



HOMEOWNER HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SALE

I. Exterior

Grass and shrubs. Keep trimmed. Consider a fast-greening fertilizer such as ammonium sulfate (inexpensive) for a deep green lawn.

Pets. Secure pets while the house is being shown and make sure the pet areas are clean and odor free.

Fences. Make any needed repairs. A neat, well-painted fence gives a positive impression.

Flowers. Plant seasonal blooming flowers, especially near the front door and in any patio area. A profusion of color can have your home half-sold before the door is even opened.

Bird feeders. Hummingbird feeders and bird houses create a pleasant mood, especially when they are close to any patio area.

Paint.

Front door. Front door should be refinished or painted if it shows excessive wear.

Condition of exterior paint. Often only the trim or, depending on sun exposure, only one or two sides of the house need painting. Keep in mind that paint is cheap compared to the extra dollars a home with a clean, fresh appearance will bring.

Lawn furniture. Place lawn furniture in an attractive, leisurely manner. A badminton net or croquet set-up gives a positive image as well.

Roof. If the roof needs to be repaired or replaced, it is best to have the work done. Otherwise, buyers will want to deduct the cost even if your price already reflects the required work. Delaying repairs can actually cost you twice as much.

II. Interior

Housekeeping. You are competing against model homes, so your home must look as much like a model as possible. Floors, bath fixtures and appliances must be sparkling. Consider using a car wax on appliances. Make beds early in the day. Unmade beds and late sleepers create a very negative image.

Odors and aromas. Avoid heavy frying, using vinegar or cooking strong-smelling foods such as cabbage. The odors last and work against the image you are trying to create. On the other hand, some

smells have a positive effect on people: Baked bread, apple pie, chocolate cookies and cinnamon rolls are examples of foods that can help sell your home. Consider keeping packaged cookie or bread dough in the refrigerator. Just before a scheduled showing, the smell of these baking foods can be a great help to us. If you or your family members smoke, don't smoke in your home and don't allow guests to smoke. Stale tobacco odors can be masked with some odor sprays. If the temperature allows it, open windows and air out the house every morning.

Paint. If you have leftover paint, you can accomplish a great deal by doing touch-ups where needed. If the surface is dark, repaint with light colors such as off-white, oyster, light beige or pale yellow. Light colors make rooms appear fresh as well as larger.

Plumbing. Repair any leaky faucets. make certain that you don't have a gurgling toilet.

Shades and blinds. Replace any torn shades or broken blinds.

Drapes. if drapes need cleaning, have it done. If they are old and worn, stained or dark, consider replacing them with either light-colored drapes or off-white vinyl vertical blinds. (Large department stores or catalog houses usually have standard sizes.)

Carpets. Dirty carpets should be either professionally steam-cleaned (preferred), or you should rent a heavy-duty cleaner. If the carpet is badly worn, replace it with carpet (and a quality pad) in a neutral color. Consider either a plush or berber carpet.

Lighting. If any room appears dark, increase the wattage of your light bulbs. Before a showing, open the blinds and drapes and turn on the lights, even during the day. You want the house as bright as possible. Be sure that your light fixtures and windows are clean.

Closets. If closets appear crowded, remove items not needed and put in boxes. They can be stacked neatly in a corner of the basement, attic, or garage.

Too much furniture. Many homes appear crowded, with too many pieces of large furniture and too much bric-a-brac. Consider putting excess furniture in a storage locker.

Garage and basement. Spruce up your work area. Consider a garage sale to get rid of items you no longer need. Put excess items in boxes and stock them neatly in a corner. Consider using a commercial garage floor cleaner on oil and grease marks on the garage floor and driveway. You might consider a commercial steam cleaner (not a carpet cleaner).

Temperature. On cold days, a natural fire in the fireplace will help us sell your home. Start the fire before the showing is scheduled. On hot days, consider turning the air conditioner four to five degrees cooler than normal. The contrast will seem phenomenal, making a very positive impression. In moderate weather, open windows for fresh air.

III. Your Best Role During Showings

Secure jewelry, cash and other valuables.

When your home is shown, it's best that you disappear for a while. Buyers feel restrained with an owner present. If buyers hesitate to voice their concerns, then their questions cannot be answered and their problems cannot be solved.

If you must remain in the house, try to stay in one area. Excellent places to be are working in the garden, on the lawn or in the workshop. These activities create a positive image. While soft music is fine, turn off the TV.

Never, never follow the agent around the house during the showing, volunteer any information or answer questions the buyers may have. You have engaged professional real estate salespeople. We will ask you questions, if necessary.

Save the business cards of real estate agents and brokers so your Realtor can follow-up and get necessary feedback on your home.

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