



## MAKE YOUR HOME SHOW LIKE A MODEL WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

If you want to get Top Dollar for your home it has to be in model-home shape. First impressions are important to make buyers want your property and pay more to get it. Look at your home through potential buyers' eyes as they walk through your home by using this checklist:

**STEP #1: Give Your Home Curb Appeal.** If your home doesn't look good from the curb, potential buyers won't even take time to look at the inside.

- Clean up messy, overgrown landscaping. A well-groomed exterior tells a buyer that the inside of the home is also well maintained.
- Check out your exterior paint job. Repaint, if necessary, but you may only need to do some touching up.
- Paint your mailbox and front door (and make sure the doorbell works).
- Wash or thoroughly clean wood, aluminum and vinyl sided homes. Hire a contractor to pressure wash, if you need to.
- Does the garage door work? Open it, and clean and organize what's inside.
- Mow the lawn and clean up the backyard.

**STEP #2: CLEAN, De-Clutter And Update The Interior.** People buy with their eyes, ears and noses. Remember, you're not only competing with other resale homes, you're competing with new homes as well.

- Clean the inside from top to bottom, including the windows, or hire a cleaning company. Shampoo the carpets (check to see if they might be covering hardwood floors). If you have wood or tile floors, do everything you can to make them shine.
- Remove odors, particularly around pet areas. Remove pets during showings.
- Clear out half your furniture (to make your rooms look bigger).
- Clear off the kitchen counters. Don't forget to remove those refrigerator magnets
- Scrub the cooktops, the cabinets and the oven (yes, they will look there).
- Clean and freshen the bathrooms. Replace the shower curtain and towels. If you can afford it, add new lighting and flooring.

- Do a maintenance review. Fix things that need fixing. Oil squeaky doors.
- Paint the walls a neutral color. If you have time, remove some of that old wallpaper first.
- Polish up your lighting fixtures. If they're "dated," try to replace them with something newer.
- De-clutter the bedrooms and organize the closets. Remove excess clothing, shoes etc. so it looks like you have more closet space than you need.
- Address basement issues. Clean the floors, remove old boxes in storage areas, and make the laundry room sparkle. If the basement is a children's playroom, buy some bins and put the toys away.

**STEP #3: "Stage" Your Home For Sale.** These are touches that give it that model-home look. You can do many of them yourself but if you're not sure, ask your REALTOR® for advice. He or she may have ideas or may recommend hiring a staging professional who will maximize your home's selling potential.

- Rearrange your furniture. This will help you establish a focal point of the room and create clear pathways for potential buyers to walk through your home.
- If you have a budget, replace an old couch or table with something inexpensive but newer.
- Remove personal items, such as family photos, unusual artwork, cluttered bookshelves and collections of things you bought on vacation. You want your buyers to see a clean slate, and let them imagine where they would put THEIR things. Purchase decisions are EMOTIONAL. You want buyers to envision themselves making this THEIR home.
- If possible, replace window coverings and buy new linens for the bedrooms.
- Dress up your dining room table as if you were having guests for dinner.
- Create a mood. Open the drapes, turn on the lights. Add a few candles in the living room, bathrooms and bedrooms. Put a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen table. Yes, you can even bake cookies before an Open House.

If this sounds like a lot of work, it is. But every hour you put into preparing your home to put it on the market will result in a faster sale at a higher price (putting money in your pocket)!