

Selling Your Home: Where to Begin?

First Impressions

Remember what first attracted you to your house when you bought it? What excited you about its most appealing features? Now that you're selling your home, you'll need to look at it as if you were buying it all over again.

A spruced up house makes a great first impression on potential buyers. An attractive property grabs their attention and makes them excited about finding a house that looks and feels well-cared for. Because buyers know they'll encounter fewer problems if they buy it, your house becomes more appealing and stands out from the competition. So if you prepare your home correctly, you'll save time selling it when it's on the market.

A good first impression makes an impact on a number of levels. It's not just the way your house looks to potential buyers, but how it feels and smells to them, how their friends and family will react, how they imagine it would be to live there.

With simple improvements throughout your house, you can grab the attention of potential buyers and help them see why your house is right for them.

Plan Ahead

Create a plan to enhance your property. Keep a notebook for your selling project, and as you stroll through your yard, make a list of what needs to be done. Consider what your property looks like to people driving by or walking through your door. What will they like or dislike? What needs fixing, painting, cleaning? What can you improve? Whether you paint your house or fix up the yard, your efforts don't need to be costly; even inexpensive improvements and minor repairs go far toward attracting serious buyers. But remember, those seemingly insignificant problems you've learned to live with can actually discourage potential buyers. Here are ideas for increasing your home's appeal in order to sell it quickly at the best price.

Interior

Clean Everything

Buyers expect a spotless house, inside and out. So clean everything, especially your windows and window sills. Scrub walls and floors, tile and ceilings, cupboards and drawers, kitchen and bathrooms. Wash scuff marks from doors and entryways, clean light fixtures and the fireplace. Don't forget the laundry room. And put away your clothes.

Cut the Clutter

People are turned off by rooms that look and feel cluttered. Remember, potential buyers are buying your house, not your furniture, so help them picture themselves and their possessions in your home by making your rooms feel large, light, and airy. As you clean, pack away your personal items, such as pictures, valuables, and collectibles, and store or get rid of surplus books, magazines, videotapes, extra furniture, rugs, blankets, etc. Consider renting a storage unit to eliminate clutter in your garage and attic.

It's hard to get rid of possessions, but cleaning and clearing out the clutter can really pay off in the end. Packing away your clutter also gets you started packing for your next move. Make your garage and basement as tidy as the rest of your house. Simple little tasks such as storing your tools and neatly rolling up your garden hose suggest that you take good care of your house. Don't let anything detract from making your best first impression.