



- SELLER'S GUIDE -

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I. The Seller's List Of 25 Easy Fix-Ups

The condition of your home will have a huge impact on how fast it sells, and its eventual selling price. Preparing your home for sale can pay you huge dividends. Many fix ups cost very little and consist mostly of time and some elbow grease. Here are some simple tips to help your home show its best.

INDOORS:

1. Clean the entire home thoroughly. Shampoo carpets, wash walls, clean sills, window screens and blinds. Clean out light fixtures and dust shelving. Get detailed here.
2. Clean the clutter from all closets, cupboards and cabinets.
3. Make your rooms look as spacious as possible. Store unnecessary furnishing items that make your home look crowded.
4. Arrange furnishing so that it is easy to walk through your home.
5. Scale down the number of photos, pictures, portraits and posters hanging on walls. Make sure you patch all nail and screw holes.
6. Keep your curtains and draperies open as a rule. You will want your home to show very light and bright. Find ways to screen any unappealing views.
7. Make your kitchen shine. Remove clutter from counter tops and cabinets and store it. Keep your sink clean and clear of any dirty dishes.
8. Clean your refrigerator, inside and out. Make sure that you do the simple things like putting an open box of baking soda in your fridge. Also, remove unnecessary clutter from the door.
9. Clean your oven. Degrease it and keep it looking as good as possible.
10. Keep scented candles burning in the kitchen and bathrooms. Pleasant fragrances will entice buyers to stay longer in your home.
11. Keep bathrooms scrubbed and tidy with fresh soap and neatly hung towels. Try to color coordinate your bathrooms.
12. Keep all sinks in the home clean and repair leaks or slow drains.

13. Go through your entire home and touch up paint. Pay close attention to corners where there is traffic wear. Touch up baseboards, trim and cabinets and cupboards.

14. Place plants or flower arrangements in strategic parts of the home. A splash of color from plants, flowers, pillows or small rugs can give your home some real flair.

15. Make sure that your home is well lit. Put higher wattage bulbs in dark areas or corners. Keep all lights on during showings, even in midday.

16. Use mirrors on walls if necessary to reflect light and make rooms look larger.

17. Make sure that all door knobs and keyed entries are working. Replace any worn knobs or handles.

OUTDOORS:

1. Clean up all around the house. Remove any debris piles such as wood, firewood and landscape trimmings. Trim all hedges, bushes and shrubbery away from the house. Keep all garden beds weeded and mulched.

2. Put some color by your home's entrance with potted flowers. Keep them watered and looking attractive.

3. Keep all walkways clear, clean and in good repair. This includes your driveways and any parking areas.

4. Keep all outdoor furniture clean and in good repair.

5. Clean your gutters and roof. Keep moss or algae from growing on, in or around them.

6. Keep your yard and lawn areas clean and in good health. A green lawn makes a home look great. Keep your lawn edged and free from weeds.

7. Repair any broken windows, screens, shutter or awnings.

8. Clean your garage area. Remove clutter and make it look organized and as spacious as possible. Try to have nothing in your garage but cars.

By following these 25 fix up tips, you can do a lot to increase the perceived value of your home and make it stand out above the competition!

II. Avoid The Top 10 Selling Mistakes

Serious about selling your home? Before you sign anything, read about these common mistakes that home sellers make:

- 1. PRICING TOO HIGH:** It's no secret, price is everything. Overpricing does more to discourage buyers than any other single factor. When you overprice, you put your home in competition with homes that may be newer, larger or have more amenities than yours. You help your competition sell their home. This leads to long days on the market, and costs you, the seller, money in the long run. Make sure you get your pricing advice from a professional agent who knows the market.
- 2. POOR CONDITION:** A home that is in ill repair, or otherwise poor condition, does not excite buyers. A home like this is looked at by buyers as a work project and money pit. Having your home in good repair and great showing condition will significantly improve your chances for a sale at top dollar value. Having your home pre-inspected by a termite and dry rot inspector will also have a positive impact on buyers.
- 3. POOR CURB APPEAL:** Most buyers today want to drive by. If your home is an attractive drive-by, it will gain more attention and certainly more showings. Doing the little things to help your home's curb appeal will make a huge difference.
- 4. DREARY DARK HOMES DON'T SELL:** Buyers like updated, light and bright homes. Dark carpets, paint, and curtains are often buyer turn-offs. Go through your home and remove clutter; touch up and update paint, counter tops, and carpets. Open your home up and make sure the sun shines in. Offensive odors from pets and smoking are also huge turn-offs to most buyers. Rid your home of offensive smells by burning scented candles and create a pleasant aroma. The most important rooms to concentrate on are the living room, family room, kitchen and master bedroom. Your entire home's atmosphere is set off by these rooms.
- 5. DON'T OVER-IMPROVE:** Get your home in good showing condition, but don't over do it. Huge projects such as complete remodels of kitchens, adding decks, and expanding room sizes may not pay back your investment. Before you jump into a huge improvement project, get some good advice.

6. BE FINANCEABLE: Bad roofs, exterior paint, or structural problems may make your home un-financeable. The wider the scope of financing that your home can qualify for, the higher the overall market value. Remember — government programs like VA and FHA will be the pickiest.

7. GET GOOD ADVICE AND GOOD MARKET EXPOSURE: Hiring a professional agent will help you get your home priced right, and will also get you started with the best fix ups. A strong agent will get your home exposed to the largest number of potential buyers. Paying the agent fee is often the least expensive part of selling your home. Trying to sell your home yourself can be costly. Most 'for sale by owner' homes close for less than comparable homes listed with an agent, and you have no representation.

8. DON'T BE PRESENT DURING SHOWINGS: When your home is being shown, go for a drive or a walk. Take yourself, your family, and pets and let the agent and their clients have the freedom they need. An agent can always do their best job of showing your home when you are not underfoot. Buyers are more at ease and much more likely to spend time looking at your home's features and benefits.

9. LET YOUR AGENT DO THE NEGOTIATING: If there is ever a good reason to have a veteran agent working for you, it's during the negotiation of your home sale. A good negotiator can mean thousands of dollars to you, and will protect your interests. Don't let your emotions run wild during negotiations. Try to separate your emotions from your business side. Remain cool and calm during this time.

10. ACT FAST WITH OFFERS: When you do get an offer on your home, act quickly and decisively. Letting offers sit around without acting can be a huge mistake. Things can change quickly in the mind of a prospective buyer. Acting quickly while the excitement and interest level are at a high point can be very important. Typically, a buyer's motivation level decreases with time. Buyers' remorse can even set in. Acting in a timely manner is essential.

III. Finding Your Home's Best Selling Price

Statistics show that the best opportunity to sell your home is often within the first few weeks of putting it on the market. This can be good news, or bad, depending on your motivation. Some homes sell right away, while others sit on the market for months without a single offer.

To maximize **your** selling opportunity, it is important that your home be priced right. What is the right price? Many factors will determine your home's best asking price. Our current real estate market has a lot to do with it. Using sound judgment, research, and experience, a good agent can help you determine the right price for your home. They will help you evaluate your location, the recent sold data, current market trends, and your home's special features that set it apart from the competition.

"What's wrong with pricing my home a little high?"

Price your home too high and most buyers won't even bother looking at it. Over priced homes tend to sell the competition first. This scares away many qualified buyers simply because they can go elsewhere and get more house for the money. As the house sits on the market, people will shy away from it thinking there must be something wrong with the home.

Should I under-price my home?

Price it too low and you could lose thousands of dollars. There are times when you will attract multiple bidders making multiple offers, but this is only recommended when you need a faster-than-average sale.

In most circumstances, pricing your home correctly from the very beginning will net you the best results in both time and money.

IV. Questions To Ask Before Listing

Choosing the right Realtor to sell your home can be difficult, especially when they all sound so convincing. The following list of questions will not only help you select the right Realtor, but will also help you get the very best from the agent you choose.

1. Do you work as a **full-time** Realtor?
2. Do you handle **incoming property inquiries**?
3. How many **listings** do you have at this time, and how does this work to my benefit?
4. Do you have a **help system** to see that no details are overlooked?
5. How many potential **buyers and sellers** do you speak with each day? Each week? Each year?
6. In what ways will you encourage **other Realtors** to sell my home?
7. Do you have **references** that I can check?
8. How will you set my listing **apart** from the crowd with out costing me more money?
9. What is my property **worth**? What listing price do you recommend? How did you arrive at that price?
10. How will you assist in my **relocation plans**?
11. Do you have a written **plan of action** designed specifically to sell my property?
12. How will you give interested buyers **24-hour access** to my property?
13. How will you make information on my property available to **out-of-town buyers**?
14. How do you promote properties on the **Internet**?

V. 7 Essential Steps To Selling Success

Knowing and using these 7 essential, yet simple steps is crucial to achieving the best deal possible – whether you decide to sell your home yourself or hire a professional real estate agent to help you.

1. Understanding the "Total Market" concept of positioning your home to attract the greatest number of buyers.
2. Using the "Total Market" concept to accurately appraise the value of your home. (The standard CMA is simply not enough!)
3. Pricing Your Home to Appear lower than market value, yet actually asking for more than market value (This one crucial step will get buyers and agents flocking to your door!)
4. Properly advertise and market your home – Using New Technology (Don't use the same old boring ads everyone else is using, and that nobody looks at!)
5. "Detailing" your home for sale. (Your goal is to set your home apart from every other home on the market – instantly attracting buyers to your home.)
6. Learn how to qualify buyers and negotiate offers. (Since we are talking about your money here, the risks of not knowing how to properly qualify and negotiate are too great to ignore or leave to chance!)
7. Understanding and helping the buyer obtain financing, removing contingencies, and closing the sale. (You need a strategy to avoid and eliminate potential problems in escrow, which can undermine your sale!) The better you understand and systematically apply these seven steps, the better the results you will get. And better results means more money, in less time, with the least amount of hassle possible. Isn't that what you ultimately want, whether you decide to sell your home yourself or use the professional services of a licensed agent to help you?