



Decorating tricks for selling your home

Before having your Realtor post that "For Sale" sign in front of your home, be sure to take a careful look at the inside and outside of the house. How your home looks to prospective buyers can determine not only how long it stays on the market, but what it sells for.

Begin by asking your Realtor for some tips on sprucing up inside and outside appearance. A good real estate professional will be well aware of what features will catch a prospective buyer's eye—and what minor eyesores can actually work against a potential sale.

Both the inside and outside of your home must leave prospective buyers with a positive feeling. If you feel you need another opinion about your home's appearance, ask a relative or friend to look at the house with a critical eye and give you an honest assessment.

Major decorating before selling may be both unnecessary and undesirable since buyers often prefer to select their own paints and colors. But if paint, both inside and out, is dull, old and dirty, you may want to paint the key areas. Washable, latex paints are the best choice. Inside a light bright natural color such as white or beige is the best choice.

Light colors will make a room look larger and brighter. Neutral shades make a room more flexible for any type furniture.

Fresh paint, minor repairs, potted plants, floral arrangements and an appealing scent, can all improve the marketability of your home and create a good first impression.

Here are more easy and economical tips:

- Make badly marked wall and closets more attractive simply by giving them a good scrub.
- Repair any broken screens, door hinges, window and other items that detract from the home's appearance; replace old light fixtures, door knobs, light switch plates to create a fresher appearance.
- Re-arrange, remove or add furniture to an area to make it appear bigger or smaller.
- Simple, inexpensive window treatments can work wonders. Adding a valance or fabric swag that complements a room's décor, can be very appealing.
- Use a strip of wallpaper, or a bright wallpaper border, to make a room come alive.

- Hardwood floors are a popular item on many a buyer's list. To check if your home has hardwood under broadloom, lift a corner and check. Removing old broadloom and having those hardwood floors sanded and polished, may be the feature that makes a buyer pick your home over another.
- If your home has worn broadloom only, consider replacing it in a neutral shade. You may not cover the cost, but you could sell your home faster.
- Remove all unnecessary possessions or clutter that detract from the sale. Consider holding a garage sale prior to selling or donating items to charity.
- Enhance the key selling points of your homes—a workshop, a solarium, a beautiful garden, or a fireplace—by drawing attention to them. An attractive hanging, mirror or framed print above a fireplace will draw attention to it. An open view from a window will draw attention to the garden outside, and so on.
- Keep front and back entrances of you home clean, clear and inviting by adding a welcome mat, an attractive door hanging or placing potted plants nearby.
- Always keep everything clean--windows and mirrors should be sparkling.
- Try to have a natural flow from room to room, rather than rooms that are not uniform or complimentary.
- To make a room look more spacious, remove toys, excess furniture, wall-to-wall trophies and books.
- Make sure the house is at a comfortable temperature and that the right number of lights are on. A crackling fire creates a homey feeling, day or night, during the fall and winter.
- Remember, the most important rooms to many buyers are the kitchen and bathroom. To create the impression that your home is easy to maintain, pay special attention to these rooms and keep them tidy and clean at all times.

Apply many of these tips to the outside of your home. If you want to sell quickly and at the price you are asking, it is very important to set the right mood and environment both inside and out. The best advice is be objective. Look at your property through the eyes of a prospective buyer.