

# Open house? Forget it, say savvy sellers

## Internet exposure overtakes an old real estate ritual

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Boca Raton real estate agent Eli Lawrence will schedule an open house to showcase a property, but usually it's because the seller insists.

"Nobody will show up other than the neighbor on the right or the neighbor on the left," Lawrence said. "I don't think open houses in today's market are effective."

Some of his peers across South Florida still preach the importance of an open house but concede the once popular weekend ritual has lost ground to the Internet as a way to corral potential buyers.

Many people are used to searching for properties while sitting at their computer keyboards, but the recent growth in online videos and virtual home tours has ramped up real estate marketing on the Web during a housing downturn that has dragged into a second year.

"There's no denying the power of the Internet," said Jeff Levine, of Illustrated Properties in Wellington.

### HOUSE MARKETING TIPS

**Interview several** real estate agents before selecting one, and don't feel obligated to accept the agent a firm assigns.

**Select an agent** who will aggressively use the Internet to market your house.

**Don't expect to sell** your home by holding open houses. They essentially invite neighbors who also are selling their properties and want to see how yours compares.

**The smell** of cookies baking won't hook a potential buyer. The home needs to smell good, but it also should be well lit and priced right.

**Make sure** photos of the house look professional.

**Reduce the asking price** if no buyers emerge after a month.

SOURCES: SUN-SENTINEL RESEARCH  
AND HGTV

### COOKING UP SALES

See a video report on the creative ways real estate agents are marketing homes.

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