

Offer Review Cheat Sheet

The 12 lines that matter and how to read them.

When the offer comes in, the buyer's agent has read 500+ contracts. You've read maybe two. Slow down. Read every line. This is what to look for.

The 12 Lines That Matter Most

1. Purchase Price

Compare to your floor. Ignore "but the appraisal will fix this" — appraisers come in low and renegotiations crush sellers.

2. Earnest Money

Standard is 1–3% of purchase price. Less than 1% means the buyer isn't serious. Confirm it's deposited within 3 business days.

3. Closing Date

Tight closes (under 30 days) signal cash or strong financing. 60+ day closes give you more risk. Also confirm: are you ready to be out by then?

4. Possession

"At closing" is standard. "3 days after closing" or "leaseback" means you stay in the house — make sure rent is at market rate and a deposit is held.

5. Financing Contingency

Cash > Conventional > FHA > VA in terms of likelihood to close. Always require a pre-approval letter (not just pre-qualification). Verify it with the lender.

6. Appraisal Contingency

Buyer can walk if home appraises low. Counter: ask buyer to cover gap up to a set amount (common: \$5–10k).

7. Inspection Contingency

Standard. Watch for: inspection period length (7–10 days is normal), and the right to "object" vs. "void." Limit objections to material defects, not cosmetic.

8. Title Contingency

Always there. Just confirm you can deliver clean title and no surprises (liens, easements).

9. Seller Concessions / Closing Cost Credits

Buyer asking you to pay \$5k of their closing costs? That's a \$5k price reduction in disguise. Calculate net to you, not gross sale price.

10. Inclusions / Exclusions

Read the personal property section carefully. Refrigerator, washer/dryer, freezer, hot tub, riding mower — list anything you're NOT including.

11. Warranties / Repairs

Buyers may ask for a home warranty (\$500–700) or specific repairs. You can decline, counter, or offer credit instead of doing the work yourself.

12. Buyer's Agent Compensation

If the buyer is represented, the offer will specify what you pay their agent. Negotiable. Know your number going in.

Counter-Offer Language That Works

Don't negotiate against yourself. "We're close on price, but \$X works better — and we'll need earnest money increased to \$Y." Make the counter clean: 1–2 changes max, in writing, with a 24-hour response window.

When to Bring in a Pro

If any of these apply, call a real estate attorney *before* you sign:

- Multiple offers and you don't know how to handle them
- A contingency you don't fully understand
- Buyer asking for unusual terms (lease-back, seller financing, swap)
- Anything that "feels wrong" — that instinct is usually right

Or just text Damian

406-697-3282. I'll review the offer with you on a 15-minute call, no charge, no pitch. If I think you're fine to proceed solo, I'll tell you. If I see a landmine, I'll point it out.