



Russell Hunt

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Q. I keep missing out on properties as they're selling very quickly. What tips can you give me?

A. If you are getting a mortgage then you must make sure that you can get your finances agreed in principle before you start looking. Remember that you will be coming up against people who have already got their mortgage in place or who are cash buyers.

You must also keep in touch with the local estate agents to make sure you aren't missing out on anything that has just come on to the market. If you work long hours then it might be worth your while employing the services of a search agent, who can look for you.

If you want to negotiate on price then you need to take the competition and the vendor into account. However, you should have in mind an upper price limit, which you won't pay above.

If you do find something in the current market, then you can't afford to dither. Make sure you have a solicitor appointed and apply pressure on the mortgage company to get the survey done very quickly. This shows that you are serious about buying.

Q. Is it best to buy now or should I wait for later in the year?

A. I would say that everyone looks into their own crystal ball and comes up with theories and predictions about what the market will do. At the moment, there is very little on the market and people are falling over themselves for what is there. But rest assured that more properties will come on to the market, probably in the final quarter of this year, and then you can negotiate harder because there is more choice.

But it is good to start looking now and work out what exactly you want and what you can afford. Preparation is key because you can then move quickly.

Don't get into the situation where you feel like you have to buy because you are fed up of looking and are desperate to move.

However, if you have found a place already and the price makes sense then it is not worth waiting for it to drop by a small amount.

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