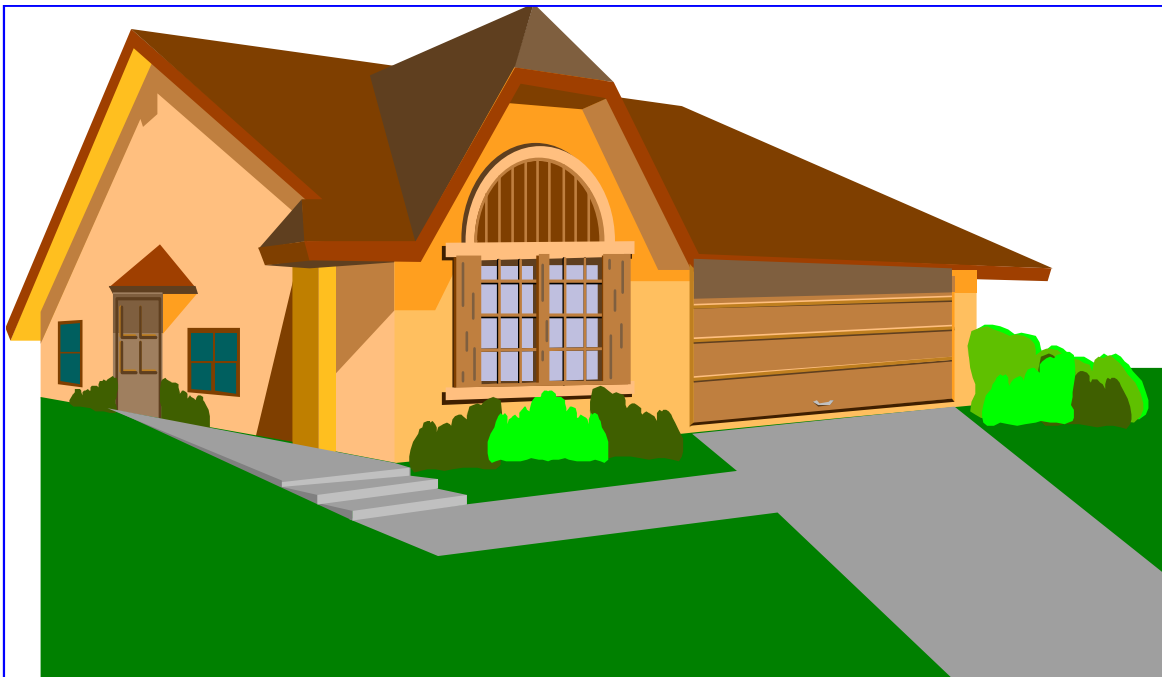


# *Staging Tips for Sellers*

*How to  
prepare your home  
for a quicker sale  
and higher price!*



**Action**  
Team Real Estate

List It

Sell It

Move On

The prospective buyers we bring to your home look for reasons to love it! They want your home to be the one they buy. But at the same time, it's human nature that buyers will scout for flaws. The more they find, the more they will want a reduced price — or simply move on to another home for sale.



Unless your home is priced equal to or lower than others on the market with similar features, your challenge is clear. You must set it apart. Set the stage for prospective buyers to see the real value that your home has to offer.

A home with no major defects, if also well maintained, can be made more attractive and distinctive inexpensively. Wisely done, the small amount you spend now will come back to you as a higher price and a quicker sale.

Not all tips will apply to your home. No seller can accomplish every suggestion offered. And there is no such thing as perfection in preparing your home, so simply do your best. Professional staging of your home can be advisable in many cases. The cost varies with the staging company and the services needed. If you have questions about any aspects of preparing your home or property for showing, please ask!

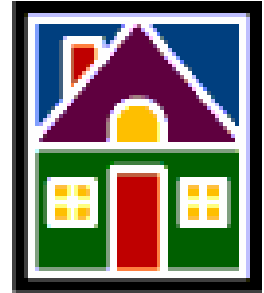
— Rod Rawlings, Broker



- [ ] **List the finest features** of your home, the ones that you especially enjoy. What can you do to emphasize each one?
- [ ] **List the negative features** of your home, the ones that trouble you. What can you do to minimize each one?
- [ ] **Inform and involve children.** They can help or hinder the process of showing your home. If well motivated, children can cope with the loss of privacy when your home is on the market and assist in preparing and maintaining your home.
- [ ] **Record the cost of fix-ups** to deduct from the amount you receive from the sale, thus lowering your capital gain tax. This applies only if you have not lived in the home for two of the past five years.
- [ ] **Attend to neglected repairs** -- broken window locks, dripping faucets, etc. Rust, rot, cracks and creaks cost much less to fix now than when you sell.
- [ ] **Clean to a sparkle**, bottom to top, nook to cranny. Use a maid service if you have no time to do the work yourself.
- [ ] **Have a yard sale**, or make gifts to a church or charity. Your accumulated treasures can clutter closets, attics, garages, storage areas and detract from usable space.
- [ ] **Oversized furniture** should be sold, loaned or stored out of sight. If you have an overfurnished room, the unnecessary pieces should be eliminated in some way. Provide s-p-a-c-i-o-u-s-n-e-s-s for your buyer's eye.
- [ ] **Light beats dark** -- every time! Almost every home has a dark room. Try brighter bulbs, sheer curtains or lighter paint if necessary.



- [ ] **Unsightly views** outside may be beyond your control. If the neighbor's trash cans are seen from your window, try curtains, shutters, even glass shelves!
- [ ] **Odors** familiar to homeowners can hit buyers in a different way. Step out of your home for 30 minutes and return with a fresh sense of smell. Ask a good friend to give your home a sniff test.
- [ ] **Enhance the buyer's imagination** in subtle ways. For example, if you have a secretary's desk, open it and show a writing pad and box of stationery.
- [ ] **Button up and put away** any whimsical or unconventional eccentricities that may reflect your personal likes, but may be turn-offs to your prospective buyer.
- [ ] **Stark and sterile rooms** are unwelcoming. The same is true of cluttered and disordered areas. Find a happy medium.
- [ ] **Traffic flow** between rooms should be easy. Perhaps four or more persons will be walking through during showings, so push pieces back a foot or two, if needed, to make an accommodating throughway.
- [ ] **Stairways** need good lighting, safe handrails, clutter-free surfaces and carpeting that is well-tacked.
- [ ] **Cathedral ceilings** are prized, but buyers often fail to see them! Within the decor of your home, choose highlights to draw the eye upwards — lights, mobile, flowers, etc.
- [ ] **Flooring**, worn and scratched, gives a sense of shabbiness. Buff or refinish wood floors and replace worn carpet. You may re-dye discolored carpet.



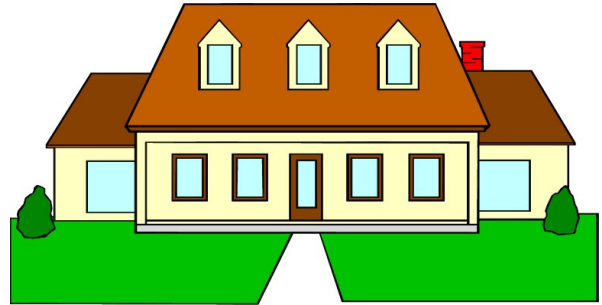
- [ ] **Television** sets can rule a room. Since buyers don't purchase your TV, try to position it in an inconspicuous place. (Always have it off during showings!)
- [ ] **Family pictures** on display should be kept to a minimum. The buyer needs to visualize his or her family living there, not yours.
- [ ] **Music and games** evoke good feelings. If someone plays an instrument, such as a guitar, show it! If you play board games, let guests see a game on display.
- [ ] **Attics** are not for dusty boots and spider webs when showing your home. Be sure lights are turned up, wasp nests are torn down, and mouse traps are out of sight.
- [ ] **"Scramble" showings** happen. Despite best attempts to provide advance notice, some prospective buyers are "now or never." **Action Team Real Estate** always gives you as much advance notice as possible, but please have a family plan to quickly set things in showable shape if necessary.
- [ ] **A welcoming sign** to arriving buyer prospects is the special attention given to your front entry. If the entrance is drab, try planting colorful flowers in the ground or in pots.
- [ ] **Focus on one point** in the entry. A striking vision sets the stage. Antique vases, planters, etc. work well. Replace doormats that are old and worn. What about a simple "Welcome" mat?
- [ ] **No Entry Hall?** You may create a functional one. Rearrange furniture, use narrow tables or tall plants to make a partial partition.
- [ ] **Porches** are rare here. If you have one, set yours off with a rocker, rattan furniture or other suitable pieces to show the joy of being under roof, and yet outside.



- [ ] **Mirrors** hung in a narrow area can effectively double the apparent space. Keep mirrors sparkling clean.
- [ ] **Clean... cleaner... cleanest!** Buyers inspect bathrooms closely. Hang fresh towels and warm pictures. Place some fancy soaps and, if space allows, a magazine rack.
- [ ] **Shower curtains, liners & mats** should show no signs of age, and be coordinated with your bathroom decor.
- [ ] **Bedrooms** should beckon buyers to settle in for comfort. Use bedspreads, pretty pillows, colorful sheets and reading chairs, and add other touches of private living to create more interest in your home.
- [ ] **Table settings** help buyers visualize living in your home. A morning showing can have a setting for a luncheon. An afternoon showing could feature your best china.
- [ ] **Small dining rooms** seem larger if you clear surfaces, remove table leaves and unneeded side chairs, or place the table against a wall. Lights and mirrors help to open smaller areas.
- [ ] **A clean kitchen** is good, but a sterile kitchen is bad. It's OK to have food! Cheerful kitchens have fruit and nut bowls, hanging baskets, and colorful cookware.
- [ ] **Super smells** of cookies or bread baking, scents of clove, nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger are always favorites. Before a scheduled showing, bake if you wish, or toss spices into a pot and brew to suit.
- [ ] **Eat-in areas** are popular. Make the most of yours by accenting with place settings, fruit or nut bowls, and casual items such as magazines or puzzles.



- [ ] **Kitchen windows** need accents. If sunlight comes through, try a planter with chives, parsley, or other herbs. If a feeder outside will attract birds, do it!
- [ ] **Counter space** in kitchens is precious, so make the most of yours. Stash small appliances in cupboards or shelves.
- [ ] **Small kitchens** are utilitarian, but to be more attractive, they need to seem larger. All white works well. White walls, ceilings and cabinets enlarge the room.
- [ ] **Porches, decks, patios & lanais** are fresh-air living rooms in Florida. Decorate them appropriate to this setting. Repair any torn screens.
- [ ] **Uncluttered, please!** In the garage or play yard, hang tools and implements, and put away toys.
- [ ] **Remove the car** from a one-car garage. If it's a two-car garage, leave no more than one car inside. People need space to walk.
- [ ] **Driveways** help form the first impression. Toys and garden implements ought to be removed. Take out weeds, replace gravel or shell, repair cracks.
- [ ] **Lawns** need lots of water in Florida's heat, and twice the usual mowing while your home is on the market. Pruning and edging are important. Unkempt yards send the wrong signal.
- [ ] **Yards** can be dressed with flowering plants, volleyball nets, horseshoe stakes, outdoor furniture, picnic tables, other items to help buyers picture themselves living and playing there.



- [ ] **Pool water** should be clear and sparkling, otherwise buyers suspect owner neglect or poor equipment. The extra cost of operating pool filtering equipment before and during the showing is well worth it.
- [ ] **Storage space** may be adequate in your home, but if it seems stuffed to the limit, buyers may get the wrong impression. Rearrange stored items, dispose of some, or store off site.
- [ ] **Clear out** last season's wardrobe, move shoes off the floor and into racks, and find space for some empty hangers. Also find room to hang a bag of potpourri or cedar chips.
- [ ] **Underbed cardboard storage** boxes can be lifesavers. If you're in a rush, sweep things in boxes and stash out of sight till buyers have gone.
- [ ] **Utility rooms** are for dirty clothes, but buyers shouldn't see or smell them. Put soiled clothes in the washer, whether or not it's time to wash.
- [ ] **Other ideas?** \_\_\_\_\_

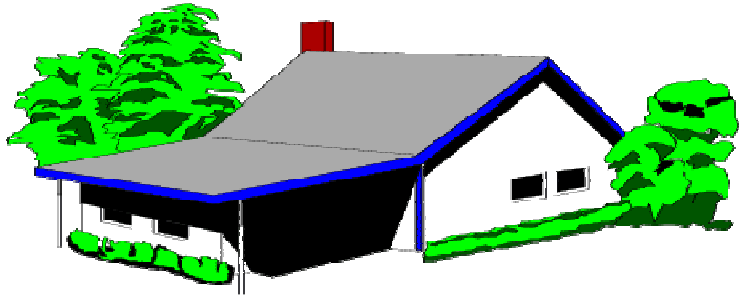
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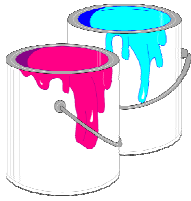
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### Just Before the Buyers Arrive

- [ ] **Open the home.** Shuttered and draped windows or closed doors can make prospective buyers feel like unwelcome intruders.
- [ ] **Lights** should be on in every room -- even garages, attics and closets!
- [ ] **Hold back on deodorizers** and room sprays, which make some people sneeze.
- [ ] **Air out** your home 30 minutes before showing, if possible. Leave time for the temperature to return to the comfort zone.
- [ ] **Temperature** is critical. If it's hot outside, buyers expect to be cooled. If it's chilly, they want to be warmed. Try not to disappoint them.
- [ ] **Background music** can create atmosphere. Pleasant sounds, not too loud, and preferably instrumental, can set the mood.
- [ ] **Pets** can frighten, bother or offend some prospective buyers. Confine the dog, if possible, and put out the cat.
- [ ] **Children** will say and do the darndest things! If possible, have children visit neighbors or relatives during showings.
- [ ] **If you are home** when it's being shown, please take your leave gracefully but soon after welcoming guests. And don't volunteer information.



## Which Improvements Pay Back at Sale (and Help You Sell Sooner)?

These improvements show an investment return at sale from positive 642 percent to **negative 35 percent**. The table is from two sources: (1) "Prepare to Sell" study by HomeGain®, and (2) "Cost vs. Value" annual study by the National Association of Realtors®.

<u>Improvement</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Value Gain</u>	<u>Payback %</u>
Lighten and brighten	\$134	\$901	+642%
Clean and de-clutter	\$306	\$2,130	+595%
Landscape front/back yards	\$420	\$1,537	+258%
Repair electrical or plumbing problems	\$337	\$928	+152%
Professional Staging of Home	\$1,851	\$2,882	+66%
Paint interior walls	\$1,555	\$2,430	+52%
Repair damaged flooring	\$1,700	\$2,402	+39%
Paint exterior walls	\$2,189	\$3,020	+32%
Replace Carpeting	\$2,728	\$3,478	+24%
Bathroom Remodel	\$8,275	\$8,655	+5%
Major Kitchen Remodel	\$39,301	\$39,750	+1%
Master Suite Addition	\$59,387	\$58,800	-1%
Roofing Replacement	\$11,401	\$10,600	-7%
Deck Addition	\$6,836	\$5,960	-13%
Sunroom Addition	\$30,535	\$22,600	-26%
Family Room Addition	\$52,168	\$38,000	-27%
Window Replacement	\$9,357	\$6,065	-35%



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