

# Getting Your Home Ready For Sale



**Fact**

Property should be **merchandised and marketed** just like any other product, i.e. Cars, boats, beauty products, food products.

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## Introduction

Some homes and cottages sit on the market for days, some for weeks, and some for several months. If you're like most homeowners, you're hoping your home will sell quickly and for top dollar.

There is a way that you can make that happen and it might surprise you to know that this strategy really doesn't involve a total renovation, either.

You can sell your home fast by preparing it properly for sale. Some people aren't aware of how their home appears to others because of the sentimental is attributed to the value of the home. Having a Certified Staging Advocate – such as Jennifer from The Parker Team, or a Professional Stager walk through your home and provide you with an objective report, will help you see your home through the prospective Buyer's eyes.



Staging creates the space to enhance the look and feel for a **BUYER**.

Staging is **MARKETING** and **MERCHANDISING** a property.



**It's all about the buyer.**

## How Preparing Your Home for Sale Can Make or Break Your Home Selling Success

There are people who are prepared to sell their home and it shows. These are people who have put the home's best features center stage, so when prospective Buyers walk into the house, they can imagine themselves living there.

Homeowners who don't prepare their home for sale, often think that because they love the home, a Buyer will, too - even with any quirky issues or outstanding repairs. They believe that others can look past the lived in atmosphere to see the true gem underneath it all. BUT it doesn't work that way. If a Buyer is turned off by

what he or she sees when they walk into your house, they can't or won't look past that to see what the home could be like. What they see is a homeowner who didn't care enough to make the house as presentable as possible, and, consequently leaves them wondering what else in the home has been neglected. When you prepare a home for sale, it makes it look inviting, and gives the impression it is well maintained. Potential Buyers walk into the house and they're immediately comfortable.

Preparing your home for sale can help you enjoy faster selling success as a home that's been prepared to look its best can outshine and stand above the competition in your area.

Not only can preparing a home for sale make it more appealing, but when an appraiser comes to your home, he can clearly see that the home has been well taken care of. Though he'll check thoroughly, your home will make a good first impression, and that can set the tone for the appraisal.

## Focus on Rooms Where Staging Makes the Biggest Difference

Not every single room in your home needs to be staged. They need to be clean and well-presented, but there are some rooms in the home that won't make or break a sale.

For example, while you want a nice looking, clean and decluttered laundry room, it doesn't have the same selling power that other rooms do.

You want to start with the entrance to your house. Your foyer area is a Buyer's first introduction to the inside of your home. Unfortunately, it's also the space where most homeowners drop everything. Keys get tossed onto a small table, shoes get discarded here, school book bags are left lying around and coats and umbrellas hang from the coat rack or are strewn on a bench. While for you that's just part of everyday life, for a Buyer it looks unkempt.

The kitchen is an area that must be presented well because it's one of the rooms in the house that's a huge selling point. If your kitchen doesn't look its best, it can make or break the deal pretty quickly. Your home can be old, but your kitchen can't look it. If your kitchen looks like it's stuck in the 1970s, what potential Buyers are going to see is expensive renovation work.

Even if you can't afford to renovate your kitchen before you put your house on the market, you can afford to spruce it up with

strategic staging. It doesn't cost much to paint cabinets, add some molding and update the hardware on your cabinets.

Each one of your bathrooms should be as inviting as possible. You want to have a great looking clean tub, shower and countertops. Put away personal items such as razors, medications, shampoos and so forth.

Your living room should not look lived in. It should look like a blank canvas that someone else can draw his or her life on. Use all neutral colors and furnishings. Leave the curtains open - it makes the room look bigger.

Your dining room should have a great looking table - even if you need to rent one until the home sells. Adding a bright accent rug beneath the table can help this room look inviting. Make sure there's great lighting and replace any outdated light fixtures. Keep any wall decorations simple so that the focus can be on the room itself.

To stage the bedrooms for a quick sale, get rid of bulky furniture, you want the room to look sparse, but not devoid of character. The bed should be one of the focal points. Cover it with new linens such as white blankets and sheets. Use throw pillows that are colorful and draw out color from a limited number of size appropriate accessories.

Closets are the one thing that many homeowners don't think about because they don't think the Buyer will check. Buyers do. They want to know how much storage space they're going to

have. Your closet should be neat and well organized, and not filled to the brim with clothes or other items.

The garage is important to. Buyers want a garage that they can picture themselves working in. You don't want your garage to look like you're a hoarder. Clean it out and paint it if needed. Put up hanging hooks to get items off the floor so it looks spacious in the garage. Organize everything and update the lights. Make sure the garage door opens and closes without squeaking or groaning. Clean stains off the floor and make sure there aren't cobwebs everywhere.

## Where to Start?



### Start with a Deep Decluttering Process

To get your home prepared for a fast sale, you need to start by deeply decluttering the rooms. When you declutter a home it showcases your home, taking potential Buyers eyes away from your “stuff,” and focusing them on the beauty of your home. Decluttering also makes your home feel bigger and cleaner which is appealing to potential Buyers.

Decluttering or prepacking prepares you for letting go and moving on, it is the first step in your moving journey.





Often people use a room in their homes for things they weren't intended for - and that can make the flow of a home confusing to a Buyer. Reset that front living room back to a living room, or the office back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom. Make sure that the use of each room makes sense in the flow of the house.

### **Remove Personalized and Sentimental Items**

When you put a home on the market, you want it to look as neutral as possible to give it the best chance of selling quickly. One of the first things that you should do before you put your home up for sale is to go through it and pack away the personalized and sentimental items. It gives the Buyer a chance to visualize their life in your home.

When a Buyer walks through the house, you want him thinking about all the features of the home and imagining himself in the rooms. You don't want him thinking about the pictures of the vacation shots you took or the sports events that you were present at.

It's one thing to live in a home and another to sell it - the two are not connected when the home goes on the market.



## Conduct a Thorough Cleaning of Your Home

Your home needs to have a deep cleaning before you put it on the market. There is a difference between everyday clean and selling clean. You can clean it yourself if you have the time, but thoroughly cleaning a home can take you a few days to do it right.

Or, you can hire someone. A professional cleaner usually has more experience with cleaning on a deeper level and doesn't often overlook the things a homeowner will.

A potential Buyer will also catch what you don't pay attention to. You need to make sure all the windows are washed on the inside and out and that the windowsills are clean.

Clean or replace window blinds. Wash all the light fixtures and make sure all light bulbs are clean and in good working order. Wipe down the light switches and wall socket plates. Ceiling fans should be cleaned both at the base, on the blades and the lights.

Remove any cobwebs from the ceilings, walls, corners, & furniture. Wipe off the tops of the door frames and all the baseboards. Clean beneath all the furniture. If you have rugs, those need to be washed or steam cleaned.

Vacuum under and between couch cushions and other furniture. Wipe down table legs and kitchen chairs. Wash the doorknobs and check and wash areas of the walls that need to be washed, paying special attention to the front entrance.

Sometimes, you may end up having to repaint a room if the paint doesn't look its best.

Wash and clean out all the trashcans. Wash off the lights on the porch of your home and make sure the front door and screen door are clean. Don't neglect the tracks in your sliding doors and windows.

Clean out all the cabinets in the house. Wash all the appliances down and clean out the refrigerator and freezer. Make sure that all the towel racks are dusted, and the towels are appealing to the eye and the nose.

Put fresh sheets and blankets on the bed. Organize everything. Sweep, vacuum and mop the floors as needed.

Wash all the pet bedding - and the pets! Clean all their toys and dishes. If your pet can vacation at a friends' home while your

home is on the market, remove all signs of your beloved pet from your home.

You can become immune to the scents in your home - like pet odors - so ask someone to come over and tell you if the house has a strange or unpleasant odor.



## **Make a Decision on What to Repair or Remodel**

Few homes are in such great shape that they can go on the market without needing some repairs and remodeling. Bumps and accidents happen and these can result in dings or holes in the drywall.

Sometimes a ceiling will develop a cosmetic crack that doesn't impact the integrity of the ceiling. You'll want to repair any drywall damage so that the walls of the home are in good shape,

make sure to touch up with the same colour of paint and if the paint on the wall has faded over time, repaint the whole wall.

If you have an appliance that's not working, fix it or replace it.

If your heating and air conditioning unit isn't working correctly, pay to have that repaired before list your home. Anything that's a big ticket item such as a heating and air unit is something that Buyers don't want to have to deal with.

If your sinks or tubs have leaky faucets, fix those. Look at the flooring in all the rooms in your house. If it looks dirty, clean it - if it's torn, lifting or worn, then you need to repair it, or replace it.

Any window frames that show any wood damage should be fixed as well as any windows in the home that might be cracked. Fix any areas of the home where there's been water damage.

Know that outstanding repairs or maintenance usually results in calculations in the Buyer's mind. A Buyer may ask for things to be repaired, or for the price to be reduced to compensate for outstanding repair items. Some of them, you'll want to give on, but others, you might not want to. The better prepared your home is, the better it shows and the more likely it is you'll receive top dollar and experience a shorter time on the market.

## **Pre-Tour Your Home Through the Lens of Your Senses**

By now, you've reached the stage where you're just about ready to put the home on the market. You think you have everything that can possibly be done taken care of and the home is as appealing as it can be.

To make sure that your home really is market-ready, you're going to want to do your own tour through the rooms to make sure you haven't missed anything. The best way to do this is by walking through the home while paying attention to your senses.

It might even be helpful to take a small notepad with you and write down your first impression of the room as it pertains to each of your senses. When you walk into a room, write down the first scent that you notice.

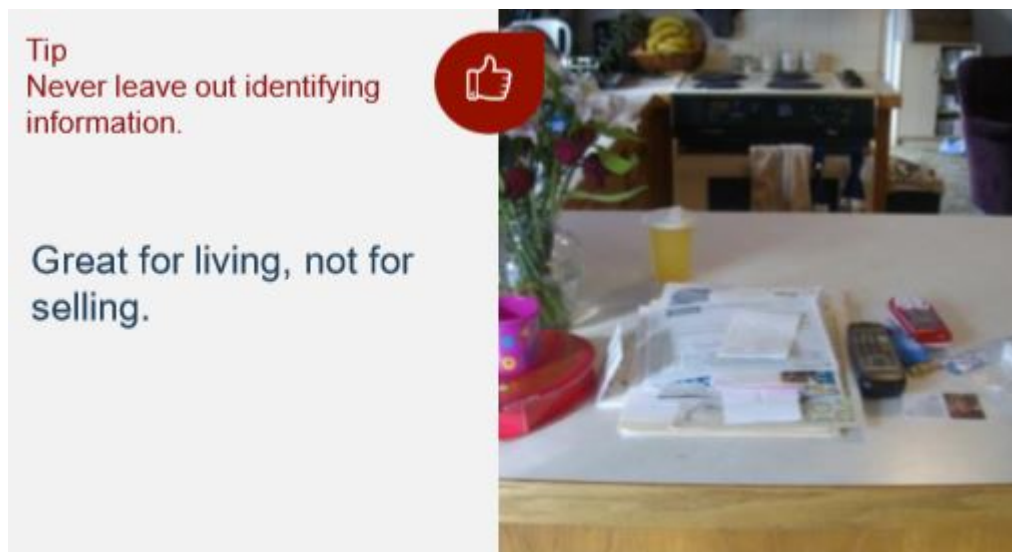
It could be that in the bedroom, the first thing you can smell is the fabric softener that you used on the linens or on your clothes. You want the scent to be fresh and appealing.

Some fabric softeners have a good, but common scent. You want the room to smell inviting. In the kitchen, breathe deeply to see if you can pick up on any scents from the trashcan or strong spices from cooking.

Go through the rooms and listen for what you hear. If there's anything distracting, like a loud clock ticking, you may want to

take that down. If you walk across the floor and it squeaks, investigate if that's something that you need to take care of.

When you push open a door, pay attention to the sound that it makes. The way a room looks makes a lasting impression on a Buyer - so when you pre-tour your home, see if it looks serene and welcoming. Look for anything that's out of place or captures attention in a bad way.







## Head Outside and Spiff Up Your Curb Appeal

What's outside the home is going to be the first thing that tells a Buyer if he wants to see the home. Curb appeal is something that can set your home up to sell fast - and it doesn't have to cost a whole lot to give a home this kind of help.

You want to make sure the lawn looks good and that it's edged. For instant curb appeal, have flowers in a flower bed or in decorative pots or use greenery. Put flowers around the trees instead of mulch.

Paint the shutters and the front door. Put in new hardware on the door or paint it. Upgrade the porch light. Paint or buy new house numbers and renovate or replace the mailbox.

If you have a concrete entryway, clean or stain the concrete to make it look like tiles. Add hanging plants. Ferns are always popular as are colorful flowers. Put up veneer panels to cover the concrete foundation of your house. Install a heating and air conditioning screen to camouflage the unit.