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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 in like-new condition typically sell fastest and procure the best price because it outshines the competition.

With that in mind, here are a few things to consider as you look over your house when getting ready to sell:

Exterior

Remember the sixty-second rule: that's all the time you have to create a good first impression! Mow the lawn, rake leaves, trim trees and shrubs that keep light out of the house, and remove dead plants. It will probably be easier to sell your house if the buyer can see it, outside and in. 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. Paint your house, if necessary. This can probably help improve curb appeal more than any other fix-up! If you decide against painting the entire house, at least 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 neat, 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 professional 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, or some other fresh scent.

Living Room

Replace the carpet if it's old or 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 move furniture to make your rooms look more spacious. Discard worn furniture and move extra furniture to a storage unit. Remember, too much furniture and too many knick-knacks make rooms look cluttered and small. One or two decorative items per surface is plenty, so pack the rest away. Visit model homes for decorating ideas.

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 on their tracks and knobs on drawers are secure.

Utility Room

Dust and wash off lint from the washer and dryer. Dust and wash off the 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.