

A few great tips on creating an atmosphere that will charm buyers and make them want to buy your home. Remember that you'll never get another chance to make a first impression. Follow these simple tips and create the competitive edge that may help you sell your home more quickly.

Drive-up Appeal

- Trim trees and shrubs, clean out flower beds and invest in a few flats of seasonal flowers, paint the front door, make sure doorbell is working properly, wash the mailbox, keep the porch swept and get an attractive mat for people to wipe their feet. Mulching the beds and adding fresh perennials shows pride of ownership to potentials buyers.

Absolute Basics

- Start by airing out the home. Most people are turned off by even the smallest odor. Odors must be eliminated, especially those caused by dogs and cats; soiled diapers and/or cigarettes.
- Wash all the windows in the home, inside and out.
- If it has been over a year since the carpets have been cleaned, now is the time to have them cleaned. Bare floors should also be waxed or polished.
- Put bright light bulbs in every socket made for a bulb. Buyers like bright & cheery.
- Clean out closets, cabinets and drawers. Closets should look like they have enough room to hold additional items. Get everything off the floor and don't have the shelves piled to the ceiling.
- Make sure rooms are not overcrowded with furniture. Select pieces that look best, and store the rest.
- Keep the kitchen sparkling clean. Make sure all appliances are clean at all times. Straighten cupboards that appear cluttered and keep floors gleaming.
- Bath tubs, showers and sinks should be freshly caulked. The grout should be clean and in good condition. There should be no leaks in the faucet or traps.

A few more suggestions

- If you have limited counter space in the kitchen, keep unnecessary items put away.
- Keep children's toys out of the front yard, sidewalks and front porch.
- Clean the ashes out of the fireplace.
- Make sure that the pull-down staircase is working correctly. Be sure there is a light in the attic.
- The pool needs to be sparkling and free of leaves.

For those willing to go the extra mile

- There are some things you can do that will really add flair to your home. If your house is the least bit dated, removing wallpaper in the entry, kitchen or bathrooms and replacing outdated light fixtures increases appeal.
- Fresh paint on interior and/or exterior where needed.
- New or at least matching appliances in the kitchen can be an exciting feature that can actually make the difference in a buyer choosing your home over another.

Showing your home

- When you leave the house in the morning or during the day, leave it as if you know it is going to be shown.
- Make sure it smells nice by using tools such as potpourri or simmering pots or candles.
- Make sure all the lights are on and window treatments are open.
- Turn off the television, or if you have digital cable you may leave it on a soft music channel like Classical, or Soft Jazz.
- Keep pets out of the way – preferably out of the house. Many people are uncomfortable around some animals and may even be allergic to them. That is why it is good to vacuum and dust regularly.
- Leave your premises. Take a short break while your home is being shown. Buyers are intimidated when sellers are present and tend to hurry through the house. Let the buyer be at ease, and let the agents do their job.