

How to Prepare Your Home for Showing

Let's face it.....most people don't live this way! Many of these tips may appear overstated or unrealistic to you and your lifestyle. However, your home has now become a product offered for sale. Just as an automobile is detailed before you try to sell it, we are detailing your house, or as the REALTORS say, "Staging Your House to Sell." We want to make the product, Your House, appealing to the majority of buyers. The closer you can get your home to the "ideal," the more your goals of a quick sale at a good price will be accomplished. PLEASE don't be offended. You deserve more than a sign out front and an occasional ad in the paper. Below are items we have discovered over the years to help your home sell fast. The most important thing is - They work. Your home will be compared to model homes that are vacant and always clean, open and spotless. These suggestions will usually get your home sold in less than 60 days.

PRICING

The single most important thing you can do to make your home sell is to price it right. We will suggest a reasonable price range based on recent SOLD properties similar to your home, but only you, the Seller, sets the price. WARNING, if there are no showings in the first two weeks on the market, a price reduction may be in order.

Buyers First Impressions

Your home's "Curb Appeal"! The first impression from the street and the view outside the front door are the most important thing that entices the potential buyer to take a look inside. Remember you're competing with over 3600 properties for sale in the Bellingham area.

- New floor mat at entry.
- Install New Mail box and post if aged.
- Repaint exterior if needed. If brick, make sure trim is painted.
- Pressure wash the home and driveway.
- Keep front porch clean and newspapers and flyers picked up.
- Replace missing shingles, as needed.
- Clean gutters.
- Clean windows until they shine—scrape if necessary.
- Repair any broken boards on fence.
- Remove: old rusted swing set, old basketball hoops, rusted lawn furniture, old rusted grill, dead trees or shrubs, old flowers from the past season, leaves, dead branches, weeds and debris.
- Garbage cans need to be stored neatly in the garage or designated area.
- Edge the lawn and use quick greening fertilizer.
- Add mulch to flower beds and shrubs.
- Remove children's toys and bikes.
- Remove leaves, pine needles from lawn and roof.
- Cut lawns, shrubs and plant fresh growing colorful flowers.
- Paint, stain or varnish front door and polish brass. Install brass kick plate.
- Oil squeaky doors.

THE FOYER

- The Foyer supports the desire to look further. Make sure it is clean, no cluttered furniture, light fixtures sparkle, floors are spotless and the general area is inviting.
- A small entrance table with fresh cut flowers adds a nice touch.

GUEST CLOSET

- 50% of hanging clothing should be taken out. No boxes or clutter. Lots of room.
- "Simple Solution" added for fresh smell.

FAMILY-LIVING-GREAT ROOM

- Put away all collections, (figurines, and fragile items)
- Store all political, religious, sports, momentos, as well as any business, sports, personal awards, (warning - failure to do this will result in the potential buyer spending too much of their time looking at the awards etc., or being offended by your political, religious, or sports affiliations, resulting in less time looking at the house as it would fit their lifestyle.
- No animal fur rugs.
- No family photos.
- Remove all crowded furniture. Open the room up, show lots of space - with an even flow pattern.
- Clean fireplace.
- Clean light fixtures.

DINING ROOM

- Take extra leaf out of table.
- Put nice white table cloth on table.
- Nice arrangement in center of table.
- Clean chandelier and light fixtures. The globes from the chandelier can be put in dish washer.

THE KITCHEN

- Clean the kitchen from top to bottom.
- Clean the oven and the stove until they shine.
- Clean the Refrigerator.
- Remove all refrigerator magnets and items from the front and the sides. This includes all children pictures from school.
- Put all small appliances under the cabinets every day.
- Put away all items from the countertops. Women want to see space, lots of space, and if its not there they'll go somewhere else.
- Clean the inside of the dishwasher—Run the dishwasher with powdered instant lemonade such as Countrytime in the soap dishes. NO Dishes. The citric acid works wonders!
- Clean out drawers to eliminate fears of too little space.
- ½ lemon run through your garbage disposal will give it a fresh clean smell.
- Remove all trash daily.
- Remove pet dishes, toys and little boxes from kitchen.
- Have dated appliances re-finished. (Gold, brown, avocado green).
- Eat-in kitchen, take out extra leaf in table. Nice table cloth. Center piece arrangement. Open curtain and let lots of light in.

HALL WAY

- Many people think the hallway is the place to hang all family pictures, when you're living there it is. When you're selling it's not. Remove all pictures, putty all holes and repaint the entire hall way.

- If you have a disappearing staircase in the hall, make sure it is air tight, and it operates smoothly. All ladder rungs are secure and the light works in the attic.

BATHROOMS

- Clean ceramic tile and grout. (paint and supply stores have a brush-on grout cleaner).
- Repair loose or cracked tile.
- Downplay dated ceramic tile color with white towels and window treatments, plus scatter rugs.
- Clean tub/shower thoroughly and leave the shower curtain open, to add more depth.
- Shine all fixtures, and remove stain from sinks.
- Replace rusted sinks or if small area cover with touch up.
- Repair leaking faucets and commodes.
- Remove personal toiletries on display.
- Glue down all wallpaper where loose.
- Repair or replace defective exhaust fans.
- Install GFI outlet.
- Clean all areas squeaky clean.

BEDROOMS

- New bedspreads if possible will make the room look great and can be taken with you when you move.
- Make beds everyday, (children paid at closing, ask about this little secret)
- Headboards free and clean of clutter.
- All Children's toys put away.
- Remove bulky furniture, room will appear larger.
- Remove dark or outdated wallpaper. Paint if needed with light neutral color.
- Clean out closets (50% rule) make them appear as if there is plenty of room to spare.
- Install closet organizers and keep clothes neat.
- Organize shoes.

MASTER BEDROOM

One of the most important rooms in the house

- Remove all excessive furniture.
- Closets 50% rule, no clutter on floor. (Seasonal clothing only in closet).
- New bedspread, open curtains.
- No clutter on top of furniture.
- Clean ceiling fans and light fixtures.

ROOM OVER GARAGE

- Make sure the staircase up is clean of debris and the handrail is tight and secure.
- Remove excessive furniture.

GARAGE/ BASEMENT

- Remove stains from garage floors.
- Make garage and basement look functional and well organized.

- Clean all windows/cobwebs in corners etc.
- Do not store extra boxes in garage (consider renting a storage unit).
- Spray with "simple solution" to give a fresh smell.

PORCH

- Make sure its clean and swept.
- Remove cobwebs
- Furniture is clean and orderly - not excessive.
- Make sure door operates properly.

DECK

- Clean with deck cleaner and nail down any loose boards.
- Consider staining with sealer stain.
- All rails are to be secure.
- Make sure all steps are tight.

GENERAL BUT REALLY IMPORTANT \$\$\$\$ SAVING IDEAS

- Put higher wattage light bulbs everywhere. The added light can make a difference.
- Oil all squeaky doors.
- Tighten all door knobs and make sure all door stops are in place.
- Replace any burned out lights.
- Warning!! Warning!! Under no circumstances be home for showings. The buyer will spend more time looking if the seller is not there. Go to the neighbors, walk around the block. If you are there the buyer will not talk freely and the agent will not know their true thoughts. If by chance you do run into the buyer, do not volunteer information about the home. Many times what you consider an advantage to you is a disadvantage to the buyer.
- Open all curtains, drapes, blinds, etc. during the day.
- For every showing, turn on all the lights before you leave. If anything is broken you must, by law, disclose, better still FIX IT.
- If there are items attached which will not go with the house, remove them at once and replace before anyone shows your house.
- Sprinkle a few drops of vanilla extract on a warm stove burner, or on a lamp bulb before turning it on, or a few drops of vanilla in a small pan of water and put in a warm oven.
- Run the vacuum every morning.
- Please reframe from smoking in the house, a much larger percentage of buyer will not look at a house if it smells of smoke.
- Refrain from the use of potpourri, many people are allergic to the odors.
- Clean and repair all cracked windows.
- Make sure all wall switches "do something". Lights, radio, etc. comes on when switched on.
- ODORS - If you have pets, there will be an odor. You might not notice, but the buyer will. A great product called "Simple Solution" is available at pet stores. This eliminates all type of organic odors. Consider boarding pets during the selling hours. 45% of the public is either highly allergic to or very afraid of any animal.
- Repair any leaking taps and toilets.

IMPORTANT \$\$\$ SAVED

Reminder- a \$500.00 repair problem becomes a \$5,000.00 problem to the buyer and will result in

a much lower offer. Another danger in not repairing the smaller problem is the idea created in the mind of the buyer, that IF you let the small problem exist. What other much larger problems are hidden. The entire process of so called "living in a glass house" will be quick and easy if you do the things we are suggesting.