

Getting Ready to Sell?

From the basics on up, we researched 10 tips to prepare you and your home for a successful experience.

Prepare yourself and your family.

1. Seek Professional Advice

Real estate related information gathered from other professionals is often most valuable prior to listing. Your financial planner or tax accountant can help with numbers, tax strategies and time deadlines. If you have owned your existing property for 20 years or longer you may want to consider speaking with a reputable, certified home inspector. The age or condition of your heating system and roof for example could significantly alter the market value of your home. Is your home still up to code? Being aware of all this information before finalizing a listing price puts you in a stronger negotiating position later.

2. Set Goals

Take time to assess what it is you want and don't want in an agent and a home. Note timelines and deadlines. Interview several agents and get answers to your questions. Your comfort level is important. Refer back to these goals along the way to keep you focused and relaxed.

3. Prepare Yourself and Family

Buying or selling a home can create additional stress in your life. Maintaining regular family life in a hyper-organized and spotless environment is difficult and unusual! Remember to make time for those parts of your life that may have taken a back seat recently.

4. Organization

Relocation can be a great time to sort through possessions and organize things efficiently. Ideally, your home should look lived-in and have some personality, but not be crammed with non-essential clutter. Remove excess items to attics, basements, closets, or better yet off-site storage. Time spent here will not just result in a more comfortable and attractive living space; but for the potential buyer, one that is more functional, spacious and aesthetically pleasing.

5. Yard Sales

Consider where you are moving to and why. In advance of listing your home for sale, have a yard sale to rid yourself of seldom used items, items inappropriate for your new home or those that may prove difficult/costly to move. Fewer things also make your home look and feel fresher and more spacious. A yard sale can also relieve you of unnecessary packing, expense and time later on.

6. Do-It-Yourself Improvements

Smaller projects, such as dripping taps, squeaky doors and windows, broken window panes, light and power outlet covers, burned out or missing light bulbs can make a big difference to a buyer. To update a kitchen - apply a lick of paint and new hardware on the cabinetry. Freshly washed or new window treatments can transform any room with minimal financial or time investment.

7. Safety Issues

You may be used to ducking low hanging light shades and planters but rest assured, a prospective buyer is not. Remove all tripping/slipping hazards. If necessary, place signs around your home to warn guests of low ceilings and ensure handrails are present where needed. Make sure your home has adequate lighting. If there is not enough natural light, add floor or table lamps; these are inexpensive, add warmth to the room, and can move with you afterwards.

8. Cleaning

Research continues to show that bathrooms and kitchens are major selling points of a property. Nothing could be more off-putting than unpleasant stains and smells. Sparkling tiles, appliances and cabinets cleaned inside and out and rooms with a fresh lemon or pine smell can improve both the market value of the property and lower the time to sale. Apply a thorough top to bottom approach to cleaning in all areas of your home.

A new front door can add maximum impact.

9. Curb Appeal

First impressions count. Your home may be the picture of loveliness and just what the client is looking for on the inside but if they never get inside, it's a moot point. The view of your home from the street and the primary photo your Realtor will advertise with should invite the client to investigate further. You can add container plants and/or trim existing trees/shrubbery to give an unobstructed view of the home with little cost. With a bit more effort, paint the trim of the house if needed. A new front door can also add maximum impact. Most importantly (especially if you are not going to have a big "For Sale" sign in your front yard) make sure the house number is clearly visible from the road.

10. Yard Work

Most buyers are looking for an easy care, well maintained yard. Minimize clutter around the yard and keep unsightly items like garbage bins out of view. Encourage the sight and sound of birds using bird feeders. If your home is suited to outdoor living dress up the deck or patio with simple furniture and colorful accessories.