CENTURY 21 Alliance

HOW TO BUILD A STRONG CMA IN BRIGHT MLS

Step-by-step workflow, what matters, what doesn't, and how to price with confidence.

1 BEFORE YOU START

- Verify subject property facts — address, property type/style, beds, baths, gross living area, lot size, age, taxes, HOA/condo, school district, flood zone, basement, garage, parking, condition, upgrades, special features, solar/leased items.

Reason: Garbage in, garbage out — accurate subject facts create an accurate CMA.

2 STEP 1: SEARCH THE SUBJECT PROPERTY

- Review prior MLS history, old photos, remarks, list price changes, expired/withdrawn history, concessions, and any prior market resistance.

Why it matters: Prior marketing tells you what the market already accepted or rejected.

3 STEP 2: SET THE RIGHT BOUNDARIES

- Start with the same neighborhood or school district and similar buyer appeal. Look for: side-of-town differences, busy roads, views, waterfront, age of development, walkability, neighborhood identity.

Why: Buyers compare by location first.

4 STEP 3: PULL THE BEST SOLD COMPS FIRST

- Solds matter most because they prove value.
  - Same property type and style
  - Similar size
  - Similar bed/bath count
  - Similar lot
  - Same basement/garage setup
  - Similar condition/upgrades
  - Sold in the last 3–6 months if possible
- ★ *If you must stretch, explain why.*

Why: Solds show what buyers have actually paid.

5 STEP 4: USE PENDINGS AND ACTIVES THE RIGHT WAY

- Pendings help show where buyers are accepting price now; actives show competition, not value; expired and withdrawn listings reveal overpricing or condition problems.

Why: They tell you market activity and pressure.

6 STEP 5: RANK AND COMPARE THE COMPS

- Use a simple A / B / C ranking system.
  - A = closest matches
  - B = usable with reasonable adjustments
  - C = context only
- ★ *Remove outliers and avoid forcing weak comps.*

Why: Strong rankings lead to a credible, defensible CMA.

7 STEP 6: ANALYZE ADJUSTMENTS

- Adjust for square footage, lot size, bed/bath differences, condition, renovations, basement finish, garage, pool, view, location influence, age, and special features.
- ★ *Use local logic and buyer behavior — not random national rules.*

Why: Adjustments turn data into real value.

8 STEP 7: RECONCILE TO A PRICE RANGE

- Don't chase one magic number.

LIKELY RANGE	RECOMMENDED LIST PRICE	STRETCH PRICE / HIGHER-RISK STRATEGY
What the market will likely support	Where we expect the most activity	Requires perfect market conditions

- ★ *Seller goals and timing matter.*

Why: A range gives options and manages expectations.

9 STEP 8: PRESSURE-TEST THE PRICE

- If this home hit the market today, which active listings does it compete with?
- Why would a buyer choose this one?
- What happens if we miss the first two weeks?

Why: The market responds fast — test before you list.

QUICK WORKFLOW AT A GLANCE

Subject search → Review history → Map and filter solds → Check pendings/actives → Rank comps → Reconcile range → Recommend strategy

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

- Subject similarity
- Location
- Condition
- Recency
- Competing inventory
- Market direction
- Buyer appeal
- Photos/remarks review

WHAT IS LESS IMPORTANT

- Zestimate/AVM
- Exact dollar-for-dollar return on upgrades
- County assessment as market value
- Tiny square-foot differences
- Emotional value
- Using only price per square foot

A CMA IS A PRICING TOOL, NOT AN APPRAISAL.

Use professional judgment, current market data, and clear communication to guide your recommendation.

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