

Appeal to the Senses

There are many ways to create a more saleable interior, at surprisingly little cost.

Light - People react more favorably to property shown under bright light than dark. The following steps should help you keep your home as bright as possible.

- Keep windows clean.
- Use adequate wattage in light bulbs.
- Consider replacing older fluorescent lamps, which darken with use.
- Use mirrors to magnify the feeling of light and space.
- Use light wall colors.
- Open drapes and blinds and turn on lights prior to showings.

Color - A fundamental rule when selling your house is to keep colors neutral and light. The following are specific suggestions:

- White, beige and gray are the most popular exterior colors.
- Shades of white, off-white and very light pastels are the safest choices for the interior.
- Avoid highly patterned wallpaper whenever possible.
- Try to limit bright colors to accents like fresh flowers, towels, area rugs and shower curtains.

Sound - The sounds of peace and quiet are some of the best sounds to have when your home is being shown to a prospective buyer. But there are other sound considerations you should also be aware of:

- Avoid barking dogs and noisy children, if possible.
- Also avoid sounds of work like vacuums, dishwashers and lawn mowers.
- Make sure there are no sounds of mechanical problems like banging pipes or faulty appliances.

Smell - Smell has more impact than you might expect. It can work for or against you.

- *The smell of newness is positive.* This scent can be achieved by applying a fresh coat of polyurethane to natural wood or latex paint to walls.
- *The smell of cleanliness is important to the selling environment of your house.* Beyond actually cleaning, lemon oil or lemon wax can help create a lasting scent of freshness. Fresh flowers can also be effective.
- For a real heart-warming touch, place a dish of vanilla in a warm oven to create the aroma of fresh-baked cookies or bread.
- Sweeten the refrigerator with a box of baking soda.

Smells to avoid include strong pet odors, tobacco, and cooking oil or gas.



The Model Home Effect

The best way to make a buyer "feel at home" is to create an environment similar to that found in a model home. Obviously, you can't recreate the feeling of a perfect display home without starting from scratch, but there are some valuable techniques to be learned.

When walking into a model home you will notice several key points.

- The environment is neutral.
- The colors and interior decorating accent the home's features.
- The smell is new and clean.
- The sound is either quiet or enhanced by subtle background music.
- The details are looked after from the manicuring of the lawn to a floral arrangement in the entry.

Home Enhancement Guide

Things to consider when selling your home.



Based on proven marketing techniques, this guide will give you practical ideas on how to successfully prepare your house for sale. These suggestions require a minimum amount of time and expense to complete and are designed to make your house stand out from the competition.



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Home Enhancement Guide for a Successful Sale

The First Impression

You've probably heard how important first impressions can be. Within 15 seconds a buyer has already formed an opinion of your property. This is why establishing the right first impression is critical to achieving a successful sale. Below is a list of elements which create the overall first impression, including suggestions on how to make sure the buyer reacts as favorably as possible.

Street - Make sure the street in front of your house is free of litter or debris. If necessary, give it a fresh sweep.

Sidewalk/Front Walk - Sweep your sidewalk if needed and remove weeds that may be growing between the cracks.

Fence - A freshly painted fence gives a home a crisp look. You should never let a peeling, tired-looking fence stand between a prospective buyer and a positive first impression.

Mailbox/Light Fixtures - A quick painting of an old mailbox will let the buyer know you care about the details. If outdoor lamps look rusted and worn out, new ones will cast a positive light on your property.

Landscaping - Neatly trimmed shrubs are essential. Taking the time to do this costs little, but has a big impact. Besides being freshly mowed and trimmed, a lawn should look healthy. If there are spots that look beyond help, a little sod goes a long way.

Driveway - If stained or otherwise worn-looking, consider resealing it with a high quality sealer product. Second, a newly waxed, well-maintained automobile will make such a different statement about

you and your property than an unattractive, poorly cared for car. If you think your car will be a detriment to the look of your property, park it down the street.

Paint - A fresh coat of paint can be one of the best investments you can make to increase the value of your property. If you do not want to spend the money to paint the entire house, consider just the shutters or the front of the house.

Siding - If you have vinyl or aluminum siding, have a cleaning service wash or repaint it using a product designed for these materials.

Windows

- Replace any cracked or broken glass.
- Make sure the windows are sparkling clean.
- Add shutters to the front of your house.
- Install window boxes with bright flowers.
- Apply touch-up paint where needed.

Roof

- Replace any broken or missing shingles or tiles.
- Repair flashing where needed.
- Paint eaves and fascia boards.
- If the roof is old and needs to be replaced, consider having the work done before showing the property.

Gutters/Downspouts - Neat and trim-looking gutters and downspouts make a house look shipshape. Consider replacing highly visible ones if they are in need of serious repair. If run off areas are eroded, you can install concrete (or other) "spillways."

Doorway - The doorway is the focal point of your house.

- Repaint the door.
- Apply new door hardware.
- Install a brass kick plate.

- Replace house numbers.
- Put a flower box or planter alongside the door.
- Install a new front light fixture.

Entry

- Repaint the entry using light, neutral colors.
- Move a prized antique or attractive furnishing to the entry, where it will have maximum impact.
- Install simple chair rail molding on the wall.
- Apply a fresh coat of polyurethane to a wood floor.
- Tile or linoleum flooring should shine.
- A new hall light fixture can make a great impression.
- Make sure the room is well lit.

Kitchen

- Make sure the room is virtually spotless and smells fresh.
- If your appliances are dated by colors like harvest gold or avocado, consider having them professionally refinished in a new color like black or stainless steel. This will make appliances look new at a fraction of the cost of actually .
- Organize your kitchen cabinets to demonstrate how much room you have.
- Remove small kitchen appliances and gadgets from countertops to create an uncluttered look.
- Chipped or damaged countertops should be repaired or replaced.
- If your linoleum floor is badly

worn, replace it with neutral no-wax flooring or tile.

Bathroom

- Place a vase of fresh flowers on the vanity.
- Refinish an old porcelain tub using a porcelain finishing service.
- Place all personal care articles out of sight.
- Freshen the air with lemon scented products.
- Add color and richness with new towels and shower curtain.

Living Room

- Use mirrors whenever possible to enhance the perception of size
- Professionally clean wall-to-wall carpet or large area rugs. Sand and refinish stained hardwood floors.
- Clean windows and light fixtures.
- Make sure all cosmetic plaster cracks are repaired.
- Use of fresh flowers and plants will enhance the environment.

Bedrooms

- Make sure the bedrooms are absolutely spotless. Rugs should be cleaned, windows washed and fresh smells from flowers or lemon oil should be in the air.
- Organize closets to increase their perceived size.
- Bedrooms should be well lit.
- A ceiling fan can be an attractive and practical accent to any bedroom.

