

## **PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE**

One of the first things to do before putting your house on the market is to prepare your house for sale. You want to show your home off in its best light to maximize your earning potential. Both by yourself and with a trusted friend, tour your house with the eye of a buyer – what works and what doesn't work.

### **Curb Appeal**

Does your house have curb appeal? Does it need a little more pizzazz to bring the buyer in? Would a bit of touch-up paint add dollars to the sale? What about the garden? Is the lawn in order and neatly edged? Are the trees and bushes neatly pruned? Your yard should look simple to maintain – people don't want to think of themselves spending hours slaving over the landscaping. Are flowers in bloom? If not, it may be time for a garden upgraded with colorful annuals. Remember that curb appeal will add dollars to your house's final selling price.

### **Welcome Home**

When you walk in the door of your house, does it immediately say "Welcome home!" Look through the eyes of a buyer who does not have a sentimental attachment to your treasured items.

Eliminate anything that gives the appearance of clutter. Countertops should be free and clear. Knickknacks, souvenirs, family photos, refrigerator artwork should be packed and ready to move to their new home. We need to "de-personalize" the house so buyers can view this as their home.

Closets and cupboards should appear large and roomy. It's time to make a donation to a local charity or store out of season belongings at a friend's or family members home. Brokers and designers agree that it is unwise to spend a great deal of money fixing up a house, because the cost of improvements can be difficult to recoup. One of the cheapest and best tricks is to put in higher watt light bulbs in

back halls and closets. The customers see that you're not trying to hide anything and the hallways look bigger and cleaner too.

Review your home room by room, noticing pieces of furniture that should be removed, rooms that need new paint (and don't forget to look at the moldings,) carpet that needs to be changed or professionally cleaned, fixtures that may need polishing , and air vents that may need cleaning. Be sure to spend a lot of time investigating the basement and attic. If the basement or attic is immaculate, it surprises the customers and makes them think that if this normally overlooked part of the house is so well maintained, the whole house must be in great shape.

### **Setting the Stage**

Before the first buyer walks in your door, be sure to set the stage to engage the buyer's senses. Lighting is critical. Draw back curtains, open blinds, change light bulbs and add lighting where needed to welcome the buyer. Whatever the season, set the stage for it; light a fire in the fireplace or rearrange the patio furniture, have music playing lightly in the background and insure a pleasing aroma emanates from every room.

### **CURB APPEAL CHECKLIST**

Inspect the outside ground. Remove any building materials, scrap piles, discarded household items, etc. from the property. Store garbage cans in the garage.

Check the home from the roof line down.

Is the roof free and clear from obstructions and moss?

Are the gutters clear and neatly hung?

Are the windows clean and free from obstructions (such as overgrown bushes and trees)?

Are bushes, trees and shrubs neatly pruned? Your yard should look simple to maintain. People don't want to think of themselves spending hours slaving over the landscaping.

Inspect the condition of the paint, bricks or siding.

Is it time to power wash the bricks or siding? Make sure there is no mold growing close to the ground line or moss in the brick mortar.

Is touch up paint needed?

Are the front door and storm door in good shape?

Do flower beds need an upgrade?

Are plants neatly pruned and dead-headed?

Is the bed free and clear of weeds?

Is the bed properly mulched?

Are flowers in bloom?

Keep the lawn neatly groomed.

Is the lawn free from weeds?

Is the lawn free from grass clippings?

Is the lawn neatly edged?

## **STAGING YOUR HOME** **CHECKLIST**

Remove all clutter from the house.

Are countertops free and clear?

Have you removed unnecessary furniture throughout the house?

Remove the art gallery and coupon collection from the refrigerator.

Check the bathrooms.

Are the surfaces clean and clear?

Are shower curtains and doors hung properly? This may be a good time to replace the shower curtain liner or wash in vinegar to remove soap build up.

Is the flooring clean and fresh?

Are towels neatly hung?

Check the walls.

Is the paint and wallpaper fresh and clean? Do you need to repaint, repaper, or just wash the walls?

Are the walls free from holes?

Are there any colors or objects on the walls that need to be removed?

Check the floors.

Is the carpet clean and free from stains?

Are hard surface floors clean and free from stains?

Check windows and window covering.

Are all the windows clean?

Are draperies and blinds clean?

Pet check.

Are there any signs that this is a pet's home? Be sure to change kitty litter and clean up any pet toys and bedding.

Make sure there is no pet hair clinging to furniture.

How's the aroma?

Try to air out the home prior to showings.

If air freshener is necessary, use well before showings as a consideration to those with allergies.

Set the mood prior to showings.

Open draperies and blinds.

Turn on the radio to a classical music station, set the volume on low.

If you have time, make a batch of cookies to have the warm, welcome aroma permeating the home.

Above all, make your home inviting. Set the stage so buyers can't imagine living anywhere else!