2 to 3 hours.
- **Check references and reviews** – Pay attention to comments about thoroughness and honesty.
- **Request to attend the inspection** – Then you can ask questions; and if they say you can't, don't hire them.
- **Do they do repairs or recommend contractors?** – If they do, this could be a conflict of interest, so count it as a red flag.

Even the best home inspectors can miss serious problems, such as hidden water damage lurking behind a wall. But, with some



due diligence, you will better be able to catch any issues before you buy.