

40 Tips to Help Sell Your Home

People usually decide within two minutes whether they like your home. The first impression is often the lasting impression. And they start forming an opinion even before they walk in the front door.

So, it is smart to ask yourself if your home is as presentable as it can be for a faster sale at the best price. The best way to find out is to imagine you're a prospective buyer. You've probably been looking at other homes; so approach your home the way you look at other houses.

Your real estate agent will do all of the things necessary to bring in the prospects – but when it comes to the nub of it, your house is going to have to help sell itself.

Here are 40 time-tested tips suggested to make your home more presentable. A good rule to follow is to do cosmetic things which will improve your chances of selling. But avoid making major changes unless they will increase the value of the home more than the cost of the improvement.

Outside

1. Invest in landscaping where it can be seen at first sight. A well-manicured lawn, neatly clipped shrubbery, cleanly swept walks create a good first impression.
2. Cut back overgrown shrubbery that looks scraggly or keeps light out of the house.
3. Paint your house if necessary. This can probably do more for sales appeal than any other factor. If you decide against painting, at least consider touching up front shutters and window frames.
4. Inspect the roof and gutters. Any missing shingles to replace? Gutters and down spouts in place? Need paint or repair?
5. Consider putting flowers outside the front door.
6. Repaint the front door.
7. The kitchen is the most important room in the house. Make it bright and attractive. If dull, paint cabinets and put up perky new curtains.
8. Clean the ventilating hood in the kitchen.
9. If the kitchen floor is badly worn, put down new flooring. Replace any loose tiles.
10. Remove any appliances that you keep on your counters. Clean counters make the room look larger.

Bathroom

11. Repair dripping faucets.
12. Use special cleaning products to remove stains from toilets, bathtubs, sinks and showers.
13. If sink and bathtub drain too slowly, unclog them.

Living Areas

14. Have all plaster in top shape. Cracks (or nail pops, visible seams in dry walls) are easy to fix.

15. Check ceilings for leak stains. Fix the cause of the damage, repair and paint the ceiling.
16. In painting and redecorating, stick to conventional/neutral colors
17. If you have a fire place, clean it out and lay some logs in it to make it look inviting.
18. Wash windows.
19. Replace broken glass.
20. Mend torn screens.
21. Check to see if all windows will open and close.
22. Replace burned-out light bulbs. Use brighter light bulbs.
23. Make sure every light switch works.
24. Make the floors shine; clean and polish them; and nail down any cracking boards or stair treads.
25. Straighten up the closets – get rid of excess items. Use air freshener to get rid of musty odors. Lubricate any sticky or squeaking doors.

Basement, Attic, Garage

26. For sliding doors that stick in their tracks, rub the tracks with paraffin or candle wax.
27. Clean out attic, basement and garage and dispose of everything you are not going to move, and package everything that you won't need until you're settled in your new home.

When Your House is Being Shown

28. Keep room draperies and shades open to let in light.
29. Have your home well-lighted during the showing.
30. At night, turn on porch light and outdoor light in back if you have it.
31. Neatness makes a room look bigger. Avoid clutter.
32. If possible, leave your furniture and rugs in the house for showing it.
33. Avoid having dirty dishes in the sink or on counters.
34. Keep any toys in the children's rooms. Bikes, wagons and skateboards should be made as inconspicuous as possible.
35. Keep radio, stereo, TV off or turned way down.
36. Take your family away if your broker is holding an open house.
37. Refer direct enquiries about seeing your house to your Realtor to take advantage of her professional skills in selling your house.
38. Don't mention furniture or furnishings you wish to dispose of unless asked. Such discussions can kill the sale.
39. Take pets outdoors when your house is being shown.
40. Let the real estate agent show your house, and don't tag along. Answer questions candidly when asked, but don't offer answers to unasked questions.