

Selling a home in today's market is getting tougher and tougher. There are a ton of homes on the market to choose from, so what are the chances a prospective buyer will decide yours has more to offer than the others?

Here are 10 areas every seller should recognize as potential ways to improving their chances of finally making that sale:

1. Clean It Up, Inside and Out

Nobody likes to visit a house where the yard is a disaster and the interior is even worse! The first thing that comes to the minds of these buyers is the amount of work they're going to have to put into the home just to have it meet their standards. A messy exterior and a disorganized interior will send buyers scurrying faster than the mice collecting in your basement. Clean it up and immediately increase the likeability factor in your property.

2. Springtime is Best

Although the current market is extremely stingy, experts still say that the best time to sell your home is in the spring months. This is the time of year flowers are in bloom, so your yard will look as pleasing as ever, and the home purchasing bug is as abundant as the pollen collecting on your car. Plus, the weather is the best for home shopping. The hot and muggy days of summer are still long off and everyone's coming out of their winter doldrums. Nature's rebirth is a sign for things to be renewed, and that includes purchasers looking for a new home!

3. Get a Second Opinion

Now that you have tended to the yard and scrubbed your bathrooms and counters to a gleam, your home looks spotless, right? Don't be so sure. Today's purchasers are a finicky lot and if there is one thing wrong with your home, be it a speck of dust on your mantelpiece or a broken oven door handle, they will spot it and believe me, they will make a note of it. Have a trusted friend or co-worker stop by for a fresh perspective on your property. Ask them if there are any areas of concern that you may have missed. That pile of leaves in your back yard may not look so bad to you, but to a buyer, it may scream that the current homeowner is lazy.

4. Make Your Home Warmer

When buyers walk into a home, they want it to feel like a home, meaning, they want it to feel warm and cozy - and I'm not talking about the temperature! If your home has a lived-in and loved feel that presents an atmosphere of comfort and joy, then prospective buyers will know it.

5. Brighten It Up

Nobody wants to live in a dungeon, so don't allow your prospects to walk into one. Replace your light bulbs with the highest wattage bulbs permitted by the fixtures and make sure your lampshades, light diffusers and covers are all well-cleaned. This is extremely important for buyers who like to look at homes at night. Plus, get rid of your bedroom's blood-red walls. It's proven that neutral colors not only brighten up the space, but they make the room more appealing to buyers.

6. Make a History for Your Home

Your prospective buyers are going to have a ton of questions for you. Questions like:

When was the home built?

How old is the roof?

How old is the air conditioner?

Does the basement have water issues?

Finding the answers to these questions and more can require some legwork on your part, but it will show buyers how much thought you put into them if you have a nicely detailed printout for them to take with them detailing your home's history.

7. Spend Money to Make Money

This is a topic that can generate some groans! The reality is, nobody wants to purchase someone else's headache, so repair the things you know about before putting your home on the market. If you have an upstairs bathroom leak that stains the basement's ceiling tiles, get the leak fixed and replace the tiles with new ones. Fixing visible leaks will help your home's probability of selling sooner rather than never. A home with no repairs needed is instantly move-in-able and that's exactly what today's buyers are looking for.

8. First Impressions Work

If you are home when the buyers are looking with their realtor, welcome them warmly into your home. If you are not home during a walkthrough, make your entrance way as appealing as possible. Try painting your front door a bright and welcoming color, or clean it thoroughly if it is a wooden door. Well-tended flowers and plants also showcase friendliness and lend a genuine atmosphere. This is how the buyer is going to make their first impression on your home, don't ruin it.

9. Sell Before You Move

If you can manage it, sell your home before you move. Buyers have a harder time picturing themselves living in a space when the home is bare. If your furniture is still there, it gives them decorating ideas and allows them to visualize how their furniture will look in the home. Once they begin making these types of associations, subconsciously they are making a purchasing decision.

10. Be Open for Negotiation

In this turbulent market, coming off as non-negotiable to a buyer will have terrible implications. The last thing a buyer wants to hear from your realtor is that the price is "firm." You immediately pigeon-hole yourself and erase a wide percentage of your prospects. Place a reasonable price-tag on your home and work around it. By being flexible, you can increase your chances of selling. But you don't have to compromise too much. By following the first nine steps listed here, you can also have a better chance of keeping the final purchase price as close to your original listing price as possible.