

Getting Your House Ready To Sell

When buying real estate, you will find that real estate agents will often refer to your purchase as a “home”. Yet, if you are selling property, they will refer to it as a “house”. There is a reason for this. Buying real estate is often an emotion decision, but when selling real estate you need to remove emotion from the equation.

Think of your house as a marketable commodity. Your goal is to get others to see it as their potential home, not yours. If you do not consciously make this decision, you can unintentionally create a situation where it takes longer to sell your property. The first step is to “de-personalize” it.

De-personalize the House

The reason you want to “de-personalize” your home is to make buyers view it as their potential home. When a potential buyer sees your family photos hanging on the wall, it puts your own brand on the home and momentarily shatters their illusions about owning the house. Put away family photos, sporting trophies, collectible items, knick-knacks, and souvenirs. These items can be packed up, placed in a storage unit until you are ready to move. By placing unused items in a storage unit, you will also remove the “clutter” which is the next step in preparing your house for sale.

Removing Clutter

This is the hardest thing for most people to do because they are emotionally attached to everything in the house. After years of living in the same home, clutter collects in such a way that may not be evident to the homeowner. However, it does affect the way buyers see the home, even if you do not realize it. Clutter collects on shelves, counter tops, drawers, closets, garages, attics, and basements.

Take a step back and pretend you are a buyer. Allow a friend or your real estate agent help point out areas of clutter, as long as you can accept their views without getting defensive.

Kitchen Clutter

The kitchen is an easy place to start. First, get everything off the counters. Even the toaster and coffee maker. Place these items in a cabinet and take it out when you use them. Minimize the items in your cabinets and drawers. Have any dishes, or pots and pans that rarely get used? Put them in boxes and add them to your storage unit.

Buyers will open all your cabinets and drawers, especially in the kitchen. They want to be sure there is enough room for their own belongings. If your cabinets, pantries, and drawers look full, it may signal a message to the buyer that there isn't enough storage space. Have as much “empty space” as possible. This means you will have to get rid of that junk drawer!

Clear out your pantry. Determine your meals by what you have on the shelves. Canned goods are heavy and can weigh down your moving boxes so use up as much as you can.

Beneath the sink is very critical, too. Make sure the area under the sink is as empty, removing all extra cleaning supplies. You should scrub the area down as well, and determine if there are signs of water leaks that may cause a homebuyer to hesitate in buying your home.

Closet Clutter

Closets are great for accumulating clutter, though you may not think of it as clutter. These can be your extra clothes and shoes – things you rarely wear but will not give away. These items can also be stored in your storage unit creating open space in your closet.

Storage Area Clutter

Basements, garages, attics, and sheds accumulate not only clutter, but also junk. These areas should be as empty as possible so that buyers can imagine what they would do with the space. Remove anything that is not essential and take it to the storage unit or have a garage sale to disperse of any unused items.

Fixing Up the House Interior

Plumbing and Fixtures

All sink fixtures should look shiny and new. If cleaning doesn't solve this problem, buy new where needed. This doesn't mean you need to buy fancy, this can be accomplished inexpensively and are fairly easy to install. Make sure all the hot and cold water knobs are easy to turn and there are no leaky faucets. If you find a leak, replace the washers.

Check to see that you have good water pressure and there are not stains on any of the porcelain. If you find a difficult stain to remove, consider hiring a cleaning crew to do a thorough clean of your home. They will make those difficult stains go away.

Ceilings, Walls and Painting

Check the ceilings for water stains. Sometimes old leaks leave stains, even after the leak was repaired. Obviously, if there is a leak, you will have to get it repaired, whether it is a plumbing problem or a roof leak.

Look for stains or dirt marks on your walls. You may also have an outdated colour scheme and also note that painting can be your best investment when selling your home. It is inexpensive and you can often do it yourself. Choose colours based on what would appeal to the many different possible buyers. Choosing light neutral colours will help your room appear bright a spacious.

Carpet and Flooring

Unless your carpet appears old and worn, or it is definitely an outdated style or color, you probably should do nothing more than hire a good carpet cleaner. If you do choose to replace it, do so with something inexpensive in a fairly neutral color.

Repair or replace broken floor tiles, but do not spend a lot of money on anything. Remember, you are not fixing up the place for yourself. You want to move. Your goal is to simply repair any minor details so they don't stand out like sore thumbs to potential homebuyers.

Windows and Doors

Check all of your windows to make sure they open and close easily. If not, a spray of WD40 often helps. Make sure there are no cracked or broken windowpanes. If there are, replace them before you begin showing your home.

Do the same things with the doors - make sure they open and close properly, without creaking. If they do, a shot of WD40 on the hinges usually makes the creak go away. Be sure the doorknobs turn easily, and that they are cleaned and polished to look sharp. As buyers go from room to room, someone opens each door and you want to do everything necessary to create a positive impression.

Odour Control

For those who smoke, try not to smoke indoors while trying to sell your home. You could also purchase an ozone spray that helps to remove odours without creating a masking odour.

Pets of all kinds create odours that you may have become used to, but are immediately noticeable to anyone entering the home. For those with cats, be sure to empty kitty litter boxes daily. There are also products that you can sprinkle in a layer below the kitty litter that helps to control odour. For those with dogs, keep the dog outdoors as much as possible. You might also try sprinkling carpet freshener on the carpet on a periodic basis. Vacuum daily as well; both cat and dog hair get everywhere!

Costs of Repairs

Do not do anything expensive, such as remodelling. If possible, use savings to pay for any repairs and improvements - do not go charging up credit cards or obtaining new loans. Remember that part of selling a house is also preparing to buy your next home. You do not want to do anything that will affect your credit scores or hurt your ability to qualify for your next mortgage.

KENTBRAATEN

Century 21 Fusion

cell | [306.370.2629](tel:306.370.2629)

office | [306.653.8222](tel:306.653.8222)

email | kent.braaten@century21.ca

web | www.kentbraaten.com | www.birchhillsrealestate.com