

Top 10 Things to Do Before Listing Your Home

1. MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

Make your home memorable. Home buying is an emotional purchase, with buyers deciding in the first 30 seconds of seeing the home if this is the one. The front entrance should be warm & welcoming. Does your home look great from the street (i.e., does it have good curb appeal)? Your home should be the one buyers want to see the rest of when they enter.

2. CLEAN, CLEAN, CLEAN

Buyers will look at the kitchen and bathrooms with a critical eye. So, if the grout around the sink or shower needs to be re-caulked, do it! Clean the carpet and rugs. If buyers see evidence that they will have to clean and fix things, they will offer less money for the home. A clean home looks like it has been taken care of and loved. If you need help, enlist a friend or hire a professional cleaning service.

3. DECLUTTER

Nothing is worse than entering a home with clutter. Get all personal items that you do not need or use packed and stored. Pack photographs, remove magnets and notes from your fridge. You want the potential buyer to see themselves in the home and they can't do that if all they see is you and your family.



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4. STORE IT

Remove any furniture that is not absolutely necessary. If a room is open, it looks large and adds square footage to the home; this is \$\$\$ in the real estate market. Have the kids put a few toys in a special basket and pack the rest.

5. LET THERE BE LIGHT

Open the curtains and let the sunshine in! You may like your privacy, but the buyer doesn't want to think about that when looking at your home. They want to know that light will come in and the house won't be dark. Turn on all the lights before a showing or open house.

6. NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

Look at your walls — are they clean and bright? Neutral walls (not just white) that are clean and have an up-to-date color make a huge impression. Make sure your artwork and decor tastefully. Don't forget the woodwork — make sure it is painted and clean. If your woodwork is stained, make sure it's clean and dusted.

7. PETS SMART

If you have pets, contain them. Preferably, move them out of the house during open houses. Find a friend or neighbor to help if you can't board them. If you are leaving for a showing or open house, take them with you. Remember that a litter box should always be out of sight & clean. Pay attention to the yard, when a buyer steps out to see the property, make sure they don't step in anything.



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8. SMELL GOOD

Remember, smell is a very important sense, and your house has a smell of its own. Does yours have a good smell or a bad smell? Do you have pets? Most owners are immune to the smell of their pets and the odor of their home. Ask a friend who is sensitive to these things to give you feedback. Do they smell Rover, or the cat? Can they smell the fish you had last night or your teenager's shoes? Odor-eliminating sprays work very well, baking cookies or a cake is a good idea, but a high-end home fragrance is another great alternative.

9. EMPTY CLOSETS

Empty every closet as much as you can. Remove out-of-season clothes. Pack all items that you are not going to use in the next 3 months. The kitchen cabinets should not be overlooked, nor should the bookcases, hutches, built-ins, entertainment centers or any other storage space. You want it to look as though there is room for the buyers' things. Buyers will open cabinet doors to see inside, make sure they see space. If you have a lot of stuff in the attic, basement or garage, now is the time to pack it up or get rid of it; remember, you are moving.

10. SET THE STAGE

Most people only use their dining room on special occasions. Make it look as though you are having a dinner party in an hour. Make sure you have a centerpiece, and fresh flowers are an inexpensive way to make someone want to sit down and join the party. If your home is casual, set a casual table, if your dining room is formal, pull out all the stops and set it with china.



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