

Preparing Your Home For The Market



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Introduction

When you prepare to place your home on the market for sale it becomes a product. Just like any product on the shelves at your local store it has features & benefits, pluses & minuses, and there are other products to compare. To gain an edge in the marketplace we must price the home right and look better than the competition. Same as shopping for a car. For instance, if you are looking for a new BMW 328i.

You find three for sale, similar look, similar miles, but different pricing... which will you buy?

OR you find three that look different, one is obviously superior on how they've taken care of it, similar miles and similar price... which will you buy?

OR you find three cars, two are in great shape, one not so much. You immediately rule out the one in lower condition... Of the two left, one is priced a bit (not much) higher than the other. Will you buy the cheaper car or make an offer on the one that is priced higher?

Sometimes it is difficult to think of your home as a mere product, but it helps to think that way so that you can get top dollar for your property and sell in a reasonable amount of time.

When you sell your property, you are going to need to pack. Our first recommendation for staging is to pack up some of your things early. It is a little bit of work, but you are going to have to do it anyway, so let's do it now so that we can get top dollar for your property.

In 15 Seconds...

YOUR HOME WILL MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

People make quick decisions in new situations. This is especially true during a showing of a home they are considering. In preparing your home for the market, we need to put this trait of human nature to work for us. Your home needs to make an impression such that the quick judgments of potential buyers are favorable. During the showing, the buyer will make judgments about your home as they view it through the “lens” formed in that first 15 seconds.

Remember, shoppers judge what they cannot see by what they can see. There is so much of what a home has to offer that a shopper can not see. So we need to make sure that what can be seen is presented perfectly. That's the purpose behind this booklet—to help you present your home so they can see all the good things it offers.



What do you see in this picture?

Counters are clean, not cluttered so you can see this beautiful kitchen without the distraction of cereal boxes.

Presence and Stature

The impression your home makes when a shopper drives in the driveway.

Any agent will tell you that one of the worst things that happens to them in the course of showing property to qualified buyers is to drive up to a home and have them say: “I don’t want to look at this house” - before you have even put the car in park. This impression is nearly impossible to overcome.



We want to offer some suggestions that we have learned over time to prevent this from happening to you.

GENERAL EXTERIOR

Start by standing in front of your home with this checklist and pen. Jot down anything that leaps out at you. Then, walk around the outside of your home with this checklist in hand.

FRONT YARD

- Shrubs and landscaping should enhance, not hide, the home. Shrubs should be lowered to, at most, the height of the home.
- As a rule of thumb, all tree limbs should be far enough from the ground so you can walk under them.
- Flowers add color and beauty to the home. Flower beds should be clean, and look good in all seasons. Make sure all beds have a sharp edge and are free of leaves and debris.
- Mow and neatly edge lawn. A perfectly mowed lawn does wonders for presence. You may have to mow twice per week during growing season.
- Mulch will do wonders to boost the presence and stature of your home at any time of the year. Always make sure all beds are freshly mulched.
- Check your flower beds, lawn areas and driveway for weeds.

- In the fall, be sure to rake leaves from your lawns.
- Inspect your property and remove all trash cans, discarded wood scraps, and trash. Re-stack wood piles if necessary and remove all storage containers, children's toys and other unnecessary objects.
- Make sure windows are clean.
- Does anything need a touch of paint? A fresh coat of paint on the front door is always worth the effort.
- Vacuum and clean the glass on exterior light fixtures where possible.
- If you have a covered entryway, add a bench or set of chairs to help the shopper imagine themselves relaxing here. If those items already exist, make sure they are clean and inviting.
- Consider exterior pressure washing. Is this needed?
- Does your doorbell work? This is a small fix with big impact.
- Sweep porch and keep clean the entire time.
- Do you have a fairly new welcome mat? If not this is a small purchase that can make a huge impact in those few minutes the buyers agent is trying to open the door.

INSIDE APPEAL

You see your home through your heart and the memories made there. To get the highest price, we need to appeal to potential buyers who will see your home through calculating eyes. If buyers have the choice between two comparable properties that are similar in price, they will choose the one in the best condition.

The following checklist will help you give the inside of your home the greatest presence.

- Air out the home. Someone who lives in a place is the last person to notice any peculiar odor that may be obvious to visitors.
- Wash all the windows, inside and out. Wash blinds and vacuum drapes where necessary.
- If your carpets look dirty or have not been cleaned in over a year, clean them. Buyers only know what they see... Unless your home is priced for a “fixer upper” dirty carpet should be cleaned or replaced before we go on the market. Especially if you have pets. Offering a buyer credit to pick

their own carpet is far less effective. Pick a light colored short plush or berber carpet. Realtor Beige is a safe color.

- Clean or polish all floors.
- Clean all closets, cabinets, and drawers. This is a great time to re-home anything you have not used in the past 3 years. No need to move it to your new place!
- Make sure the closets look like they have enough room to hold additional items. Remove any items on the floor.
- Look around each room and check for any furniture that could be moved to the garage or storage. This helps the rooms look larger and helps the shopper to see their own furniture there.
- Remove personal photos on tables, mantels, etc. If removing from walls, use a little touch up paint to fill holes.
- Clean the ashes out of the fireplace if you have one.
- Put maximum safe wattage of light bulbs in all fixtures.
- Clean all wall switches and replace broken plates.
- Remove posters in children's rooms... take down and fill holes.
- If there is a smoker in the residence, remove all ashtrays and all smoking needs to be done outside (not in garage) while the home is on the market.

INSIDE APPEAL - KITCHEN

The kitchen may be the most important room in the home. Clean this room like your sale depends on it- because it does!

- Clean the oven and keep it clean—even if this means eating out for a short season.
- Clean around the seal of the dishwasher door.
- Look at your kitchen as if you were a health home inspector. Paying particular attention to the garbage area, cracks, and corners.
- Remove any disorganized items. You may think the shoppers will not look in the cabinets but they are interested in seeing how much storage space is available



INSIDE APPEAL - LAUNDRY ROOM

- Put soaps and supplies in cabinets or containers.
- Keep counters and sink clean and empty.
- This is one room to take special care with lighting. Many laundry rooms are dark and uninviting. Upgrade wattage in light fixtures if safe to do so.
- Make sure all pull-down staircases, such as to an attic are working and will hold weight. Check light in attic also.

INSIDE APPEAL - BATHROOMS

- Repair all leaky faucets.
- Caulk bathtubs, showers, and sinks where necessary.
- Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold clean towels in thirds and hang onto racks each day. Purchase new towels if necessary.
- Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs and store under sink.
- Clean or replace shower curtains and liners.
- If necessary, remove the shower door for cleaning. Use solution of one part muriatic acid and ten parts water (use goggles) and scrub with pad.

- Fresh flower arrangements do wonders for a bathroom, both in appearance and aroma. No plug-in air fresheners or scented candles please.
- If you have pets, be sure to clean around the food area and empty any litter boxes every day.

GARAGE

- Clean and sweep garage. Consider painting walls flat white and floors light gray.
- Store any dangerous tools and arrange others neatly. Use containers and tool boxes as necessary.
- Vacuum pipes around heating systems which are visible.
- Check garage windows and screens. Windows should be clean and screens free of rips and tears. Windows should be checked for cracks and holes.
- Remove all “junk” from the attic, basement, closets, garage, and tool shed. Large storage areas appeal to buyers. Rent a storage unit and clear out as much as possible to make your home feel open roomy.

CONCLUSION

We know this seems like a lot, but once you get started it will go quickly. Start now. By the time we are ready for pictures, you'll be feeling great! - Team Fraker

