


Setting The Stage To Sell



Your home will sell. There's no question about that—in today's market or tomorrow's, good or bad. However, if you put your home on the market without preparing it for sale, you may have a long wait for an offer. You also may not realize your home's greatest return on investment.

You don't have to turn your pockets inside out to get it ready to sell. Some outlay may be necessary for painting, for replacing worn woodwork, carpeting, cabinet doors, or for repairing broken fixtures or appliances.

There are, however, many fix-ups that cost absolutely nothing—except a little time and elbow grease. These fix-ups will make all the difference in whether or not your home makes the most of itself.

Here are a few tips for getting your home

ready to show itself off to your pocketbook's best advantage:

OUTDOORS

- 1 Spruce up all around the home. Keep lawn and shrubbery trimmed and free of bicycles and other clutter. Keep the garden beds weeded and mulched.
- 2 Put a flowering pot on the front step and keep it watered and trimmed.

- 3 Fill potholes in your driveway and tidy up walkways.
- 4 Clean off your outdoor furniture; remove any rust (or toss out the rusted item).
- 5 Clear out the garage of everything but cars. If yours has become a two-car attic, throw out the excess.
- 6 Straighten gutters, the mailbox, the fence—and other things that sag.
- 7 Fix doorbells, tighten loose doorknobs, and oil squeaking hinges.
- 8 Repair broken windows and shutters.

INDOORS

- 9 Clean everything in and out of sight. Shampoo rugs and wax floors. Wash or brush walls. Wash windows and clean blinds and draperies.
- 10 Weed clutter out of closets and cupboards.
- 11 Create space by storing some of the extra furniture you've found useful (bureaus, bookcases, storage chests, oversized chairs) but which makes a crowded impression.
- 12 Place the remaining furniture so that traffic can flow easily from room to room.
- 13 Unless you're a skilled artist, scale down your personal art work (portraits, landscapes), posters, signs, and family photos, especially in teenagers' rooms. Create a feeling of spaciousness.
- 14 Keep shades and draperies open, to admit as much light as possible, but screen out unappealing views.
- 15 Let your kitchen look warm and welcoming, not a hectic workplace. Keep your sink shining and free of dirty dishes at all times.
- 16 Organize cupboards.

- 17 Clean the refrigerator.
- 18 Keep countertops clear, but not empty (as if unused); adorn them with your most attractive canisters.
- 19 Completely degrease your oven. Let the kitchen smell fresh and fragrant (with cinnamon warming in the clean oven, if you have time).
- 20 Remove debris (dust, flies, moths, etc.) from all light fixtures.
- 21 Keep bathrooms scrubbed, tidy and equipped with fresh soap and neatly hung towels (matching, if possible).
- 22 Get rid of all stains and install new washers on dripping faucets.



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