



Seller's market/Buyer's market...it doesn't really matter. You want top dollar for your home, and this is a comprehensive list of things to do before listing your home. This checklist will help you get top dollar for your property. It will also help alleviate some stress once your home goes under contract.

Having Pride of Ownership Will Sell Quicker

The most sale-worthy properties are those that show pride of ownership, with attention to every detail. If you are looking to sell your home soon, we hope this checklist will be of assistance. Even if you're not planning to sell, it may be helpful for spring cleaning or filed away under "house papers" for future reference.

TEMPERATURE —Keep your home at a comfortable temperature.

FRESH AIR —Keep air smelling fresh. Air freshener, candles, or fresh flowers are nice, but don't overdo it.

LIGHT —Have sufficient lighting. If it's daytime, have draperies drawn open. In the evening, turn on the lights prior to showing. Light makes rooms look larger and more appealing.

MUSIC —Soft music can be nice, but loud radios, stereos, or television should be off during the buyers' inspection. If it's a vacation home, showing off the quietness and the sounds of nature would be the best sound of music.

VALUABLES —Having valuable possessions displayed in your home is only inviting trouble. They're best placed out of sight, or out of the home.

CLOSETS —Clothes hung properly; and if used for a storage area, clean out. Of most buyers' requirements, closet space is high on their list.

LAUNDRY —Keep fresh towels and washcloths displayed. Laundry should be done often to keep laundry area clean and fresh.

EXCLUSIONS —Remove or replace items you do not intend to include in the sale. Sure enough, the one item that you wanted to take with you (such as a certain lighting fixture) is just the item the buyers want to include – causing a delay in the negotiation process.

TRASH REMOVAL —All trash cans should be empty and clean

Home Inspection

Bottom line - Buyers are going to have a home inspection. Consider having your home inspected before you list it. This will allow you to see if there are any major repairs needed and you can address them before the house goes on the market. You could make the home inspection list available for potential buyers, as well as a list of the repairs that were done. This will show the buyer that you have been proactive.



When it comes to finding the right home inspector, we can recommend someone who has done home inspections in the area.

What are some things a Home Inspector looks at/for?

- Mold & Mildew
- Damp Basements & Crawl Spaces
- Roof & Chimney
- Plumbing Problems
- Inadequate or Inferior Electrical Systems
- Heating & Cooling
- Structure & Foundation
- Appliances, Smoke Detectors & Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Exterior Surfaces
- Interior Rooms
- Windows, Doors and Wood Trim
- Attic
- Kitchen
- Bathroom

Pre-packing/Clutter

Storage is one of the top items on a buyer's list; therefore, it's necessary to show that your home has the space desired. Organizing and pre-packing items that are not regularly used will create a spacious feeling. Your house needs to be neat, clean and orderly in preparation for sale.

- ___ Does each room in your house feel spacious?
- ___ Is your house clean from top to bottom?
- ___ Pre-pack all items that you do not need while selling your house
- ___ Pre-pack off-season clothing and items
- ___ Decide where you can store your boxes and extra items
- ___ How does your garage look?
- ___ If your basement is unfinished and used for storage, how does it look?

Flooring



Buyers want a home that is move-in ready, and the flooring will reveal how well the home has been maintained. Up-to-date flooring is one of the most attractive features for buyers. Flooring is very important in preparing your home for sale.

- What condition is your carpet in?
- What color is the carpet?
- What style is your carpet – Cut pile or Berber?
- If you need to replace your carpet, do you need to re-do every room? If not, select something that will work with the rest of the carpet in the house.
- What style of vinyl flooring do you have? Does it need to be replaced?
- Do you have hardwood? Does it need to be refinished?
- Do you have hardwood under your carpet?

Exterior



The Exterior creates a lasting impression when buyers drive by your home or view photos online, so show them that your property is well cared for. When buyers see an attractive exterior, they will be excited to view the interior too.

- What major repairs are needed?
- What minor repairs are needed?
- Make a list of what needs to be done
- Sweep or shovel walkways, driveways, patio/deck (salt in the winter)
- Maintain front, back and side yard
- Place flowers or winter arrangements on your front porch and/or in front of the garage
- Remove all festive lights and decorations

Paint



Think NEUTRAL! If your house is painted in very bright or unusual colors, potential buyers may be turned off or feel they can negotiate on your asking price. Neutral colors are restful to the eye.

Buyers want to purchase a home that is move-in ready, and this includes the paint color because they normally want to live in the home awhile before deciding if they want to change the paint color.

- When was the last time you painted your house?
- Do your walls need to be painted a neutral color?
- If they are already neutral do they need a fresh coat of paint?
- Determine whether or not your house has a warm tone or cool tone before selecting your paint color.
- Do you have wallpaper?
- Remove all wallpaper, and paint the wall a neutral color.
- Do your doors and trim need a fresh coat of paint?
- Repair any holes or cracks in the walls and ceilings.
- Put a fresh coat of paint on the ceiling to give the entire room a clean look.

Depersonalizing



This is one of the hardest things to do because, after all, it's your home! However, "depersonalizing" is a major step to selling your home. Since you've made the decision to move, you need to commit yourself and remove your identity from the house. You need to let go emotionally, and this can be a tough process.

Focus on turning your home into a "model home." By disconnecting yourself from your house, you enable prospective buyers to emotionally connect and envision themselves living there. They won't feel as if they are guests in your home.

- Remove all personal and family photos
- Remove all memorabilia
- Pre-pack books and music that do not appeal to a wide range of buyers
- Pre-pack your collections
- Remove and pre-pack any items that could be potentially offensive or disagreeable
- Store away and organize children's toys, games and books

Main Selling Rooms



Buyers want to fulfill a wish list, not a to-do list. When they see a bunch of fix-up projects when walking into your house, they'll turn away faster than you can say "water damage." Oftentimes, it's not one big thing, but a lot of little things that turn buyers away.

If there are problems and a significant to-do list, your house will drop to the bottom of their list, or attract an offer much less than what you're looking for. Present buyers with a complete package that is move-in ready; give them a home they can be comfortable and happy in.

Front Entrance

- How do the rooms look from where you are standing?
- Does your entrance feel spacious?

Kitchen

- How does the kitchen look and feel when you walk into it?
- Make a list of what needs to be done if your kitchen requires some updating
- How do your cupboards look?

Living Room

- Does this room feel inviting?
- How is your furniture positioned?

___ Are there any repairs or upgrades needed in this room?

Dining Room

___ Does this room show its function?

___ Are there any upgrades or repairs needed?

___ How is the furniture positioned?

Main Floor Family Room

___ What is the focal point in this room?

___ Is it apparent?

___ Are there any upgrades or repairs needed?

___ How is the furniture positioned?

Master Bedroom

___ Do you feel calm walking into this room?

___ How is your furniture positioned?

___ Are there any updates or repairs needed?

Master Bathroom

___ Are there any updates or repairs needed?

___ Do you feel relaxed when you walk into this room?

Furniture Placement & Lighting



Proper furniture placement helps present a room to its full potential. Keep in mind the traffic flow and how the buyers will walk through each room. Lighting is also a key factor. Make the home as bright as possible by opening shades and blinds.

When your furniture and lighting are properly placed, you show off the prime features and allow buyers to see the specific function of each room.

- How much furniture is in each room?
- How is your furniture placed?
- What size is your furniture?
- What condition is your furniture in?
- Do you need to rent or purchase new furniture?
- How much lighting do you have in each room?
- What condition are your permanent light fixtures in?

Air Quality/Odor/Pets/Holidays



These items can determine whether a buyer will make an offer on your home. Buyers want to envision themselves living in the house, and if the home is not offered in a manner that will allow them to do that easily, most will move on.

- Inspect your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace if needed
- Avoid cooking with strong seasonings and foods that have a lingering smell
- Remove your pets while the house is on the market
- Remove any signs of the pets (e.g. food and water bowls, toys, litter box, leashes)
- If your pets must stay in the house, hide any sign of your pet during showings
- Keep the litter box out of sight and cleaned daily
- What time of year are you selling?
- Are there going to be any holidays during that time?
- Decorate using items that are simple and nondenominational
- Any holiday specific decorations need to be removed immediately after the celebrations



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SELLER'S CHECKLIST

Questions the Buyer Will Ask

- What year was your house built?
- What additions have you made? Are they permitted?
- Do you have a breaker box or electrical panel?
- Do you have aluminum wiring, or knob and tube?
- How old is your furnace?
- How often do you replace your furnace filters?
- How old is the water heater?
- Do you have a water softener?
- How old is the roof?
- When was the well pump inspected?
(Buyers will normally ask for you to have your water tested)
- When was the septic system inspected?
(Buyers will normally ask for you to have your septic pumped and inspected.)
- What is your average electric bill?
- What is your average heating bill?
- Who do you use for cable and internet?
- Do you get cell service in the home?
- Do you have a survey?
- Do you have a floorplan available?
- If there is an HOA, how do they treat you?

I look forward to working with you on the sale of your home!

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