For consumers who are interested in protecting their credit, often a short sale will be less of a "ding" on their record than a foreclosure.

A short sale involves the bank forgiving part of your debt in exchange for a buyer coming in with a payment for the bulk of the mortgage amount. This allows the bank to cut its losses by receiving a significant amount of what it otherwise might never receive, and allows you to walk away from what otherwise could have been a stressful court battle and foreclosure judgment on your credit.

Short sales involve realtors and attorneys working together to advocate with your lender in order to facilitate its accepting a new purchaser's proposed purchase amount.