



When it comes to cultivating a credit score you've probably got the good citizen routine down cold. You pay on time, try to wipe out the entire balance

5 UNCOMMON WAYS TO RAISE YOUR CREDIT SCORE

every month and never close too many accounts at once. Beyond the basics, though, many consumers are still in the dark about what makes their credit scores go up and down.

Consumers understand that the credit utilization ratio, the total amount of revolving credit someone uses in a month, compared to the amount of available credit they have. But did you know that it's often calculated from the total on the statement date, not the due date? So even if you pay balances in full every month, a card issuer may report a balance. That can hurt your credit score. Here are five ways you can use that bit of knowledge, with some other expert know-how, to boost your credit rating.

PAY BILLS BEFORE THE STATEMENT DATE

The balance as of your last statement date is the balance that will be reported. So if you pay most of the bill before the statement date, you can lower your utilization rate. That can equal a higher credit score. How much you owe is 30 percent of your score and the utilization ratio is a large part of that.

MAKE A TIMELY PAYMENT

Another way to lower the balance on your statement date is to make a payment just prior to the statement date.

ASK FOR A 'GOOD-WILL DELETION'

If you only have one or two bad marks on your credit record, you may be able to get them expunged. Say you've paid late, but have an otherwise spotless credit history. You can ask your lender for a "good-will deletion." You'll be surprised how many times they will.

PAY FOR REMOVAL

If you have an account that's gone into collection, sometimes collectors will agree to remove the debt from your credit report if you agree to pay it off. You'd be surprised how many collection agencies will stop credit reporting in exchange for payment.

PROTECT YOURSELF IN A SHORT SALE

After a short sale, the mortgage lender often will report to credit bureaus that the home loan was settled for less than the full amount. In addition, it can also note the amount of the deficit as "balance owed" on the credit report, even though the obligation has been finalized and no additional money is owed. While the short sale will damage your credit score dramatically (as much as a foreclosure, according to examples recently released by FICO), you can mitigate the damage slightly by arranging with the lender not to report a balance owed. The best time to negotiate this with the lender: before or during the short sale process. **Please call Dennis Wilson at Investors Title (888) 579-8454 with short sale questions regarding title.**



Source: SmartCredit.com & myFICO.com

7 questions to ask before buying a home.

What is this property worth in today's market?

How flexible is the seller on the asking price?

What's wrong with this house?

Is this home in a flood plain?

Will the lender allow a short sale?

Are any foreclosures for sale in the area?

Do you have the paperwork for the mechanical systems?

6 worst home fixes for the money

It's the magic phrase uttered by almost anyone who's ever considered the cost of home remodeling: "We'll get it back when we sell." Unless you keep those projects practical you might be kidding yourself.

Ever wonder what brings the lowest return when you plant that "for sale" sign? Think high-dollar, high-end & highly personalized add-ons that make you drool. Like a totally tricked-out garage built from the ground up. Or a super luxe master suite addition. Or the home office redo designed just for you.

Here are the 6 improvements that rank dead last nationally when it comes to getting those renovation dollars back at resale. **Call me, Dennis Wilson at Investors Title, (888) 579-8454 to explain how title affects remodels and add-ons!**

- Home office remodel
- Backup power generator
- Sunroom addition
- Upscale master suite addition
- Bathroom addition
- Upscale garage addition



9 items homebuyers desire in 2012

Today's homebuyers want it all. Some items on the shopping list: a home in great condition with rooms that can do double duty. Areas that mingle indoor and outdoor living -- patios, porches, decks and outdoor rooms -- are always a plus. And so are those features that offer a little luxury, like garden tubs, first-rate appliances and high-dollar countertops. They're also going back to basics: searching for solid, well-maintained properties that will give them their money's worth. **But more than anything, buyers want to drive a hard bargain. They want great deals, and no matter where a seller prices their property, they're looking to negotiate.**



- Homes in good condition • Outdoor living areas
- Incentives • Open kitchens • Green features
- Rock-bottom bargains • Touches of luxury
- Smaller, less-formal homes
- Simulated materials