

PREPARE YOUR HOME TO SHOW

1. YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION - The “curb appeal” that your home offers a prospective buyer is extremely important. Begin with your lawn: fertilize if necessary, keep it neat and trim, and always remove ice and snow from steps and sidewalks during the winter.

2. YOUR FRONT DOOR IS A WELCOMING SIGN TO PROSPECTIVE BUYERS - Make sure it is clean, and paint it if necessary. A seasonal decoration, such as a wreath, adds an inviting touch.

3. WEAR AND TEAR MAKES BUYERS UNEASY - Minor imperfections that we often overlook in our own homes tend to turn prospective buyers off, because they overestimate the cost of repairs. Faded and scraped walls, as well as any scratched woodwork, should be restored to good condition. A little paint and furniture polish can go a long way in increasing the appeal of your home.

4. THE BRIGHTER THE BETTER - Clean windows and open draperies highlight your walls and ceilings. By letting in natural light, you are letting buyers see how bright and cheery your home can be.

5. AVOID CLUTTER - Buyers have a hard time looking past clutter. By removing items that you seldom use, you let people see the space your home has to offer. Items such as newspapers and toys should be put away, and stairways should be clean and free of clutter as well.

6. A CLEAN KITCHEN IS A MUST - Many buyers judge housekeeping based on the condition of the oven and the stove. Make sure both look as shiny as possible. Clean the interior of your dishwasher, removing stains, especially on the door. Clean out your kitchen cabinets, packing away unnecessary items. Countertops should be clean and free of clutter, as well.

7. SPARKLING BATHROOMS WILL HELP SELL YOUR HOME - All tile, grouting and linoleum should be clean and free of soap scum. Fixtures should be free of water marks and polished. If there is a window in your bathroom, open it to allow a fresh breeze to flow through.

8. MAKE CLOSETS APPEAR LARGER - By removing items that can be packed or stored elsewhere, closets appear neat and organized, making them seem larger and more enticing to buyers.

9. DON'T OVERLOOK YOUR UTILITY SPACE - The attic, basement, garage, and other utility spaces should be as neat as possible, so remove any unnecessary items. Dull walls are easily brightened with a fresh coat of paint. Damp, musty smells are quickly cured by placing bags of limestone in moist places.

10. CHECK MAJOR REPAIRS - Major appliance repair is something that very few prospective buyers would look forward to. Drain a pail of water from the heater in order to remove rust particles, and change the filter on the furnace. Applying oil to noisy appliance fans is a quick remedy. Be sure not to overlook cleaning the exterior of the water heater, furnace, and other major appliances that will be seen by prospective buyers.

11. MAKING REPAIRS NOW CAN MEAN A HIGHER PRICE LATER - Since buyers tend to overestimate the cost of most repairs, it is generally in your best interest to make necessary repairs yourself rather than leave it to them. If closet doors or screen doors are off track, or if doorknobs are loose, fix them. Dripping faucets and cracked molding also suggest neglect to prospective buyers. By fixing them now you should be able to get top dollar for your house.

12. TOO MANY COOKS SPOILS THE SOUP - Having many people in the house while it is being shown can be very distracting for buyers. Try to have as few people around as possible, putting the buyer at ease to absorb all of the advantages your property has to offer. Most people like dogs, but they distract attention, so try to keep your pet out of the way during showings.

13. LET YOUR BROKER DO THE TALKING - If a prospective buyer asks you questions or starts a conversation about your home, be polite, but try to avoid entering an in-depth discussion with them. Your broker is trained to increase the buyers' interest in your property and easily overcome objections they might voice.

14. NIGHT SHOWINGS - In order to best highlight your property, remember to turn on porch lights and any other outside lights for night showings. Inside, try to have the house well lit throughout when the hour of appointment nears.

15. SELL THE HOUSE FIRST - Do not attempt to sell the prospective buyer furniture, rugs or drapes in the house, as this practice will detract from the interest created in your home. If any property is desired by the prospective buyer, discuss these issues with your broker at a later date.

16. STAGING YOUR HOME - There is a plethora of information available on the internet about home staging to help increase your home's sales appeal.