

Some Quick Home Selling Tips

Do you know what it takes to get your home sold as quickly as possible in this market? Here is some valuable and time-tested advice:

Unclutter a Messy Room: The first step is to completely unclutter every room. To get top dollar, put half your possessions in storage. This means it might not be feasible to live in your home comfortably while it's on the market, but it's a worthy sacrifice.

The Perfect (if Unrealistic) Closet: Put the bulk of your clothing in storage, and leave a lot of space between hangers. Leave only a few select items of neatly-pressed clothing hanging. Keep one or two pairs of shoes in shoeboxes.

Keep the Bathroom Basic: In the bathroom, you should have some pretty towels and a bar of soap, and not much else. Remove everything from the countertops and empty the medicine cabinet. Put everything in storage except a couple rolls of toilet paper. Put candles around the bathtub and remove your razor, shaving cream and half-empty shampoo bottles.

Tend the Walls and Floors: A fresh coat of paint goes a long way toward making your home look fresh, clean and move-in ready. Clean the carpets. If they're stained or at all worn out, replace them. After an exhausting move and a pricey purchase, a buyer doesn't want to envision their first tasks as busting out the paint and paying for new carpeting.

Remove Frightful Furnishings: Look at your furniture with a critical eye. If you've been flopping your tush into your easy chair every night for the last eight years, it's probably looking a little sad. Remove or toss anything old, ratty or dirty. If you have nice furniture, then leave the nicest pieces in the house. If not, then purchase a few inexpensive, sleek pieces.

Create Marketing Materials: Make a flier that lists the most important details about your home with a few pictures, and leave a stack of fliers on the kitchen counter for real estate agents and prospective buyers. Realize, though, that if a buyer isn't interested in your home, then nothing in the flier will sell the property.

Home Improvements Count: Make a list of every single improvement you've made to the property since you've lived there, the time frame in which it was made and approximately how much it cost. Also make a list of everything you personally love about the home. Put this information in your listing, and include it on your flier.

Show It Off: Make your home super easy to show for real estate agents. Use a lockbox. Your showing instructions should be "show anytime." If you prefer a call first, then the instructions should be, "Call first, leave a message and go." When a real estate agent calls, keep it brief and don't bother giving any extra information. It should already be in your flier.

Scram, Get Lost and Make Yourself Scarce: Try to be out of the house before the buyer arrives. The majority of buyers will feel tense and intrusive snooping around and opening closets and cabinets when the seller is there. If the buyer arrives before you can get out of the house, then make them feel welcome and leave promptly. Don't come back until they're gone.

When Will It All Pay Off? Don't dare over price your home in this market. Be extremely careful to price your home very competitively from the beginning, when the largest number of buyers will see your listing. Once you receive an offer, you should almost always counteroffer.