

Where do I Begin? Preparing Your Home to Sell



Real Estate Advice

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Article 3

Are you overwhelmed by the thought of preparing your home for buyers to view? Does holding an Open House make you anxious, knowing you have accumulated more things than you'd like the public to know about?

Many sellers are unsure about what areas to address when listing a home. Dividing this project into manageable tasks will make it easier and engaging your spouse, kids or best friend can make the task more fun. Then share a meal to celebrate your accomplishments. Here are some basic areas to address:

Exterior (Curb Appeal)

- At the front entrance, remove cobwebs and leaves, buy a new doormat, power wash the exterior if possible or wipe down the siding.
- If you have containers for gardening, toss plants past their prime and refresh them with bright colors. Have your lawn in good shape and straighten the bird feeder, which has been leaning for some time.
- Check your exterior light bulbs (some buyers like to visit homes after dusk, especially for a second showing).
- Clean your windows and check screens for tears.
- Power wash the deck or patio. Fix loose deck boards and make sure railings are stable.

Interior

- De-clutter all horizontal surfaces, which include floors, kitchen counters, bathroom vanities, dressers, shelves, the dining room table, office desk, coffee table and the fireplace mantle.
- People love to open your refrigerator. It gives them a peek into your life. Be sure it's clean, doesn't smell and isn't stuffed to the brim.
- Closets. Yes, people will open them, it's just human nature. Make sure items don't come tumbling out. Storage space is very important to buyers and they are known to open anything with a doorknob.
- Oh, the garage. Need I say more? Declutter, sweep and organize this area.
- Look up – do you have fuzz on your ceiling fans? Wipe down baseboard trim, especially if you have pets.
- Are your walls covered with “too many” family photos? Take them down so buyers don't feel like they are living in your space but instead can envision themselves living there.
- If your walls are a dark color, it's time to lighten up those rooms. A neutral palette will appeal to the largest number of buyers. Be sure to repair nail holes and do drywall patching before painting.

Do You Have Deferred Maintenance?

- Do doors close properly? Can kitchen and bathroom drawers slide smoothly?
- Do your locks work well and is your mailbox in good shape?

Next time you come home, look at your house from the perspective of someone who has never been there. Is this a home you would buy? If not, concentrate on decluttering and making reasonable improvements. You only have one chance to make a first impression!

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