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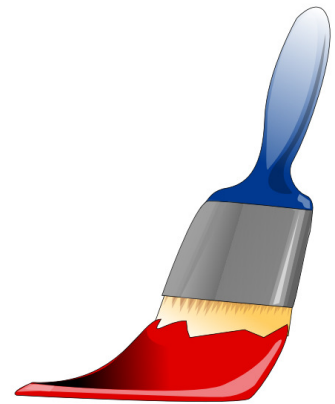
**Bringing Expertise, Loyalty & Trust
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90 TIPS FOR PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR THE MARKET....

The following pages will guide you step by step through the process of preparing your home for sale in order to achieve the highest possible sales price in the least amount of time. We will concentrate on six areas: (1) Repairing, (2) Cleaning, (3) Neutralizing, (4) Space Management, (5) Atmosphere and (6) Staging.

REPAIRS



1. The rule of thumb is, if something is in need of repair, fix it! There are probably many small things in your home that you have simply become used to over time...things that you have been promising yourself that you would attend to. Well, now is the time. The buyer will mentally add up the cost of repairing all those minor flaws and end up with an amount that is generally much higher than what it would cost you to do the repairs. And if there are too many items, even if they are not costly, the buyer may choose to buy another home. Many buyers do not have the time or “know-how” to make simple repairs. And because our marketplace is so competitive, they have come to expect a near-perfect property.
2. Check all the walls for peeling paint & loose wallpaper.
3. Large repairs: In today’s climate of open disclosure & professional home inspections, the rule is “Treat a buyer better than you would treat yourself.” Repair any problems with major systems. It is to your benefit to address these kinds of issues up front rather than to have to re-negotiate after the home inspection.

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CLEANING



4. Every area of the home must sparkle and shine! Each hour spent will be worth it. Would you rather buy a clean car or a dirty one? Would you hurry to buy a pair of shoes with mud on them?
5. Clean all windows inside and out. This helps make the house sparkle.
6. Clean all wall-to-wall carpeting and area rugs. Clean and polish all linoleum, tile & wooden floors.
7. Clean and polish all woodwork. Pay particular attention to the kitchen and bath cabinets.
8. Clean and polish all light fixtures.

NEUTRALIZING

9. Be cautious about selecting colors when painting or replacing carpeting. Your objective here is to make your home appeal to the largest possible buying segment. Ask yourself, "How many of the available buyers would be able to move into your house and have their furniture fit in and not have to replace the carpeting or repaint the walls?" Position your home on the market to be as livable as possible to as many people as possible, and allow the buyer to mentally picture the home as theirs.
10. Forget your personal taste...the "market" is always demand driven! The average buyer will have a hard time looking beyond blue carpeting and bold wallpaper. Consider replacing unusual or bold colors with neutral tones. Two coats of white paint may be the best investment you ever made!

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SPACE MANAGEMENT

This involves creating the illusion of more space...

11. Arrange furniture to give the rooms as spacious a feeling as possible. Consider removing furniture from rooms that are crowded. If necessary, store large items.
12. Pack up collectibles, both to protect them, and to give the room a more spacious feel. Leave just enough accessories to give the home a personal touch. Dispose of unneeded items.
13. Remove all clutter and make it a habit to pick up clothing, shoes, and personal possessions each day in preparation for possible showings.
14. Empty closets of off-season clothing and pack for the move. Organize the closets to demonstrate the most efficient use of space. Leave as few items on the floor or shelves as possible.
15. Use light to create a sense of space. All drapes should be open. Turn on all of the lights throughout the home before a showing and be sure to replace any burned out light bulbs.

ATMOSPHERE

When placing yourself in the potential buyer's shoes, you will want to consider the overall atmosphere of your home. Keep in mind your sense of smell as you go through the checklist. Create the atmosphere of your home as a shelter, a place that is safe, warm & in good condition.



NO SMOKING



16. A clean smelling house creates a positive image in the buyer's mind. Be aware of any odors from cooking, cigarettes, pets, etc...that may have adverse effects on potential buyers. Remember that some people are much more sensitive to odors than others. Smokers rarely notice the odor of tobacco that fills their homes and pet owners may be oblivious to objectionable doggy or kitty odor. The reality is, many buyers will cross your home off the list when they open the front door and smell smoke or pet odor.

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ATMOSPHERE

17. You can use products like carpet deodorizers, air fresheners, and room deodorizers; but the best strategy is to remove the source of the smell rather than cover it up.
18. Unfortunately, often the only way to remove the smell of pet urine is to rip up the carpeting and padding and replace them. Do not hesitate to make this investment.
19. If smoking and cooking odors have permeated your home, have your carpets and furniture cleaned and air-out or professionally clean your drapes.
20. Mildew odors are another no-no. Don't allow wet towels to accumulate in hampers or dirty laundry to pile up in closets.
21. Once offensive odors have been removed, consider adding delightful ones. Recent studies have shown that humans have strong, positive responses to certain smells. Cinnamon, fresh flowers, breads baking in the oven are all excellent ways to enhance your property for sale.

STAGING

This part of preparing your home for sale is the most fun and involves the use of color, lighting and accessories to emphasize the best features of your home.



22. Study magazine ads or furniture showrooms to see how small details can make rooms more attractive and appealing. The effect of a vase of flowers, an open book on the coffee table, a basket of birch logs by the fireplace, etc, can make the difference in a room.
23. The use of a brightly colored pillow in a wing chair or a throw blanket on a couch can add dimension to a sterile room.

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24. Soften potentially offending views, but always let light into your rooms. Replace heavy curtains with sheer white panels.
25. Go through your photo albums and select pictures of your house and yard during all seasons. If hung at eye level in a well-lighted area, the pictures will speak for themselves and give you yet another selling edge.
26. Take advantage of natural light as much as possible by cleaning windows, opening shades and drapes, etc. Add lamps and lighting where necessary. Be sure that all fixtures are clean and have functioning bulbs.

THE EXTERIOR: *Check your home for any needed maintenance just as a buyer would. Repaint or touch up as necessary. You can't make a better investment when you are selling your house! Don't let the outside turn off buyers before the inside turns them on.*



27. Color has the power to attract. A tub of geraniums, a pot of petunias, or a basket of impatiens on the front steps is a welcoming touch.
28. Wash all windows.
29. If you have a porch or deck, set the stage with pots of flowers and attractively arranged furniture.
30. Check to see that all doors and windows are in good working order. Give special attention to your home's exterior doors and front entry. Clean and paint doors if necessary. Remember, first impressions are likely to color the remainder of the house tour.
31. Replace any broken or cracked window panes.
32. Screens should be free of any tears or holes.
33. Inspect all locks to ensure they are functioning properly.
34. Check for loose or missing shingles.
35. Invest in a new doormat that says "Welcome".

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THE YARD



36. Make sure the yard is neatly mowed, raked and edged.
37. Prune & shape shrubbery and trees to compliment your house.
38. Consider adding seasonal flowers along the walks or in the planting areas. Put the plants into a well-placed wheelbarrow, an old-fashioned washtub or barrel planter. Such standbys as nasturtiums, impatiens and verbena are easy to maintain...just remember to water them regularly. Try a row of sweet smelling alyssum to line a short sidewalk to plant some perky dwarf marigolds to form a cheerful oasis of color in your yard.
39. It is important to devote at least one area of your yard to outdoor living. Buyers will recognize a scene set with picnic table and chairs and respond positively to it. Cover your picnic table with a cheerful cloth, bring out the barbequing equipment and buyers will almost smell the burgers cooking!

THE DRIVEWAY

40. The driveway is no place for children's toys, bicycles or yard equipment. Not only are such things dangerous, the clutter is unsightly.
41. The surface of your driveway should be beyond reproach...after all it's one of the first things a buyer will see when he drives up. Sweep & wash the driveway & walkways to remove debris, dirt & stains. Repair & patch any cracks, edge the sides & pull up the weeds.

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ROOM BY ROOM ANALYSIS

***The Front Entry:** Whether a graciously proportioned foyer or a small space just large enough for a coat rack and tiny table, this part of your home deserves your particular attention.*

42. Study your entry hall and ask yourself what kind of impression it makes. Dried flowers or a small plant can make a striking focal point on a hall table at any time of year.
43. Virtually any entry hall will benefit from a well-placed mirror to enlarge the area.
44. Your entry hall's flooring will be observed carefully by the prospective buyer. Make sure the surface is spotless.
45. The entry hall closet is the first one inspected. Make it appear roomy. Add a few extra hangers. Hang a ball of cedar chips or potpourri to give a fresh, pleasant scent. Remove all off-season clothing.

***Living Areas:** Think of these areas as if they were furniture showrooms. Your job is to make each room generate a positive response. Add touches that make a room look truly inviting.*



46. Sweep and clean the fireplace. Place a few logs on the grate to create an attractive appearance.
47. Place something colorful on the mantle, but don't make it look like a country store.
48. Improve the traffic flow by removing excess furniture. Create easy traffic flow patterns. Be sure that all doors open fully and easily.

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49. Draw attention to exposed beams or a cathedral ceiling with special lighting. Be sure to remove any cobwebs or dust.

50. Remove oversized television sets if they dominate the room. If necessary, substitute with a smaller one until you move.

***The Dining Room:** Avoid going overboard. To be effective, any stage setting that you create should reflect the character of your entire home appropriately.*

51. Set the scene by setting the table with an attractive arrangement. Add fresh or silk flowers as a centerpiece.

52. Visually enlarge a small dining area. If your dining table has extra leaves, take one or two out. Remove any extra “company” chairs. Consider putting oversized pieces in storage until you move out.

***The Kitchen:** Pay particular attention to your kitchen. This room continues to be the “heart of the home”. A pleasant, working kitchen is near the top of most buyers’ list of priorities and is a room that buyers always scrutinize closely.*



53. Avoid clutter! Clean counters of small appliances and store whenever possible in order to maximize the appearance of work space.

54. Check the countertop around your sink and remove any detergent, cleaners, etc...that may be cluttering the area.

55. Sinks, cabinets, appliances and countertops should be clean and fresh.

56. All appliances should be absolutely clean, bright, sparkling & shiny!

57. Clean off the top of the refrigerator. If you must use that space for storage, use baskets to camouflage items kept there.

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58. Set the scene with an open cookbook, a basket filled with fruit, a basket of silk flowers or a ceramic mixing bowl & wire whisk.
59. Create the aromas associated with happy homes! Bake some cookies from pre-mixed, refrigerated cookie dough, start baking a loaf of refrigerated bread dough or pop a frozen apple pie in the oven.
60. In the heat of summer, place a bowl of lemons or limes on the counter to provide a fresh & pleasant aroma.
61. Clean & organize all storage space. If your cabinets, drawers & closets are crowded and overflowing, buyers assume your storage space is inadequate. Give away items you don't use. Store seldom used items elsewhere. Reorganize the shelves. Neat, organized shelves look larger and more adequate for prospective buyer's needs.
62. Large, cheerful kitchen windows are an advantage and should be highlighted as a special feature of your home. Take a critical look at the window treatments. Are they clean, sharp & up to date? Do the curtains need washing or the blinds need cleaning? Would the windows look better without any window treatments at all?
63. If you have a countertop eating area, set two attractive place settings with coordinating napkins & placemats. Place cushions on the stools.
64. Place a centerpiece of fresh flowers on the kitchen table.

Laundry Room: *Don't hide this treasure behind closed doors. Spruce up the room and open the door proudly for inspection.*

65. Add a fresh coat of paint.
66. Organize all closets & storage space.
67. Remove all dirty laundry. Keep current with your laundry & store all dirty laundry in a closed container.

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68. Clean and polish the washer & dryer.

69. Make sure the floor is clean & sparkling too.

Stairways: *Stairways should provide an attractive transition from one level of your home to another.*

70. Make certain the stairs are safe! Stair lighting should be more than adequate. Stairs must be clutter free, stair railings tight & secure and runners or carpeting tacked securely. Remove any items from the surface of the stairs & store elsewhere. Check the condition of the walls & repaint if necessary.

71. If the stairs are a focal point of the main living areas, carefully choose accents to improve the visual appeal. If you have a wide, gracious staircase, emphasize this feature by hanging a few pictures along the wall. Draw attention to a handsome lighting fixture by polishing the brass & dusting each small light bulb or crystal prism.

Bedrooms: *Imagine for a moment that you are in the “Bed & Breakfast” business.*



How would you change your home’s bedrooms to appeal to a paying guest? Naturally, you’d make up the beds with your prettiest sheets & comforters. Maybe you’d add a vase of flowers on the dressing table or a cozy armchair in the corner. Every bedroom of your house should invite prospective buyers to settle right in.

72. Large master bedrooms are particularly popular among today’s homebuyers. Make your bedroom larger. Paint the room a light, neutral color. Remove one of the bureaus if the room is crowded and minimize clutter to maximize spaciousness. Aim for a restful, subdued look.

73. A private bathroom off the master bedroom is also a plus. Decorate to coordinate the color scheme of your bedroom...creating a “suite” effect.

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74. Virtually all buyers are looking for a house with plenty of closet space. Try to make what you have appear generous and well planned. Remove and store all out of season clothing. Remove any items from the floor area. Arrange shelves to maximize use of space. This will make a closet seem more spacious.
75. Make sure all articles in the closet are fresh & clean smelling. When prospective buyers open your closet door (and they will!), they should be greeted with a whiff of fresh smelling air.
76. Make sure all closet lights have adequate wattage and are operating. Add battery operated lights to those closets that lack them. Lighted closets look bigger, are more attractive and allow buyers to inspect the interiors more easily.



77. Take the time to explain the importance of marketing to your children. Encourage them to participate in preparing your home for showing. Ask your children's corporation in making their beds and picking up their rooms each day. Consider promising them a special reward if they willingly participate in your house-selling goals.
78. Have them pack up any items that are not currently in use and give away, free-cycle or dispose of unused possessions.
79. Remove any crowded, unusual or personal wall hangings such as posters and store them until your home is sold.

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Bathrooms: *Wise sellers take special pains when preparing their bathrooms for scrutiny by strangers. Prospects will inspect yours carefully so be sure they are immaculate.*



80. Replace worn or dirty shower curtains. Clean and repair caulking and remove non-skid bath decals that are in poor condition.
81. Clear off countertops and store all personal care products out of sight.
82. Repair any faucets that leak or do not function properly. Clear off mineral deposits with vinegar or commercial products.
83. Clean & organize all cabinets & drawers. Don't forget the medicine cabinet: dispose of old prescriptions and polish the shelves. The same goes for the cabinet under the sink.
84. Remember that you want to appeal to a wide range of buyers. Play down dominant colors with contrasting neutral colored towels & accessories. If your bathroom is mostly white or neutral add a few cheerful accents of color. And don't hesitate to buy a few new towels & rugs...you'll be taking them with you to your new home!
85. Scrub & wax an old floor.
86. Decorate & personalize to create a pleasing look. Consider bringing out your best towels & perfumed guest soaps. Add a plant for color & freshness.
87. A gentle hint of fragrance in the air is fine, but keep it very subtle.

Garage:

88. Sweep & wash the floor to remove dirt & stains. Organize tools, garden equipment, bicycles, etc...A clean, organized garage appears larger.
89. If the area is dark, add more light. If it is small, remove your car before buyers visit. An empty garage always appears larger.
90. Get rid of anything you do not plan to move to your new home. Do it now & reap the benefits!

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