

Get Your Home Ready To Sell

In preparing your house to sell, ask yourself over and over if your house looks like someone else's dream house. Houses in move-in condition tend to be inviting to buyers; houses that are like new typically sell the fastest and procure the best price.

With that in mind, here are a few things to consider when getting ready to sell:

Exterior

Remember the 60-second rule: that's all the time you have to create a good first impression! Mow the lawn, shovel the snow, rake leaves, trim trees and shrubs that keep light out of the house and remove dead plants. Pick up tools, garbage cans, hoses, toys, and building materials and store them neatly in a storage area. Replace broken or missing roof shingles and straighten and clean the gutters and downspouts. Clean all windows and mend torn screens. Painting your house helps improve curb appeal more than any other fix-up! If you decide against painting the entire house, consider painting the front door, window frames and shutters. Seal or resurface the driveway and repair broken steps and walkways. Paint or replace your mailbox and post. Dress up the front yard with some simple landscaping.

Clean, Clean, Clean

Step back for a moment and look at your home as if you were seeing it for the first time. Every room should be spotlessly clean, dusted and uncluttered. Steam clean the carpets and wax the floors. Wash the walls, windows and light fixtures. Tighten loose stair railings and clean all woodwork. In the event that you feel a project of this magnitude is better left to a professional, ask your real estate agent to recommend a cleaning service.

Entryway

Use bright light bulbs in the foyer and throughout the house. Fill the house with a pleasant aroma, such as berries in the summer or cinnamon in the winter.

Living Room

Replace the carpet if it's worn. It costs money, but you may find that you will more than recoup that cost when the home sells. Patch cracks and nail holes in the walls, and repaint walls in neutral colors, such as white or ivory. Nail down creaking boards and stair treads. Lubricate any sticking or squeaking doors. Open all curtains, and replace them if they are getting old. Add lamps and lighting if the house is dark. Set out fresh flowers.

Furniture

Rearrange or remove furniture to make your rooms look more spacious. Too much furniture and too many knick-knacks make rooms look cluttered and small. One or two decorative items per surface are plenty, so pack the rest away.

Kitchen and Baths

These rooms should sparkle! Clear off counters, and clean all appliances and fixtures. Scrub the floors and walls. Re-caulk tubs and showers. Clean these rooms thoroughly, and be sure they smell fresh.

Closets

Take those things to Goodwill that you'll have to discard anyway when you move. Organize shelves and straighten shoes. Be sure that sliding doors operate smoothly and knobs on drawers are secure.

Utility Room

Dust and wash the washer, dryer and water heater.

Light and Bright

Do everything you can to brighten the interior. Replace wallpaper with white or off-white paint, and repaint shabby or dark walls. Open the blinds, and replace broken windows and window seals. Always maintain a comfortable temperature inside the house, even if you are away for an extended period of time.