



Prepare and Staging to Sell Your Home

1. MAKE THE MOST OF THAT FIRST IMPRESSION

A well-manicured lawn, neatly trimmed shrubs and a clutter-free porch welcome prospects. So does a freshly painted - or at least freshly scrubbed - front door. Invest in landscaping where it can be seen at first sight, and cleanly swept walks create a good first impression. An extra shot of fertilizer, in season, will make your grass look lush and green. Cut back over-grown shrubbery that looks scraggly or keeps light out of the house. Paint your house if needed. This can probably do more for sales appeal than any other factor on the exterior. Inspect the roof and gutters. Replace any missing shingles, and make sure gutters and downspouts are in place. Consider putting flowers outside the front door, freshly bark mulch flower beds, and plant some seasonal bedding plants for color. The fewer obstacles between prospects and the true appeal of your home, the better.

2. INVEST NOW FOR BIG DIVIDENDS

Here's your chance to get top dollar and clean up in real estate. Clean up in the living room, the bathrooms, and the kitchen and get rid of all that clutter. Make all rooms as spacious as possible and model home condition. If your woodwork is scuffed or the paint is fading, fresh paint in soft light neutral colors will definitely bring the greatest return and improve the marketability of the property. Have all sheetrock in top shape. Cracks, nail-pops, and visible seams are easy to have fixed and remove any doubt in a buyer's mind about potential structural problems. Check ceilings for leak stains. Fix the cause of the damage, repair the ceiling and repaint. New updated wallcoverings add charm and fresh appeal. If the carpeting is stained or dirty, have all the carpets freshly cleaned and stretched if needed. And if the flooring is badly worn, torn, and exceeded it's life expectancy, by all means replace it now. Buyers would rather see how great your home really looks than hear how great it could look, "with a little work".

3. CHECK FAUCETS AND BULBS

Dripping water rattles the nerves, discolors sinks and suggests faulty or worn-out plumbing. Burned out bulbs leave prospects in the dark. Replace all light bulbs with brighter ones. Be sure every light switch works, and replace any cracked electrical outlets. Don't let the little problems detract from what's right with your home.

4. DON'T SHUT OUT A SALE

If cabinets or closet doors stick in your home, you can be sure they will also stick in a prospect's mind. Don't try to explain away sticky situations when you can easily plane them away. For doors that stick slightly, rub a block of paraffin against the surface that shows signs of wear. For sliding doors that stick in their tracks, rub the tracks with paraffin or candle wax. Repair any broken window glass and replace torn screens. It's the little things that buyers remember. A little effort on your part can smooth the way toward closing.

5. THINK SAFETY

Homeowners learn to live with all kinds of self-set bobby traps: rollerskates on the stairs, extension cords, slippery throw rugs and low-hanging overhead lights. Make your residence as non-perilous as possible for uninitiated visitors.

6. MAKE ROOM FOR SPACE

Remember, potential buyers are looking for more than just living space. They're looking for storage space, too. Make sure your attic and garage are clean and free of unnecessary items. Start packing - you're moving anyway! Clean out and dispose of everything you are not going to move. Package and store everything you won't need until you're settled in your new home.

7. CONSIDER YOUR CLOSETS

The better organized a closet, the larger it appears. Pack up and store away those seasonal clothes you won't need. Now's the time to box up those unwanted clothes and donate them to charity. Get rid of that clutter now! If your closets are dark and gloomy, paint ceilings and walls a light color.

8. MAKE YOUR BATHS SPARKLE

Bathrooms sell homes so let them shine. Check and repair damaged or unsightly caulking in the tubs and showers. Use special cleaning products to remove stains from tiles, tubs, toilets, and sinks. For added allure, display your best towels, mats and shower curtains.

9. CREATE THAT DREAM KITCHEN

The kitchen is one of the most important rooms in the house. Make it bright and attractive. If dull, paint cabinets, add fresh light color wallpaper and new window treatments. Make sure all appliances are in tip top condition, and make them sparkle and shine. Remove any appliances that you keep on your counters, like a toaster, coffee-maker, can opener. Clean counters make the room look larger.

10. STRETCH THOSE BEDROOMS

Buyers love warm, inviting, and spacious bedrooms. Wake up prospects to light, bright, and the cozy comforts of your bedrooms. For a more spacious look, get rid of excess furniture and clutter. Colorful bedspreads and bright decor are a must.

11. OPEN UP IN THE DAYTIME

Let the sun in! Pull back all your curtains, drapes, and blinds so buyers can see how bright and cheery your home is. Make sure all the windows are clean and sparkle. Turn on all lights - even during the day - which will further brighten your home and make it more inviting. Lights add color and warmth, and make prospects feel welcome.

12. LIGHTEN UP AT NIGHT

Turn on the excitement by turning on all your lights - both inside and out - when showing your home in the evening.

13. WATCH YOUR PETS

Dogs and cats are great companions, but not when you're showing your home. Pets have a talent for getting underfoot. So do everybody a favor and keep the pets outside, out of the way, and restricted so that buyers can see everything.

14. EARS AND NOSE

Rock-and-roll will never die, but it might kill a real estate sale. When it's time to show your home, it's time to turn off the stereo or TV. If noise from outdoors is heard inside, some soft music works wonders. Make your home smell wonderful. Air fresheners, potpourri, and scented candles will add an inviting aroma buyers won't forget.

15. IT'S SHOWTIME!!!

Remember the old boy scout saying, "Be prepared". In real estate it's, "Be prepared on a moment's notice!" When you least expect it someone will want to show your home. And when your home is going to be shown, be sure to leave before the buyers arrive. Potential buyers often feel like intruders when they enter a home filled with people. Rather than giving your house the attention to detail it deserves, they're likely to hurry through with minimum recall. Let the real estate expert sell your home - they know the buyers and what they need and want.