

## Thinking About Selling?

### Six Steps To Give Sellers A Competitive Edge in A Buyer's Market

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Recently the housing market has become much more competitive, which is normally the case when we experience a “buyer’s market,” typically seen in the spring and summer months. Basically the term “buyers market” is trendy real estate jargon used to describe communities with homes remaining on the market for longer periods of time giving buyers more bargaining power due to the number of available homes outnumbering the quantity of available buyers. As a seller, your challenge is to turn a buyer’s market to your advantage. How you ask? Simple! The right price is crucial, because overpricing your home can cause you to discourage potential buyers and lengthen the time that your home stays on the market. However, there is another aspect equally important to giving your home a competitive edge that is often overlooked and in most cases can be the easiest and cheapest: creative eye appeal. That’s right, making your home appealing to buyers. Sounds like a no brainer right?

One common mistake that many homeowners make is that they try to sell “THEIR home.” The brutal truth is, once on the market, your home is no longer your personal keepsake box, it’s a product that must be marketable to others. That is why it is imperative for sellers to transform their home into an environment that buyers can’t resist by creating a home that is so attractive, charming, cozy, inviting, comfortable and exciting that a buyer will be so captivated by the marketed lifestyle that they will be compelled to buy.

Just a few improvements in your home’s presentation can make your property distinctive and memorable to buyers.

**1. Eliminate clutter.** There should only be a few exquisite and well-placed accessories on tables, desks, chests, etc. Also, clear kitchen and bathroom counters and furniture of everything except decorative accessories. Put the personal things--cosmetics, toiletries, clothes, bills, papers, and homework—out of sight. Tuck wastebaskets under counters or inside cabinets. Clutter and personal belongings detract from the important features of the home.

**2. Create a color theme.** If you embark on any investment decorating, like painting, wallpaper, draperies or new furniture purchases, create a color theme that’s consistent. Wall-to-wall carpeting should be the same throughout the house. Neutral colors are best to please all tastes.

**3. Rearrange the furniture.** Just the slightest readjustments can make a big difference. Pull the furniture from against the walls to create a more intimate setting. Move furniture from one room to another. That extra armchair in the living room may create a cozy sitting area in the guest bedroom.

**4. Create custom spaces.** Luxury master bathrooms, decorator kitchens, built-in cabinets, computer workstations, exercise rooms, and children’s play areas are the kinds of features that generate sales appeal. Even if you don’t have these specific custom spaces, you can fashion them or suggest the potential for creating them. Accessories, mirrors, plants and fluffy new towels can generate a feeling of luxury even in a plain-Jane bathroom. Turn an extra bedroom into an exercise room if you’ve got the equipment, or a loft space into a child’s play area or hobby center.

**5. Keep it clean and pristine.** Dust, vacuum, mop and polish on a regular basis. You’re not selling the furniture, but a high shine on wood furniture and floors can make a room sing. Touch up nicks on walls and make sure the porcelain sinks and tubs and metallic fixtures shine. Windows should sparkle. Keep yards and landscaping neat and attractive. Add color spots of flowers to perk up entryways and yards.

**6. Consult with a professional.** There are decorator professionals trained to “stage” a home for sale. They are able to offer an objective view of what buyers are looking for in your competitive market. Depending upon location, neighborhood, demographics and price range, the special touches that turn on buyers may range from luxurious master bathrooms and gourmet kitchens to children’s play areas or home offices.

Be sure you ask yourself this one vital question: “who is my target buyer?” Once you know who you are marketing to you don’t have to spend a great deal of money to give your property the competitive edge. Just try to imagine the kind of lifestyle your target buyer would enjoy, and use a few decorative touch-ups to create it. Good luck and remember you are selling a lifestyle not yours specifically!



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