

# HOUSE & HOME

## REAL ESTATE

### Getting Your Home Ready to Sell

**A home that is in ready-to-sell condition  
will sell faster and bring a higher price.**

**Rent a storage unit** or borrow a friend's garage for a few weeks or months and fill it with boxes of collectibles as well as sports equipment, holiday decorations, seasonal clothing, and extra furniture.

Then begin to fill it with things that are unsightly. Add pre-packed items, boxes of garage clutter, and items pulled from storage areas including the basement and attic. You're going to have to move it sometime anyway, so get some of it out of the way before you begin showing your home.

#### **What Goes, What Stays?**

You know that people will open your cupboards and closets. Be sure they're organized neatly and not packed to the point of overflow. They'll look more spacious if you don't try to show off your whole wardrobe or collection of china. They're not buying that! Let potential buyers envision their own thing there. Will they fit, or will the space seem too small, since your own things don't fit?

If your closets are stuffed, **it's time to weed through things.** You can either sell or give items away or pack them up for your next home. Every storage area in your home -- including display shelves -- should be neat, clean, organized, and clutter-free.

#### **Get Rid of Personal Items**

Take down your wedding photos, religious items, the kids' school pictures, and your collection of refrigerator art. Buyers need to picture themselves living in the house. That will be more difficult if your personal photos, awards, and mementos are evident everywhere. It won't take long to remove these things. Be sure to wrap them carefully and put them in the storage unit.

## **Remove All Valuables**

During the time of your home sale, you'll have lots of people coming through, including potential buyers, groups of realtors on walk-throughs, open houses, inspectors, cleaners and handymen. Before they do, **pack up your jewelry, guns, collectibles, crystal, silver, and anything that could be stolen or broken. THIS INCLUDES MEDICINE!** You'll be moving it anyway, so you might as well get it ready ahead of time.

## **Make a List**

Ask your realtor, a friend, or your home stager to help you put together a list of items that need fixing. Walk slowly through every room and look for obvious defects, such as loose door handles, burned out light bulbs, leaking faucets, or stained carpeting. Add to the list little irritants or eyesores, such as slippery rugs or dangling extension cords. You might as well take the time to make repairs before buyers knock on the door.

## **Anticipate the Home Inspection**

Most buyers hire a third-party inspector to check out the systems of the house prior to purchase. Ask for a copy of a home inspection report to learn what areas of a home will be examined before the sale. Whenever possible, repair items that could be cited in the report. You'll probably not be able to anticipate every inspection item, but you'll have another chance to fix these, later, after the report comes back.

Clean, clean, CLEAN!!

## **Clean and Repair Tile Grout**

You might have lived with gray tile grout or moldy caulk around the tub. But these items may turn off a potential homebuyer. Take a good look at your kitchen and bathroom tile. Clean and bleach white grout to remove any stains. Scrape out and re-grout any badly damaged or mildewed areas. Caulk corners, cracks, and gaps around the sink and tub.

## **Clean Like You've Never Cleaned Before**

Once the clutter is out of the way, you can really get to some thorough cleaning. Cleaning for home staging goes beyond a regular house cleaning routine. You'll want to really concentrate on bringing a sheen to every surface of your home.

Make a list and do the work yourself or hire a cleaning crew to come in after you've moved out the clutter -- and just before your home goes on the market. Check every surface including windows (inside and out) and window sills, ledges, door knobs, ceiling fan blades, mini blinds, ceiling, and floor

corners -- and make sure they are clean. It might be helpful to make a list of things to be done in every room. Check off the items as you complete them.

### **Create a Welcoming Entrance**

Remember the outside of your house when you're getting ready for sellers. After they see your home from the street, they'll notice the front door and porch. Spend some time and money getting this area beautiful.

Wash, scrub, or repaint the front door so that it shines. Replace the door handle if it is weathered and unsightly. Clean any windows in this area until they sparkle. Add a fresh topiary or planter and keep it watered and trimmed. Put a pretty wreath on the door. Stand outside and look into your entry area. It will be the first thing buyer's see of the inside of your home. Is it welcoming, clean, uncluttered?

*~ Coral Nafie*