

GETTING READY TO PUT YOUR HOME ON THE MARKET???

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Here is a list of the best tips from home stagers and real estate pros – things you can do for little or no expense to put your home in prime showing shape.

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN:

- Focus on how your property looks from the street . . . the buyer sees that long before he gets to the front door. Make sure your grounds are manicured and landscaped, trim trees, prune shrubs & make sure the lawn is mowed & watered regularly. Plant pots of colorful flowers at the entry and on the patio/deck. Our winters are generally mild enough to have nice color at that time of year, too. Be sure your gutters are clean, too.

PETS:

- If you have pets, special attention is needed. If they're overly friendly, consider kenneling them in an out-of-the-way room or putting them in an extra bedroom with a pet gate (if size is not a problem) for showings. Putting them in the garage is not a good idea due to weather extremes. If they are outdoor animals, perhaps they could be isolated to one part of the yard.

REPAIRS & INSPECTIONS:

- Make functional repairs – fix dripping faucets, sticking doors, replace windows with broken seals, replace any broken fence slats -- actually anything which you know needs repairing. It is wise to have a general inspection done prior to putting your property on the market. By doing that, you will minimize any surprises when your buyer has an inspection done. Also, be sure your home is pest-free.

CLUTTER ELIMINATION:

- Clear out closets & clutter – give away or pack up toys, linens & small kitchen appliances to store **offsite**. (Buyers can be forgiving of storage boxes neatly stacked in the garage.) The “POD” storage units are very popular these days – have one delivered to your driveway, load your belongings & have them stored until you're ready to move into your new residence.
- De-personalize all areas of the property by removing photos, mementos & dated items. Put away collections – plates, porcelains, figurines, etc. You want the buyer to be interested in your home, not your personal collections.
- Use plants in colorful pots or inexpensive wicker baskets to fill in empty spaces. However, don't be overly concerned that your property will look too sparse
- Check out home catalog for little details on beautifying the home. For instance, group books, pictures & *objects d'art* attractively on bookcases rather than having shelf after shelf filled with books.

FURNITURE ARRANGEMENT:

- Try angling one or two pieces of furniture slightly for interest. Try area rugs at an angle, too, rather than just vertically or horizontally. If space allows in the living or family room, include a small conversation area. If the room has a focal point for selling such as a fireplace or bay window, arrange furnishings to enhance that feature. Unless absolutely essential, remove small throw rugs.
- Remove valuables, prescription medicines, breakables, personal identity items & info. Put away any mail, receipts, personal bookkeeping items, check books, credit cards, etc.

LIGHTING:

- Use as much natural light as possible. Open blinds to an upward position, turn on small accent lamps & accent ceiling lighting. Add extra lamps in dark rooms or corners. Be sure all hallways & stairways are lighted.

KITCHEN & BATHROOMS:

- Be sure your kitchen counters are spotless and free of clutter. Do away with dingy kitchen linens & any wet towels (kitchen & bath) should be tossed in the dryer before you leave for work. Your pantry should be organized and lighted. Be sure all waste baskets are emptied before you leave for work.
- Be sure all personal items are out of sight in all bathrooms including shampoo bottles in the shower, razors, hair dryers & curlers, etc.

SCENTS & ACCENTS:

- Just like certain smells can trigger memories in a person years later the scent of your home can leave a lasting effect on a potential buyer. Refrain from cooking anything leaving a distinctive odor . . . fish, liver, garlic, cabbage, strong seasonings & spices, etc. Conversely, baking a frozen loaf of bread, cookies or using vanilla or cinnamon can be very inviting. Also, don't over-perfume your home. Stay away from sharp floral scents, too.
- Set the dining room table with attractive linens, dishes & stemware. If you don't have appropriate items for display, leave it clear and uncluttered.
- Have fresh flowers throughout the house & particularly in the living areas & kitchen.
- Light a fire in the fireplace in the fall and winter.
- A mirror in a nice frame can make a small room feel more open especially an entry if it is small and/or dark.

CLEAN:

- Hire professional services to clean your home including the carpeting, windows, driveway & walkways if you are unable or not inclined to do those jobs. Your home should be as spotless as possible for showing.

AND THEN SOME MORE:

- Bring in another pair of eyes – even if it's not a professional stylist. The person may see problems you have missed. There are, however, reasonably priced "home staging" services. Also, after you've done all you can, be sure to ask your REALTOR to level with you about his opinion as to what needs to be done to make your property the very best it can be for the buyer's sake. It's a matter of the bottom line . . . more dollars to you at closing.
- Also, preview your competition – those properties on the market in your neighborhood. Those which are the cleanest and in the top condition will sell first when priced according to the market.

**And, remember, you live in your home differently now
than when you put it on the market for sale!**