



TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE

First Impressions Really Count

A home that sparkles on the outside will appeal to more buyers, sell faster and bring more money than its shabby neighbour. Presenting your property for sale is the key element for achieving the premium price and it is **important to do whatever is needed to have it looking its absolute best.**

Disassociate Yourself With Your Home.

- Say to yourself, *"This is not my home; it is a house - a product to be sold much like a box of cereal on the supermarket shelf.*
- Make the mental decision to "let go" of your emotions and focus on the fact that soon this house will no longer be yours. Focus on your next move – **your new home – your new future.**
- Picture yourself handing over the keys and envelopes containing appliance warranties to the new owners!
- Say goodbye to every room.

De-Personalize.

Pack up those personal photographs and family heirlooms. Most buyers can't see past personal effects, and you don't want them to be distracted. You want buyers to imagine their own photos on the walls, and they can't do that if yours are there! You don't want to make any buyer ask, *"I wonder what kind of people live in this home?"* You want buyers to say, *"I can see **myself** living here."*

De-Clutter!

People collect an amazing quantity of junk. Consider this: if you haven't used it in over a year, you probably don't need it.

- If you don't need it, why not have a garage sale or donate it to charity?
- Pack up those knickknacks.
- Clean off everything on kitchen benches (cluttered benches convey a lack of cupboard space to potential buyers).
- Think of this process as a head-start on the packing you will eventually need to do anyway.

Rearrange Bedroom Closets and Kitchen Cabinets.

Buyers love to snoop and will open wardrobe and cupboard doors. Think of the message it sends if items fall out! Now imagine what a buyer believes about you if she sees everything organized. It says you probably take good care of the rest of the house as well. This means:

- Neatly stacked dishes.
- Turn coffee cup handles facing the same way.
- Hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction.
- Line up shoes.

Rent a Storage Unit.

Almost every home shows better with less furniture. Remove pieces of furniture that block or hamper paths and walkways and put them in storage. Leave just enough furniture in each room to showcase the room's purpose and plenty of room to move around. You don't want buyers scratching their heads and saying, "*What is this room used for?*"

Make Minor Repairs

- Replace cracked floor or counter tiles.
- Patch holes in walls.
- Fix leaky taps.
- Fix doors that don't close properly and kitchen drawers that jam.
- Replace burned-out light bulbs.
- If you've considered replacing a worn bedspread, do so now!

Make the House Sparkle!

- Wash windows inside and out.
- Rent a pressure washer and spray down sidewalks and exterior.
- Clean out cobwebs.
- Re-caulk tubs, showers and sinks.
- Polish chrome faucets and mirrors.
- Vacuum daily.
- Dust furniture, ceiling fan blades and light fixtures.
- Make sure the bathroom and toilet areas are spotless and free of odours, gleaming shower screens make a much more positive impression than the thought of having to move in and scrub off the soap scum that has built up over the years (a handy hint – soap impregnated steel wool and vinegar makes this job really easy). Bleach dingy grout. Buy some new towels and use these for 'your inspections'.
- Smells – good and bad leave a lasting impression. Remove dirty washing from the laundry basket, no-one wants to experience your dirty socks. We know it's really hard, but if you're a smoker, try to smoke outside only. Most of us have pet pooches who we love dearly, however, they do leave lingering smells in the house, try to keep on top of this. Essential oils and incense can make a good impression, however, make sure they are not too overpowering. Odours of any type are a no-no!!
- Throw open the curtains and blinds and let in the natural light, this will also give you the opportunity to showcase those sparkling clean windows. Make sure the window tracks are free of dead insects and dust.
- Make sure the oven is clean, a chore I know we all loathe but, unfortunately, one that should be done.
- If possible, arrange to have fresh flowers strategically placed throughout.

Scrutinize.

- Go outside and open your front door. Stand there. Do you want to go inside? Does the house welcome you?
- Linger in the doorway of every single room and imagine how your house will look to a buyer.
- Examine carefully how furniture is arranged and move pieces around until it makes sense.
- Make sure window coverings hang level.
- Tune in to the room's statement and its emotional pull. Does it have impact and pizzazz?
- Does it look like nobody lives in this house? You're almost finished.

Check Kerb Appeal.

If a buyer won't get out of their agent's car because they don't like the exterior of your home, you'll never get them inside.

- Keep the lawns and sidewalks mowed.
- Keep gardens, pathways and paving free of weeds.
- Plant some colour in your front garden.
- Check treads on stairs, this is the first impression your potential buyer will have before actually entering your property, if they look 'dodgy', fix them up.
- Step back and look at the paintwork, sometimes paintwork that is looking 'jaded' will look a lot better with a good exterior wash.
- Make sure gutters and downpipes are clean, vegetation growing in the guttering definitely is not a good look. Clean gutters will also make a good impression on the building inspector once the property goes to contract.
- Sparkling windows and screens make a huge difference to any home and it doesn't cost a lot to make sure they are clean.
- Remove any rubbish and garden litter from your yard.
- If you own a swimming pool, make sure the water is always crystal clear – once again having cane toads wallowing in green sludge is not a good look. Ensure your pool fencing complies with local Council regulations.
- Stand across the street and pretend you are the potential buyer for your property. Be very honest and objective with yourself when assessing how your property looks. Is the letterbox overflowing with junk mail? Are the garage doors open? Is the fence in need of repair? Does the exterior of your property have the 'edge' over other properties in the street?

Tie up the Dog

- Not everyone appreciates our canine friends.
- De-doggy doo the yard.

Get Up

- Potential buyers often feel more comfortable if they are able to take time to 'wander' and not feel that they are being watched. Perhaps you could go for a walk (and take the dog with you), sit in a quiet spot in the garden or visit a neighbour to make the buyers feel more at ease.

And finally, enlist the help of a good friend, ask them to look at it from a buyer's point of view and give suggestions on how to improve your property for sale.