

Getting the Best Price: 8 Essential Ways to Ready the Interior of Your Home for Sale

A Guide for By-Owner Sellers

Provided courtesy of

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Curb appeal and the overall exterior condition of your home and care of its grounds are certainly important. Research clearly has shown that a prospective buyer's first impression, if unfavorable, will almost surely eliminate a home from consideration. On the other hand, when buyers are not turned off by the outside appearance of a home, they become sold based on the attractiveness and apparent comfort of a home's interior. This pamphlet presents 8 truly essential ways to prepare interior spaces in order to maximize your home's attractiveness to as many buyers as possible and to achieve the greatest selling price.

No. 1: Keep all areas bright and well lit.

Buyers take special notice of light and bright homes. If the home is to be shown during the daytime, keep shades and curtains open. Turn on virtually all lights in the house, even during the day. Buy high intensity lights and be sure to clean all light shades and covers. Increase the wattage of bulbs in all lighting fixtures to the maximum safe rating; this is especially important in the basement, closets, garage, hallways, and other typically dark areas of a home. To achieve greater light when you bump up against safe wattage ratings, switch incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs with higher equivalent wattage bulbs. You not only will achieve greater light safely, but you will save electricity.

No. 2: Make sure your home is sparkling clean.

Do a "spring cleaning" throughout ... no matter what the season is! Give special attention to the windows and screens, kitchen and bath countertops, kitchen appliances, mirrors, ovens, sinks, toilets, and tub/shower areas.

No. 3: Spruce up the views to the outdoors.

Make sure the windows and sills are clean. Freshly launder or vacuum all drapes and curtains. Dust or otherwise clean all shades and blinds.

No. 4: Make your floors shine.

Replace or repair damaged areas of the floor or floor covering. Wax or polish tile, wood, or linoleum floors. If your area rugs and carpets have not been professionally cleaned fairly recently, do it before you begin

showing your home to prospective buyers. Always vacuum all floors before any showing appointment.

No. 5: Work to create the illusion of larger size.

Buyers crave spacious rooms. Arrange furniture and decorations to create this illusion in each room. Remove all clutter and all unnecessary personal items and furniture. The larger rooms appear to be and more spacious the home's living space seems to be, the better buyers will be able to visualize their furniture and possessions in your home and the more likely they will be to imagine the enjoyment they will experience living there.

No. 6: Be an artist – take up painting.

Unless your home was recently painted, strongly consider freshening up the look of your home with a fresh coat of paint. Painting is the least expensive way to liven the appearance of a home. Should you have rooms dominated by a strong or dark color, painting these rooms is practically mandatory. Choose paint of light and neutral colors such as off-whites or beige. These colors not only make a room look bigger and brighter, but they also are likely to go with the new buyer's furnishings and, therefore, they will make it easier for buyers to see how nicely the home fits them.

No. 7: Go nuts organizing storage spaces.

Buyers value closet and cabinet space highly. Neatly arrange everything in your closets, cabinets, and other storage areas such as the basement and garage. Get rid of all unnecessary items or store them off-site.

No. 8: Sweat the small stuff.

Buyers pay attention and often overreact to tiny details. Fix all of the "little things" such as loose door knobs, leaky faucets, and towel racks. Clean and repair all caulk and grout areas. Replace broken or cracked tiles. While none of these things truly should be worrisome, they can be viewed as indicators of neglect and make potential buyers walk away from an otherwise ideal home. Small flaws create big concerns that there may be major hidden flaws, huge headaches, and nasty surprises in their future if they buy your home.