

TIPS AND TOOLS

for preparing your home for the market.

De-Personalize. Pack up those personal photographs and family heirlooms. Buyers can easily get distracted by personal artifacts when their focus should be on the features of your home. You want buyers to say, *"I can see myself living here."*

De-Clutter! People collect lots of items (a.k.a. "junk") over the years. Therefore, if you haven't used something in over a year, you probably won't miss it. So why not donate those unneeded items to a local thrift store or throw them away? Some other helpful de-cluttering tips are listed below...

- a. Remove everything from kitchen counters including blender, coffee maker, cookbooks, salt and pepper shakers, etc... Same goes for all surfaces including table-tops, vanities, and more. Place essential items used daily in a small box that can be stored in a closet when not in use.
- b. Don't leave a paper trail! Recycle out-of-date newspapers and magazines and place mail in a secure place where no one can see it.
- c. Place clean clothes in drawers and closets and dirty laundry in hampers tucked away. Make sure your family's shoes, coats, and school bags are stowed away.

Rearrange Closets, Cabinets, and Drawers. While touring your home, buyers will peek in drawers, cabinets and closets. If these areas are packed full and disorganized the buyer will fear the property lacks storage. If these storage spots are clean and orderly the buyer will feel confident the rest of the house has also been well taken care of. Some helpful hints on organizing follow...

- a. Neatly stack dishes.
- b. Turn coffee cup handles facing the same way.
- c. Hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction.
- d. Line up shoes.
- e. Fold towels, wash clothes, and sheets neatly.

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. Remove extra leaves from your dining room table to make the room appear larger. Leave just enough furniture in each room to showcase the room's purpose.

Remove/Replace Favorite Items. If you want to take window coverings, built-in appliances or fixtures with you, remove them prior to putting your property on the market. If the chandelier in the dining room once belonged to your great grandmother, take it down and replace with a new fixture. A buyer may fall in-love with an item in your home and make an offer based on that. Once you tell a buyer he or she can't have that item, they will covet it, and it could blow the whole deal. Pack those items and replace them, if necessary.

Make Minor Repairs:

- a. Replace cracked floor tiles or counter tiles.
- b. Patch holes in walls.
- c. Fix leaky faucets.
- d. Fix doors that don't close properly and kitchen drawers that jam.
- e. Consider painting your walls neutral colors, especially if you have grown accustomed to purple or pink walls. (Don't give buyers any reason to remember your home as "the house with the bright orange bathroom.")
- f. Replace burned-out light bulbs.
- g. Replace toilet seats if needed.
- h. Replace burners if soiled from years of cooking.
- i. If you've considered replacing a worn bedspread, do so now!

Make the House Sparkle!

- a. Wash windows inside and out.
- b. Clean out cobwebs.
- c. Re-caulk around toilets, tubs, showers and sinks.
- d. Make toilets, tubs, showers, and sinks shine.
- e. Polish chrome faucets and mirrors.
- f. Wash appliances inside and out.
- g. Vacuum daily.
- h. Scrub floors.
- i. Dust furniture, ceiling fan blades and light fixtures.
- j. Wash floor, wall, and ceiling vents to remove dust and dirt.
- k. Wipe down walls, doors, and trim to remove stains, dirt, and dust.
- l. Bleach dingy grout.
- m. Replace worn rugs.
- n. Hang up fresh towels—bathroom towels look great fastened with ribbon and bows.
- o. Clean and air out any musty smelling areas. Odors are a no-no.
- p. Throw out the trash.

More Helpful Tips.

- a. Wash fabrics including drapes, rugs, shower curtains, towels, bedding, etc... Fabrics hold in odors and should be freshened up regularly.
- b. If your chair or couch has a stain or rip, a nice throw makes everything better. Plus it brings a little elegance into the room.
- c. Place toys in an appropriate place such as a child's room or play room and not in the family room.
- d. Keep all pets, pet beds, feeding dishes, and litter boxes out of the way—preferably out of the house.
- e. Consider pet and food smells in your home and do your best to make them pleasant such as baking cookies, burn cinnamon on the oven, or light candles before an open house.

Scrutinize.

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

Check Curb Appeal. If the outside of your home doesn't excite your buyer they won't get out of their agent's car. Therefore, make your home inviting in the following ways.

- a. Rent a pressure washer and spray down sidewalks and the exterior.
- b. Keep the sidewalks cleared.
- c. Mow the lawn.
- d. Patch lawn in spotted areas.
- e. Paint faded window trim.
- f. Plant yellow flowers or group flower pots together. Yellow evokes a buying emotion. Marigolds are inexpensive!
- g. Trim your bushes.
- h. Paint your front door.
- i. Make sure visitors can clearly read your house number