

Be Ready on a Moment's Notice

Before you put your house on the market, your listing agent will advise you on how to make your home more marketable. Below is a checklist to keep your home market ready on a daily basis:

Make all beds, pick up all clothes and toys, and wash and put away the dishes.

Place fresh flowers in several rooms.

Eliminate litter boxes when possible. Clean them daily if they are left on the premises.

Keep the property comfortable by running the air conditioner or heat.

Keep the kitchen counters and refrigerator exterior surfaces clear of clutter.

Make sure bathrooms and fixtures are spotless and free of mildew. Use a mildew killing agent on a daily basis. Bathrooms should be clean with toiletries stowed out of sight.

Put away your empty garbage cans immediately after garbage pickup.

It's Showtime

Everything you have done to your home up until a potential buyer arrives is a dress rehearsal. When you prepare for the showing appointment, try to create ambience that helps the buyer imagine what it would feel like to live there. The following are tips to make your home more hospitable for the showing.

Leave on the lights and open curtains, drapes, blinds, and shutters to make the home bright, light, and engaging.

Never disconnect utilities. Your property should be show-able even after dusk. Lights should be able to be turned on even in vacant properties. The temperature should be comfortable.

Make your home smell pleasant: have a pot of potpourri brewing on the stove, bake a loaf of frozen bread or refrigerator cookies, or place several cinnamon sticks in a low heat oven right before a showing.

Leave soft music on even when you leave the premises. Turn off the TV because it will compete for the buyer's attention.

Restrain pets when the property is shown. Perhaps your overly friendly pup could visit a neighbor's back yard during a showing.

When possible, leave the home when it is being shown. If you can't leave the premises, you and your kids should retreat to the backyard or garage. This allows the buyer the freedom to really look around.

Avoid the temptation to verbally show the house yourself. Leave that to the professional . . . the REALTOR®. Let the showing agent field questions or contact your listing agent for particulars

Seller Best Practices

Your sales professional will give you advice and support. The following best practices will give you the upper hand over your competition.

When your resources permit, choose to fix up your home rather than offering the buyer an allowance to do the work. Buyers will make an offer sooner if the home is enticing. Many buyers cannot see the potential beyond the needed repair.

Offer a homeowner's warranty. This is a plus for a buyer. It will dispel worry over break downs and reduce your liability if something goes wrong after closing.

Keep abreast of market changes while you are listed. Ask your sales professional for a new market analysis every 30 days. You will be better prepared to negotiate an offer if you are current on market conditions.

Leave your home when it is being shown. This will allow the buyer to stay and feel comfortable. Leave your utilities turned on if your property is vacant. No buyer should ever have to leave because it is too hot or too cold.

Set up a pre-planned schedule for price reductions during the listing. The spacing of the reductions (from 14-30 days) should reflect your selling urgency.

When negotiating, focus on your bottom line. In the end, the cash you walk away with at closing is more important than the offer price.

Price your property in line with competitive properties and comparative sold homes. Don't list too high to see what the market will bring. The first 14 days of a listing are the most critical. Don't squander them.

Listen to the advice of your sales professional. Reap the benefits of your sales professional's experience since he/she works in the market daily.

Staging: What to Do before You Put Your Home on the Market

Prime properties sell faster and bring a better price. To gain competitive advantage, prepare your home for the market.

Minimize clutter by packing up as much as you can and putting it out of sight. Keep stairways clear.

Re-organize closets to showcase ample storage.

Rearrange furniture or remove extra pieces to promote spaciousness.

Clean out your garage, attic, and closets.

Park all vehicles in the garage to promote your curb appeal. If there is not room, arrange to park them at a friend's while your home is on the market.

Mow and edge the lawn and weed all beds. Add color to your exterior by planting seasonal bedding plants.

Make sure your lawn is getting enough water in the growing season.

Add attractive colorful hanging baskets to patios and decks. Place a large potted plant on the front porch or a seasonal wreath on your front door.

Your front door should have a fresh, clean and scrubbed look. Clear away all exterior cobwebs.

Freshen up the exterior and interior with a new coat of paint.

Eradicate all pet/smoking odors. A drop or two of industrial strength deodorant will sometimes do the trick.

Replace worn, soiled, or odorous carpets for 'almost new appeal.'

Make sure to change all AC filters and clean all grates.

Wash all windows (and screens) inside and out.

Make sure that all light bulbs in fixtures and lamps are bright.

Fix dripping faucets which discolor sinks and suggest faulty plumbing. Tighten loose knobs and fix sticking/squeaking doors and windows. Re-caulk bathtubs and showers.

Repair/replace items your REALTOR® suggests to increase appeal.

Why Hasn't My House Sold?

Selling your property successfully depends on many things, including the market. When your property is out there for an extended period, and there are very few interested lookers, it's easy to become frustrated.

Eventually you may begin to wonder what you are doing wrong or what can be done to improve the chance that your home will sell quickly. Keep in mind that there are many things you can do to help your sales professional.

First of all, review your home with an unbiased eye. Would you pay your asking price? Think about what your home has to offer and what other homes in your market offer and compare them. If your home doesn't stand up to the competition, you should consider lowering your asking price.

To make your home more appealing, offer a home warranty to the buyer. A warranty covers any problems or breakdowns that may occur during the first year of homeownership. Providing it will give your home the competitive edge you strive for when selling.

Although it's your sales professional's job to bring buyers to your house, it's your job to "sell" your property. Get your house in shape to be sold. Don't spend the time and money on an entire remodeling job, but make sure your property is clean and uncluttered.

Prepare your entire home.

Exterior:

Cut the lawn

Trim the hedges

Sweep the sidewalk

Plant flowers

Shovel the driveway

Clean the garage

Interior:

Make sure your home is clutter free. Rent a storage space and bring everything you don't need to that space.

Remove personal items such as pictures so lookers are able to imagine their own belongings in that space.

Clean out the closets so the appearance of space is more prevalent.

Make sure everything is in working order, especially lights, water heater, and the garage door opener.

Before buyers arrive for their tour, ensure satisfaction by:

Opening all window coverings

Turning on all lights and lighting candles

Vacuuuming and sweeping the floors

Picking up all extra clutter

Putting out fresh flowers

Opening windows for fresh air, if weather permits

Most importantly, disappear. Take the dog and kids for a walk while the sales professional shows your home.

Help your sales professional. By working together, you'll find more people are interested in your home.