

Getting Your Home Ready for Sale

Inexpensive improvements

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Getting Your Home Ready For Sale

It's almost time for the For Sale sign to go up, and time to make sure your home will be looking its best when the first prospective purchasers walk through the door.

A clean, uncluttered house looks bigger and more inviting, so begin by packing away bulky or unused furniture and making the best use of your space. Be ruthless when you go through closets, spare rooms and cupboards.

If you haven't used that bread-making machine for a while, and if you're not likely to need that extra set of china or cutlery in the next few weeks, pack it away. Those knick-knacks on the mantelpiece may have sentimental value to you, but they'll just look like knick-knacks to the people who come through your home. Take a deep breath and move them out of sight. You can make a head start on packing by cleaning off bookshelves, clearing clothes, shoes, extra towels and bedding out of closets, and boxing the kids' toys, out-of-season sports equipment and garden tools.

Take a tour of your home and make a note of all those easy-to-miss spots that need a good cleaning. Wash down the walls, windows and woodwork. Scrub sinks, toilets, bathtubs and kitchen appliances until they sparkle. Clean out the cupboards under the sink, dust the tops of baseboards and wash all window coverings.

The more thorough the clean-up, the easier it will be to keep your home looking its best for visits from your REALTOR and prospective buyers.

Inexpensive fix-ups

Now is also the time to fix the cracked light-switch plates, broken door handles, leaky faucets and squeaky doors you've learned to live with for years.

Shabby kitchen cupboards and a dingy hallway will benefit from a fresh coat of paint in a neutral colour -- this is not the time to start experimenting with dramatic paint schemes.

Similarly, heavily-patterned wallpaper or brightly-coloured accent walls may tend to distract buyers from other features, or make it hard for them to imagine how their belongings will look in the room. If you can, repaint or paper the walls in a subtle colour.

It's often worth replacing carpet or floor coverings that are in really rough shape. If the state of your kitchen floor is diminishing the impact of the whole room, perhaps inexpensive peel-and-stick tiles can improve the situation.

Ask yourself if improvements like this will make your home more saleable, and do they justify the cost.

Get expert advice

REALTORS are very familiar with the housing market and consumer preferences and can help you decide which improvements will be appealing to buyers. A major investment -- adding a garage or deck, for example, may not be recovered through a higher selling price. Conversely, something as simple as replacing torn screens or filling cracks in walls and ceilings can add considerably to your home's saleability.