

Is Your House Ready to Show to Buyers?

From experience, we know that a well-maintained house appeals to more buyers and will sell faster and usually for a higher price. Buyers often times feel more comfortable purchasing a well-cared for home because if what they can see is well maintained, they assume that what they can't see has most likely also been well maintained. When getting your house ready for sale, consider the following:

- How much should I spend to prepare my house for sale?
- How is the exterior and curb appeal?
- How is the interior appeal?

Before putting your house on the market, take some time (and as little money as possible) to maximize your interior and exterior appeal.

How Much Should I Spend to Prepare My House for Sale?

When preparing your home for the market, you want to spend as little money as possible. Buyers may be impressed by a brand new roof, but they aren't likely to give you enough extra money to cover the cost. There is a big difference between making minor high impact polishes and touch-ups to your house, and doing extensive and costly renovations. For example, putting new knobs on cabinets and a fresh coat of neutral paint in the living room, will often get you more bang for your buck than installing a new kitchen.

How is the Exterior and Curb Appeal?

Your first concern when putting your home on the market should be the home's exterior. If the outside looks good, people will be more likely want to view the inside.

Here are some tips to brighten up your home's exterior and curb appeal for buyers:

- Keep the lawn edged, cut and watered.
- Regularly trim hedges and weed lawns and flowerbeds.
- Be sure your front door area has a WELCOME feeling.
- Paint the front door.
- Add a couple of pots of colorful annuals near your front entrance.
- Keep walk ways neatly cleared of debris.
- Check foundation, steps, walkways, walls and patios for cracks and deterioration, and fix any problem areas.
- Remove and repaint any peeling paint on doors and windows.
- Clean and align gutters.
- Inspect and clean the chimney.
- Repair and replace loose or damaged roof shingles.
- Repair and repaint loose siding and caulking.
- Reseal old asphalt.
- Keep the garage door closed.
- Store RVs, boats, trailers, or old cars elsewhere while the house is on the market.

Maximizing Interior Appeal

You want your home to look as spacious, bright and clean as possible. Also the home should look neutral – without a lot of your personal and sentimental objects - so buyers can begin to imagine living there.

Here are some tips to enhance your home's interior appeal to buyers:

- Give every room in the house a thorough cleaning and remove all clutter. This alone will make your house appear bigger and brighter. Some homeowners with crowded rooms actually rent storage garages and move half their furniture out, creating a sleeker, more spacious look.
- Use a professional cleaning service every few weeks while the house is on the market.
- Remove the less frequently used, and even daily-used items from kitchen counters, closets, basement and attic to make these areas more inviting.
- Make sure that table tops, dressers and closets are free of clutter.
- Pay special attention to the kitchen and bathrooms: they should look as modern, bright and fresh as possible. It is essential for them to be clean and odor free.
- Repair dripping faucets and showerheads.
- Buy showy new towels for the bathroom, and put them out only for showings.
- Spruce up a kitchen in need of more major remodeling by installing new curtains and cabinet knobs, or applying a fresh coat of neutral paint.
- Clean walls and doors of smudges and scuff marks.
- If necessary, repaint dingy, soiled or strongly-colored walls with a neutral shade of paint, such as off-white or beige. The same neutral scheme can be applied to carpets and linoleum.
- Check for cracks, leaks and signs of dampness in the attic and basement, and fix any problem areas.
- Repair cracks, holes or damage to plaster, wallboard, wallpaper, paint and tiles.
- Replace broken or cracked windowpanes, moldings and other woodwork.
- Inspect and repair the plumbing, heating, cooling and alarm systems.

Following even just a few of these tips will help you maximize your results when it comes time to sell!