

# Preparing Your House

As you prepare to sell your house, I wanted you to have some tips that will help you obtain the maximum value for your property. Please take a few minutes to look over this material.

## **Why the first five minutes are critical:**

Homebuyers inspect a number of similar homes at similar prices. They begin making value judgements from the moment they drive up to each house. Their first impression begins with the yard, the driveway and the front door. Once inside, buyers can sense the presence of pride of ownership or its absence.

It has been said that buyers make up their minds in the first five minutes, then spend the rest of the time rationalizing their decision. As you prepare to sell your house, providing an impeccable, move-in condition must be your priority.

## **Not making important improvements to your house, can cost your thousands of dollars:**

When buyers look at a home they overestimate the cost of necessary changes such as carpeting and paint. If a buyer estimates that cost of new carpeting at \$10,000, they will want to deduct that amount from the price they offer you. In reality, carpeting can completely transform your home for maybe \$4000, perhaps less. In this case, not installing carpeting could actually cost you \$6000.

Even worse, buyers may totally pass on your house because they can't visualize what your house could look like with the needed changes.

## **Buyers buy what they see, not what it could be.**

We live in our homes one way, we market them another way. Please use the attached information to make a to do list for what you need to do to make your house more appealing. Staging your home to enhance it's appeal will give you a competitive edge.

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## **Staging your house:**

**The psychology of the buyer** - Buying a house can be exhausting. By the time potential buyers arrive on our doorstep, they have probably already packed and readied their own homes for sale. At this point, all they are looking for is a clean, peaceful house to purchase and move into – somewhere where they can relax, feel comfortable and make it their own. Most buyers don't want to do anything to a house initially, at least for the first few months. Their energy is tapped and their resources strapped. They just want to move in and sit back for a while. Let your house be the haven they fall in love with. By staging your house, you'll immediately pull it ahead of the competition. Buyer make decisions with every inch they walk. So go over your house inch by inch. So make sure that your house is staged the best that it can be. Buyers are much more demanding about what they want to buy and what they expect to see in the market. Buyers will be honest, even brutal, as they assess your house. If your house does not appeal to the agents, they will pass it in favor of a house they think that they can sell.

When you stage your home, you're investing in your most important possession and earning back your equity. If your house sells for thousands more after you buy a new sink and countertops, you are ahead of the game. By staging you house, you will have more to invest in you new home. Many staging ideas cost nothing. This is where the creativity of staging comes in, and it works. Stage it from the get-go. You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

**Outside the home** – The first impression when a buyer drives up to your house is critical. Walk across the street and look at it through the eyes of the buyer. Pretend you have never seen the house before. Be tough on yourself. What do you see? You'll probably notice things that you have not seen for years. You must assess your house and property with an unemotional eye. You might want to take pictures inside and outside of your house. Overlooked trouble spots are glaringly apparent in a photograph: piles of mail, a sooty fireplace, a tired bathroom, the old compost heap, your falling down dog house, and the wisteria blocking the front porch.

**What buyers want** – Light bright rooms, clean rooms, uncluttered rooms.

**What clutter is** – Too many books, clothes lying around a room, knick-knacks, too many plants, too many pieces of furniture in a room, too many accessories dominating a room, too many kitchen appliances on the counters, all those stacked magazines on the kitchen desk, papers in your home office, messy book cases, shoes left out, too many family pictures, too many throw pillows, collections, etc. On the outside – too much patio furniture, too many plants on the patio and deck, barbecue equipment, lawn mowers, rakes, shovels, tools left out, dead plants in the yard, plants not yet planted in those black plastic pots, unused building blocks and stepping stones and paint cans.

## **Staging is -**

- About using items, accessories, and pieces of furniture in new ways. Audition things in a new role!
- About living life in an easier way, with less around you
- About using what you have to create a new “set” in your home
- About putting many extra things away
- About packing those collections up early
- About decluttering
- About cleaning up your property
- About the colors you use inside and out
- About being committed to getting your house ready for sale
- About clearing your rooms – one by one, so buyers can envision themselves living there.
- Turn on the lights and have the window blinds and curtains open
- Windows should be spotlessly clean
- Remove screens from the front of the house, to improve the curb appeal (this won't work with some windows)
- All bathroom and kitchen fixtures and counters should be cleaned each day
- If the carpets have not been steam cleaned in the past 2 years, then now is the time to do it.
- All door handles should be clean and in good repair
- All joints between tiles should be clean
- KEY POINT – Be sure that there are no pet odors

## **Where to store all the stuff I took out when I staged?**

- Throw it away
- Pack it away
- Rent a storage unit or pod
- Have a garage sale
- Give it to charity
- Put it in the attic
- Stack it neatly in the garage
- As a last resort, use a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> bedroom as a storeroom

### **Impress the buyers –**

- The closets should look roomy and shelves should not be cluttered
- Don't have the walls crowded with growth charts, kid's art and posters of characters or celebrities.
- Buyers will be impressed by floors that are clean and sparkle
- Buyers love light and bright kitchens. Kitchens are the most important room in any house.
- Have your master bedroom look open, airy and romantic
- Open the windows when you can and let in some fresh air
- Buyers will be disappointed by bags of pet food and stacks of bottled water on the floor