

## Broaden the Appeal of Your Home

Walk through the house and pick out things that would enhance the value of the home if they were different. You'll be better able to prioritize this way. For example, repainting a child's bubble-gum pink bedroom may attract more buyers than something not as apparent, such as replacing an old dishwasher.

You can direct a potential buyer's eye away from something negative or toward something positive. Use artwork or a room's own features such as a fireplace to capture a buyer's attention. There is a fine line, however. You want buyers to be able to appreciate the room and not just focus on the items in the room.

Remove any furniture that tightens spaces. If a couch or chair forces you to turn your body as you walk by or just makes a passage appear smaller, get rid of it. Everybody wants more space.

Rid the house of personal effects, and don't forget simple things like magnets on the refrigerator. Small distractions to the buyer's eyes will disturb their thinking, preventing them from picturing the house as theirs. You want the rooms to look well-decorated and spacious, but avoid turning the house into a perfect home. Try to balance the brand-new look with some of its lived-in warmth.

Potential buyers often feel uncomfortable in bedrooms and bathrooms because they are, by definition, personal and private places. To counter this reaction, make bedrooms and bathrooms look like a model home (toss the lived-in feel out the bathroom window). Clear off all surfaces of the bathroom – removing simple things like toothpaste and soap. Put out nice, fresh towels instead. The goal is to make these rooms comfortable for buyers. If the buyers feel comfortable, they'll linger and picture themselves in the house.

## Less is Definitely More

### REDUCE CLUTTER

Clean out closets, pick up clutter, and pare down what's inside. That goes for those treasured family photos and mementos too. The reason? Besides adding a spacious feel to the home, pared-down surroundings can help potential buyers better envision themselves and their family photos in the house.

Pack away items and special collections usually displayed in cabinets and hutches, and move a few pieces of furniture out of the house. This will help buyers to better see where their furniture might go in the house.

Don't forget to keep the house clean every minute it's on the market. This takes great effort, but the buyer may need to see it in the next five minutes, and you'll need to be prepared.

### TONE DOWN YOUR CREATIVITY

So you like your house to "say something" about your personality. Well, it's time to tone it down. Go buy some plain-vanilla paint to cover those red-and-purple walls in your bedroom—it'll make a difference when you're trying to sell your home. Many buyers can't see your Picasso genius (and can't get past the splatter-paint in the living room) to visualize colors they're more comfortable with.

If you've got an Italian fresco on a living room wall that stops people in their tracks, they may lose sight of the rest of the home's wonderful features. If you're resistant to do anything about it, ask someone you trust to give you an independent view of your home. Your listing agent will tell you if the house looks cluttered or if any colors are too bright. Some may see bright colors as gaudy. Listen to their answers and take their advice.

## 24 Simple Things to Make Your Home More Marketable

### INTERIOR

- Have carpets cleaned and re-stretched or replace if worn or dated.
- Clean or have house cleaned (top to bottom, baseboards and ceiling fans).
- Pack away all small collections and jewelry; “little hands” have taking ways.
- Put out the “oil” air fresheners in entry, kitchen and bathrooms the day it’s going on the market.
- Wash windows inside and out (home will look newer and cleaner).
- Arrange all closets to be presentable.
- Fix all minor repairs, nail holes and touch up paint.
- Touch up all painted trim where needed.
- Replace all burned out light bulbs! Use a higher wattage in rooms with only one light fixture.
- Brasso/polish all doorknobs and hardware in all rooms (an absolute must for older homes!). If you have brass fixtures, it’s worth the investment to replace them.
- Leave out *some* family photos. This suggests “a happy and loved home,” not “we can’t wait to leave this house!”
- Remove stuffed trophy heads and/or animal collections of any kind. It’s a PC thing, and it “themes” your home...you don’t want buyers referring to your home as “The Cow House!”
- Limit toys to one toy box and pack the rest away. If you don’t have enough room to put them all away, the buyers will see that they won’t have room either (this also makes picking up for showings much faster).
- Put away any boxes. The only things that should be on the floor are furniture!

### KITCHEN

- Remove all kitchen appliances not used daily and only leave the functional kitchen décor items out. Keep all food items off the counter and off the top of the refrigerator.
- Remove all magnets and papers from the front of the refrigerator and move only what you “can’t live without” to the side of the refrigerator. This will make the kitchen feel bigger.
- Replace old stove drip pans, and for older stoves, add new burner covers; it helps it look newer.

### BATH

- Put all loose stuff on bathroom countertops under the sink for easy use. Only leave out the pretties! Everything else must go under the sink cabinets; this gives the appearance of more storage. Remember to wipe down the mirrors; it doubles everything good and bad!

### EXTERIOR

- Remove solar screens from the front of home; dark screens make a home seem unfriendly and cold. Place the screens in eye view in the garage so the buyer will see them.
- Plant flowers in pots outside by the front door and along sidewalks and landscaping beds, if needed.
- Freshen mulch in landscape beds.
- Power wash patios, walkways, and driveway.

### GARAGE

- Clean out the garage & remove all the “extras”. Leave only tools, lawn equipment, bikes & cars. It’s key to show that at least one car does fit in the garage.
- If both sides of the garage are full, rent a mini-storage to put all the extra stuff that is to be removed from the house and garage. If the house and garage are stuffed full they will assume you’re moving because the house is too small!

### WARNING

- PETS: They should go with you for all showings. If it isn’t possible and you are gone during the day, consider a crate, kennel or dog run while the house is on the market. Over 50% of buyers are allergic, dislike, or are afraid of pets. This is the #1 reason buyers won’t buy or even enter a home with a pet!