

Write Compelling Listing Copy  
Expert tips from Leigh Brown



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YOUR LISTINGS

## STAGING WITH WORDS

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How to write compelling listing copy

LEIGH BROWN  
RE/MAX EXECUTIVE REALTY  
CHARLOTTE, N.C.



“Describe the home as you would describe it to another real estate professional. The truth is highly engaging to buyers.”

—Leigh Brown, broker-owner of RE/MAX Executive Realty, Charlotte, N.C.

### STAGING WITH WORDS

- Describe how a home's features will benefit the buyer. For example, instead of mentioning a “screened-in porch,” say “provides a shady retreat from the Florida heat.”
- Ditch the adjectives and rely on strong verbs to paint a vivid picture. For example, replace “huge fireplace” with “soak in the ambiance of a crackling fire.”
- Tap into the art of storytelling by digging into the home's history. Are there unique circumstances surrounding the home's construction? Can the seller share a memory of a significant family event or tradition in the home? Flesh out the details, and craft the home's story in a way that appeals to a buyer's emotions.

**L**eigh Brown, real estate trainer and broker-owner of RE/MAX Executive Realty in Charlotte, N.C., knows she has limited space in her MLS listing copy to grab her buyer's attention.

“You've only got a few seconds to hook a buyer with captivating copy,” Brown explains, “so think about what your buyers say to you when they're house-hunting.”

*Ready to stage with words? Brown offers these tips for writing copy that sizzles:*

**1 BE HONEST.** Describe the home as you would explain it to another real estate professional. “The truth is highly engaging to buyers,”

Brown says. For example, mention that a house backs up to power lines. While including this information might result in fewer showings, they'll be the right showings.

**2 NIX REPETITION.** With limited MLS space, don't take up precious space repeating the same property details that buyers can find in the listing information. Provide details that buyers wouldn't know unless they physically walked through the property. For example, point out how a tree-lined backyard offers a shady play area for children.

**3 USE STORYTELLING.** A description that focuses on statistics (like square footage) will miss the mark.

The best way to engage buyers is to capture the seller's feelings on why they think it's a terrific home. “Use the seller's story to help buyers see their way into the next chapter of their lives,” explains Brown. “It's about [telling a story] that triggers the buyers' and sellers' emotions.”

**4 PAINT WITH WORDS.** Put your buyers in the scene and use specifics. Rather than stating that the property features a huge deck, say, “Imagine throwing an annual July 4th barbecue on your oversized deck that can accommodate 40 of your closest friends.”

Using these tips will help buyers engage with your listing copy, pique their interest and reel them in for a closer look. #

When it comes to listing copy, think lifestyle rather than basics. People want to know what life will be like in the home.

Source: Bernice Ross, CEO, of Real Estate Coach in Austin, Texas

## Listing Description Makeover

### BEFORE:

Four-bedroom, 2.5 bath, single-family, two-story home sits on a 3/4-acre lot. Built in 1984, this 2,400 sq. ft. property features hardwood floors, new appliances, granite countertops, pool and big backyard.

### AFTER:

Imagine driving up a palm tree-lined entrance to your luxurious home, just walking distance from the beach. Lush landscaping greets you as you pull into the circular driveway, with privacy fencing providing a quiet oasis in the back.

The oversized pool, outdoor grill island and concrete deck set the stage for backyard barbecues and poolside parties.

The main floor features a spacious gourmet kitchen with new stainless steel appliances and granite countertops, perfect for potlucks and casual family breakfasts. An open floor plan means you can talk with your kids playing in the family room while you're cooking dinner. Head upstairs to discover three spacious bedrooms and a master bedroom with a spa-like, en suite bathroom sure to melt your stress away.

Plus, plenty of storage space abounds, with two walk-in closets, pullout pantry shelving and custom built-ins in the family room. The walkable neighborhood and beach access give you ample opportunity to enjoy fresh-air exercise and stunning sunsets over the ocean.



## GATHER SELLER INTEL FOR LISTING COPY

One of the best sources for gathering intel for your listing copy is the sellers themselves. The key? Ask questions that elicit those lifestyle and emotional answers with which buyers connect. Try these questions to jump-start the process:

- What motivated you to buy this house in the first place?
- What makes this house unique?
- What special memories, family events or traditions can you share that tell a great story about why you love this home?
- What is the best part about this house?
- What is the best part about this neighborhood/location?
- What will you miss about this house when you move away?
- If you were a real estate professional trying to sell this house, what insider secret would you want to make sure buyers know?

## SEO-Optimization

Part of writing marketing copy that sizzles means ensuring property descriptions are search engine optimized (SEO). Cyndee Haydon, broker-associate of Future Home Realty in Pinellas County, shares her winning strategies for writing focused copy that ranks high in search engines.

- **DO KEYWORD RESEARCH.** Go to Google, think about how people might search, start typing search terms and see what shows up. Look for variations in words and phrasing, identify alternative search terms people are using, then use some of these terms in your listing copy.
- **BUILD A SWIPE FILE OF WHAT WORKS.** Once you've identified relevant keywords, sprinkle them throughout your listing copy and track (through Google Analytics) which ones generate the best results. Take note of top performers and create a keyword list you can use again.
- **BE SPECIFIC.** The more honed-in your description is, the higher it will rank in search engines. For example, "beach bungalow" is too general and would be considered a short keyword. Add details such as "Clearwater Beach home with a pool," and now you've got what's called a long-tail keyword that makes it much likelier to rank high in search results.
- **USE KEYWORDS STRATEGICALLY.** For the best SEO results, use the same top-performing keywords in a variety of places, including the webpage's URL, page title, opening paragraph, marketing copy, title of images and blog posts.
- **THINK GLOBALLY.** Because international buyers don't know the area, they want to know what's near the property. Make sure your marketing copy mentions nearby notables, such as large employers, airports, attractions and major bodies of water.

## Key Buzzwords to Use (and Avoid)

Leigh Brown, real estate trainer and broker-owner of RE/MAX Executive Realty in Charlotte, N.C., suggests describing what's hot in real estate right now, particularly in your geographic area. She gives some examples of buzzwords to use and avoid:

### USE:

- Main-level guest suite
- Rustic barn door
- Subway tile
- Any upgrades, such as new hardwood floor or brand-name appliances

### AVOID:

- Diamond in the rough
- Motivated seller
- Has good bones
- Anything that violates Federal Fair Housing Laws