

Preparing Your Home for the Market



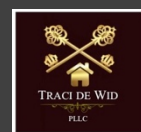
A Guide for Listing Strategically

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First Consideration

When you are preparing to place your home on the market for sale, it helps to think of it as a product. Just like any product on the shelf at your local store it has features and benefits, pluses and minuses. In addition, it has to compete with other similar products.

To gain an edge in your marketplace you must be ***priced right*** and ***look better*** than the competition. Sometimes it's difficult to think of your home as a product but viewing it in this manner can help us get top dollar for your property and ensure it sells in a reasonable and/or accelerated time frame.

When you sell your home, you are going to prepare to move. Part of this process includes packing. Instead of waiting and doing this all at once we're going to do it in two steps. The first step will be a partial packing process to declutter and set the scene for staging. We do this to help direct the buyers' attention to your home's assets. This will require upfront work but since you are going to have to pack anyway, it makes sense to use part of your effort to present your home in the best light possible and bring in \$\$\$!!



YOUR HOME WILL MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION...in 15 seconds



People make snap 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 snap 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.

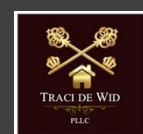
Remember, people judge what they cannot see by what they can see. There is so much of what a home has to offer that you cannot see. So, we need to make sure that what can be seen is presented perfectly. That is the purpose behind this booklet.

FOUR FACTORS THAT CONTROL THE SALE OF ANY PROPERTY

1. **Price:** How competitive and reasonable the price is compared with similar ‘like’ properties in your area. Recent sales (on and off-market), area trends, location, “special” attributes that can be captured and quantified (by an appraiser), renovations/updates, curb appeal, etc. will all impact price.
2. **Terms:** These refers to market conditions such as interest rates, employment levels, area statistics (schools, crime rates, etc.) and consumer confidence. Although we cannot control any of these, they can/will impact us as we market your home.
3. **Marketing:** Our team will be working very hard on the marketing your property in the best light possible, using a variety of methods, to reach the largest and most appropriate target group.
4. **Condition:** Refers to the level of care and upkeep maintained at the property. Condition can be as important as price. If condition is not model home/move-in ready perfect, buyers will expect the price to be adjusted to reflect its current state. If you have ever been in a model or show home, you know the vibe they give off as soon as you enter. When homes have that kind of appeal, they sell quickly and usually for the highest price possible. Another characteristic of good-looking homes is that generally, the transaction is remarkably free of problems.



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Price and Condition

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO HAVE PRICE AND CONDITION PERFECTED WHEN YOUR PROPERTY FIRST GOES ON THE MARKET FOR SALE!

Consider implementing the suggestions in this booklet *as soon as possible* because just like you cannot duplicate a first kiss, you cannot duplicate the debut of your property on the market.

After the initial surge of interest, the only people to look at it will be those buyers new to the marketplace. The initial impression we make with your property is critical.

Please Use the Checklist

The blanks in the checklist are for marking items complete. It is meant to guide you, so you don't forget any important details.



Fix What Needs Fixing



If you have a "honey-do" list or know of items that need to be addressed at your home, do them up front. Do not let the buyer wonder if you have cared for your home - let them leave with the impression you have! Fix anything that needs addressed upfront and avoid headaches later.

We Will Help You!

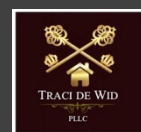
Our decades of experience in the marketing and sale of homes will allow us to guide you in making low cost, high-value enhancements to the positioning of your property.



Let's Get Started...



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Presence and Stature

THE IMPRESSION YOUR HOME MAKES WHEN YOU DRIVE UP THE ROAD OR DRIVEWAY TO YOUR HOME

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.

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 outside 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.

___ **Trees.** 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. Flowerbeds should be clean and look good in all seasons. Make sure all beds have a sharp edge and are free of leaves and debris.

___ **Lawn care:** Keep the lawn mowed and neatly edged. A perfectly mowed lawn does wonders for presence. You may have to mow twice per week during rainy season; at a minimum, ensure it's being kept up once a week.



___ Aerate and seed any bare or thin spots in your lawn. If you have 14-30 days before we list, you might throw down some 'fast-grow, grow-anywhere' seeds to fill in the blank spots. Consider sod if/as necessary.

___ If needed, get a lawn fertilization company to set up an accelerated program to keep your lawn a deep green color and weed free.

___ **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. During the winter, at the very least, front yard and beds along the walkway approach should be mulched.

___ **Weeds.** Check your flower beds, lawn areas and driveway for weeds. It is better to pull them than to use chemicals. Chemicals take a long time to work and the dead and dying weeds look awful as they



go from yellow to brown. Only use herbicides to maintain these areas once the main weeding has been complete.

___ **Leaves.** In the fall, be sure to rake leaves from your lawn and from planting beds. This may need to be done every couple of days.

___ **Property Clutter.** Inspect your property and remove all trash cans, discarded wood scraps, and trash. Re-stack wood piles so they look neat (if/as necessary) and remove all storage containers, children's toys and other unnecessary objects.

___ **Windows.** Do a thorough cleaning of the windows – or call a window cleaner to come out. Cleaning should include frames, sills and shutters.

___ **Fencing and exterior design elements.** Wipe down and paint (if/as needed) any fences, or other ornamental design elements such as light posts and railings.



___ **Exterior lighting.** Vacuum out and clean the glass on all exterior light fixtures.

___ **Entryway.** If you have a covered entryway, add a bench or attractive set of chairs to help people imagine themselves relaxing here. If these items already exist, make sure they are clean, inviting and some place a person could actually sit. Wash or replace any cushions if/as warranted – bright and happy colors can set a good tone.

OTHER YARD AREAS

___ **Pathways.** Mow and/or trim to clear any pathways to water or other amenities on your property. This includes trimming low hanging branches. It is important to remove these items as they should not line the path. (NOTE: Now is NOT a good time for view enhancement unless you have researched and understand your city/county's environmental regs. Removing trees or other vegetation that is protected can result in fines or worse so please keep the idea of clearing to a minimum.)



___ **Shoreline-water side areas.** If your property does have access to any shoreline or beach areas, ensure they are clean and free of debris and any trash.

___ **Driveway and walkways.** Keep driveway and walkways swept. If not paved, rake and add more gravel if needed. Pressure wash these areas if concrete and not showing bright and in their best form.

___ **Gutters.** Clean gutters & wash or paint the trim if/as needed.

GENERAL EXTERIOR - FRONT ENTRY

___ **Front door.** Consider a fresh coat of paint or varnish on the front door. There are studies that suggest certain colors attract a higher asking price (if you're interested, just ask and we'll share). At the very least, wipe down the door and hardware to remove dust and fingerprints.



___ **Doorbell.** Make sure your doorbell not only functions but is not cracked or broken.

___ **Porch.** Keep the porch swept and free of cobwebs and wasp nests.

___ **Threshold.** Have an attractive welcome mat for people to wipe their feet. Having a second mat inside the entry for people to wipe their feet on is important during bad weather but can also keep your floors cleaner.

___ **Mailbox.** If there is a mailbox by the entrance, ensure it is clean and not peeling.

___ **House numbers.** Verify your house numbers are large and visible from the street. We want to make sure buyers and agents are able to find your home.



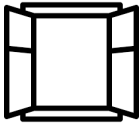
“Fixing up your house before putting it on the market is just a good move in general: [HGTV says](#) exterior improvements, when done right, have a return on investment of more than 95%.”

INSIDE APPEAL

You see your home through your heart. To get the highest price, you have to appeal to potential buyers who will see your home through skeptical, 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 best presence:

___ **Air it out.** Someone who lives in a place often won't notice an odor that may be obvious to visitors. If you're able, consider opening all windows and doors early in the morning for a few hours. Having a cleaning company come in can also help to bring back the smell of freshness. NOTE: Be careful not to saturate your home with incense or other fragrant boosters since not everyone appreciates the same smells.



___ **Windows.** Nothing helps bring in more light than clean windows. Also remember to clean the window sills and the bottoms of the window jams. Wash the blinds and/or dry clean or vacuum the drapes.

___ **Carpets.** If your carpets look dirty or have not been cleaned in over a year, call in a professional. Buyers only know what they see, not the way it is going to be. Unless your home is a "fixer-upper", badly worn or very out of date carpets should be replaced before coming on the market. Offering a buyer credit can so they can pick their own new carpet can work but is far less effective in helping to establish the homes as "well cared for." If in doubt of what to replace with, choose light-colored short plush or Berber carpet. Staying in the off-white -to- light tan range is safest.

___ **Flooring.** Clean and/or polish all floors. If floor tiles are cracked or hardwoods show signs of wear or scratching, consider fixing or refinishing those areas.

___ **Donate!** Clear out all the closets, cabinets, and drawers. Consider donating things you have not used in the past 3+ years. Try to pack up anything seasonal or that you have not used the past 6-12 months (this will also give you a head start on moving) since you likely will not miss it while we're getting your house sold.

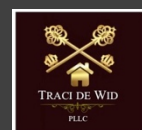


___ **Closets.** Make sure the closets look roomy. As a general rule, they should not be more than ½ to ¾ full. Closet doors should not get stuck when trying to open and nothing should be falling out. Take everything off the floor unless neatly arranged – like shoes—and don't use shelves to the ceiling. Coats should be facing in the same direction. And for the master, if you want extra points, consider using hangers that have some uniformity – remember, we want it to look like a model home!

___ **Furniture** should be kept to a minimum in all rooms. You're better off selecting the pieces that look best and *deliberate* in order to give the perception of a spacious home. The "extra" items can be stored in the garage, a POD, or in storage.



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___ **Fireplace.** The fireplace is a focal point and should be the star of the room. Arrange seating to face the fireplace. Make sure fireplace mantel is not overloaded with items. A couple of well-placed items like a painting, a vase, or small flower arrangement are all that is needed. If applicable, clean out any ashes.



___ **Photos & Display items.** Take down and store all family photos and any other personalized items. We want potential buyers to be able to picture themselves living in the house (and not you). Also consider packing up any religious, taste-specific (i.e. death symbols, collections of memorabilia, etc.) or political items that could be taken in an offensive context.

___ **Walls.** Wipe down or paint any wall that are scuffed. Fill any holes and touch up the paint from taking them down.

___ **Lighting.** Put maximum safe wattage of light bulbs in all fixtures. Ensure that fixtures taking multiple bulbs are using bulbs that are all the same color and wattage.

___ **Switches.** Clean all wall switches and replace broken plates. It is best if all switch and outlet covers in one room are the same color.

___ **Attic access.** Make sure that any pull-down staircase can be used safely.

___ **Smokers.** Remove all ashtrays from sight; wipe down the inside of all lighting fixtures inside the home (these retain the smoke residue and may carry the odor when the light warms them). If there is a smoker in the residence, please insist that all smoking be conducted outside (not in garage) while property is on the market. Empty ashtrays daily.



___ **Bedding.** Consider investing in some new and luxurious bedding (comforter, sheets, and accent pillows). You can take them when you move, and they will improve the look of the bedrooms while your current house is on the market.

___ **Outdated items.** If your house feels dated, consider changing specific items that will increase your home's desirability. These items can include: outdated wallpaper, light fixtures, some carpet (certain colors), appliances more than 10-15 years old, etc.

INSIDE APPEAL - KITCHEN

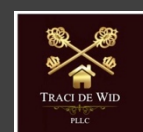
The kitchen may be the most important room in the home. Clean this room like your sale depends on it - because it does!



___ **Oven.** If you have a self-cleaning oven, run it. You may however, need to buy a degreaser or hire someone to do the job right. Once it's clean, let everyone know it needs to stay that way! Consider eating out or getting take-out more often if/as necessary.



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___ **Range.** If you have a glass cooktop, buy the special cleaner to remove the grime (NOTE: These scratch easily so do not use any harsh chemicals to clean it. Window cleaner typically does not do the job.) If it's a regular burner range, buy new drip pans for under the burners or foil over the old ones.

___ **Dishwasher.** Clean around the seal of dishwasher door. If you don't use it regularly, run it to ensure it's working and doesn't have an odor. If stainless, wipe the fingerprints.



___ **Fridge.** Go through the fridge and toss all old jars and items that don't get used. Wipe it out and ensure it looks clean. Consider placing a new box of baking soda in the fridge to help absorb any odors. If stainless, wipe down all fingerprints and remove all magnets from the front.

___ **Declutter and toss.** Make certain you get rid of all junk, broken or cracked dishes, take-out sauces, Tupperware with missing lids, etc. Also remove disorganized items that have accumulated in the kitchen drawers and cabinets.

___ **Counters.** Put away most everything on the counters that is not used on a daily basis. Some small appliances are fine (i.e. coffee maker, toaster, etc.) but not things that just take up counter space. If you have no room in the cabinets, consider boxing up items and placing them in the garage or storage. Wipe all counters down after use.

___ **Cabinets.** Wipe down cabinet doors and door handles to remove fingerprints, grease and food splatters.

___ **Pet feeding area.** If you have pets, be sure to clean around their food areas and empty litter boxes frequently. Consider placing a mat under the food and water dishes to help keep the area clean and looking organized.



INSIDE APPEAL - LAUNDRY ROOM

___ **Supplies.** Put soaps and supplies in cabinets or containers that help organize them.



___ **Clutter.** Keep counters and sink clean and empty.

___ **Lighting.** This is one room to take special care with lighting. Many laundry rooms are dark. Upgrade wattage in light fixtures if safe to do so.

INSIDE APPEAL - BATHROOMS

___ **Faucets and Sinks.** Repair all leaky faucets. Clear off any unnecessary clutter on sinks. Use glass cleaner on mirrors.

___ **Towles.** Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold clean towels in thirds and hang onto racks each day. Purchase new towels if necessary.



___ **Showers and tubs.** Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs except for necessities. Clean or replace shower curtains where applicable.

___ **Shower door cleaning.** If necessary, remove the shower door for cleaning. Use solution of one part muriatic acid to 10 parts water (use goggles when mixing), then scrub with plastic scouring pad and rinse clean.

___ **Tub/tiles.** Purchase a mildew remover or consider caulking over areas looking distressed.

___ **Scent.** Fresh flower arrangements do wonders for a bathroom, both in appearance and aroma. No plug-in air fresheners or scented candles.

INSIDE APPEAL - GARAGE

___ **Clean and sweep garage.** Consider painting walls flat white; floors light gray.

___ **Tools.** Store any dangerous tools and arrange others neatly. Use containers and tool boxes as necessary.



___ **Vacuum** pipes around a/c or heating system and hot water heater that are visible.

___ **Garage windows and screens.** Windows should be clean and screens free of rips and tears. Windows should be checked for cracks and holes. Replace as needed.

___ **Junk Removal.** Remove all “junk” from the attic, basement, closets, garage, and tool shed. Large storage areas appeal to buyers. Rent a storage unit (or a POD) and clear out as much as possible to make your home feel open and roomy.



Preparing for Your Photography Appointment



To produce the best possible listing brochure and internet tour, we recommend completing the following *before* we arrive to photograph your home. The interior and exterior of your home will be photographed from multiple angles. Every room will be photographed, including bathrooms, laundry room and garage.

EXTERIOR

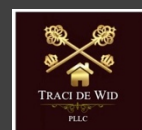
- ___ Clear front and rear yard of any lawn equipment, toys, leaves and debris.
- ___ Schedule the lawn to be mowed a day or two before the photo shoot if possible.
- ___ Close garage doors.
- ___ Park cars in the garage or on the street (not in front of the house) if possible.
- ___ Open any deck or patio umbrellas and put out cushions on pool chairs (as/if applicable), no matter the time of year. Built-in grills need to be spotless; grill lid closed.
- ___ Tidy any hoses, lawn decorations, etc.
- ___ Pick up any pet messes in the yard and arrange to remove the pet from the home for your photography appointment.

INTERIOR

- ___ Turn on interior lights to make the home as bright as possible.
- ___ Open all window shades and drapes completely.
- ___ Clear all unnecessary articles from counter tops, coffee tables, dressers and bathroom counters and stalls.
- ___ Double check to ensure that any items that would impact the buyers' ability to focus on the home such as family photos, collectibles, piles of magazines/books, coats, boots, etc. are put away or stored.
- ___ Make all beds. Remove unnecessary articles from floors, dresser tops and doorways.
- ___ If you have any photos, reading materials, videos or other items that would not be appropriate for all age groups to see, please put them away.
- ___ Put pet food dishes and litter boxes out of view of the camera.



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Showing Time!

Showing Checklist. Your property looks great and you have a scheduled showing appointment. Here's how to get ready quickly:

- ___ Open all drapes and window shades.
- ___ Open all doors between rooms to give an inviting feeling.
- ___ Turn on all lights including lamps.
- ___ Turn off the TV.
- ___ Look around for clutter, including newspapers and magazines and clear it away.
- ___ Remove any unnecessary items from kitchen counters and put any dirty dishes in the dishwasher.
- ___ Take out the trash. If you have pets, get them out of the way and take care of their food and/or litter area.
- ___ Make beds and tidy closets/remove clothes from floor, bed and chairs.
- ___ Verify the bathroom is straightened up - toilet lids down, counter tops cleared, towels hung neatly, etc.
- ___ Do not use air fresheners or scented candles. They can aggravate allergies and create an image of covering up or masking issues.
- ___ Keep your home well light. Buyers will drive by at odd hours and you want your home to stand out. Keep ample lights on outside until at least 8:00 pm every day.



OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES

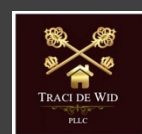
Whenever you leave the house in the morning or during the day, ***please leave it as if it is going to be shown.***

Yes, it is difficult sometimes and it might even mean you have to get up a little earlier in order to take care of these important items, but you never know when the right people are going to look at your home. This way, you will always be ready for them!

Please try to accommodate all showings. Buyers tend to look at multiple properties during each outing and may find another before you are able to reschedule.



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If your electric bill does not go up while your house is on the market you are doing something wrong! While on the market, your house will have the lights left on in case of a showing and a comfortable temperature should be maintained.

Keep pets out of the way during showings-preferably out of the house. Many people are uncomfortable around animals and may even be allergic to them.

During a showing, plan to leave the premises. Take a short break while your home is being shown. Buyers are intimidated when sellers are present and tend to hurry through the house. Let the buyers be at ease, and let the agents do their jobs.

Agents should leave the home exactly as it was when they arrived. They do not know if you have another showing after they leave. So, if you would like certain lights turned off or blinds closed, please leave a note at your home.

RESOURCES!



If you need the name of a painter, house cleaner, window cleaner, handyman, roofer, electrician, etc... just give us a call. We would be glad to refer you to vendors we have worked with and from whom we have received excellent service.



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