

Make Your Home A Hot Property

The single most important thing you can do to sell your home quickly – next to correct pricing – is to showcase your home in its ideal condition.

It matters not that potential buyers viewing your home might have dirty dishes stacked at their own home, jammed closets or pet smells. You, however, need to forsake the real life for the ideal life while your home is on the market. Studies have proven these simple tips are effective in getting top dollar for your home.

Love at First Sight:

Maximize your curb appeal to start your showing in a positive fashion. Make sure your yard is edged, your grass is green, your garden, hedges and trees are manicured, and that your paint is fresh (or at least not peeling.) Pressure wash your driveway, walkways, and the house itself. Remove all yard clutter, including toys. Make sure your eaves, fascia and soffits are attached, window screens are in good repair, and doors are fresh and functional. Replace aged mailboxes, house numbers or other entrance appointments such as doorbells.

Be doubly sure porch railings and such are secure, steps are structurally sound, and that there is no hazard in your yard for visitors.

First impressions are lasting.

Open Wide...

The first proven rule to successful staging for sale is to help the potential purchaser imagine themselves living in your home. That means you need to create space and neutralize. Remove brick and brack (and valuables!) such as collections, family photos and other excessively personal touches that could distract the potential purchaser.

Open up as much space as possible in every room by removing excess furniture, and reduce closet contents by 50% to give your home an open, airy feeling. You may wish to secure a storage locker to keep unsightly boxes, spare furniture and extra clothing. In this case, LESS IS MORE.

Cleanliness is Next to God...

Your home is in direct competition with new homes that are vacant and spotless; where appliances are new, paint is fresh and the condition pristine. Studies show that \$1500 invested in fresh paint will give you a 73% return on investment. Consider painting in neutral colors to offer potential purchasers a clean, blank canvas to work with.

Even if you don't paint, check the following areas for maximum cleanliness:

- Ensure foyer sparkles, is uncluttered, and smells clean
- Make sure windows, mirrors and other reflective surfaces shine
- Re-apply or clean all caulking and grout
- Make sure all nail holes are plastered and touched up; that baseboards are secure and that any peeling wallpaper is glued.

- Vacuum daily.
 - Consider boarding pets while your property is on the market. At the very least, ensure litter is always clean and pet food out of sight.
 - Keep garbage out of sight (and smell). Empty garbage receptacles daily.
 - Ensure that beds are made and dishes done at all times
 - Keep small kitchen appliances out of site at all times. The spaciousness of the kitchen is a prime selling factor to many purchasers.
 - Keep drapes open during daytime, light bulbs bright at night, and consider the value of fresh air if in season.
 - In winter, ensure a boot tray is available, exterior walkways are cleared, and keep a fireplace lit if you have one available.
 - Organize storage areas, such as garages, garden sheds, attics and basements. Remove all clutter and stains.
 - Be sure to clean light fixtures and appliances thoroughly
 - Wash or replace blinds and curtains
- If your home is clean, well maintained and of neutral décor, there are a few touches that will give you the edge over a new home.
- Cover tables with clean linen table cloths
 - Place fresh cut flowers in appropriate places
 - Use subtle scents, such as vanilla and lemon, to give the house a light, homey smell.

Minor Repairs Bring Major Returns:

Be proactive in the marketing of your home by reviewing it with a critical eye. If there are repairs required, it may be in your best fiscal interest to fix them rather than allow them to serve as an obstacle to a sale. For example, a small water stain from a \$500 leak repair could cause a potential purchaser to fear that more extensive water damage is at hand and could result in an offer reduced by \$5,000. So know potential problem areas and address them.

Low-cost repairs can also make a big difference on first impressions:

- Ensure taps do not leak
- Replace cracked windows and repair screens
- Oil anything that squeaks
- Replace loose doorknobs or cupboard handles
- Eliminate drafts
- Replace furnace and air filters
- Replace outdated light fixtures
- Fill cracks in hardwood floors (eg. beeswax effectively hides gaps) and plaster cracks or mars in wall surfaces
- Fill mars in wood trim or wainscoting
- Replace outdated electrical or switch plates

Absence Makes the Viewing Longer...

Another important ingredient to a successful showing is your absence. It's difficult for a



potential purchaser to picture your home as theirs with you in it. Your presence will also mean that clients won't discuss freely their feelings about your home, which is an important opportunity for the agent to address any concerns. Studies have shown that clients will rush viewings where the homeowner is present.