

The SRES® PROFESSIONAL

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sres.realtor



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NOTE: Social distancing necessitates altering your real estate business activities, especially when working with clients who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

The information provided in this newsletter is for informational purposes only and shall not constitute a promotion, endorsement or approval of any of the products mentioned herein. Further, nothing contained in this newsletter is intended to or shall constitute medical advice. You should consult a healthcare professional before using any medical device or health product.



FEATURED MEMBER BENEFIT

2 Blogs for Agents and Consumers!

Did you know that SRES® designees have not one but two blogs focused on the senior market—one for consumers and another for designees?



For consumers

Are you looking for senior-oriented content to share with customers and prospects on your social media channels or for email marketing? You'll want to bookmark seniorsresource.realtor/blog/blog-home.

Articles are posted twice a month covering a wide range of topics. Plus, readers are often reminded to turn to an SRES® designee for their real estate needs.

For SRES® designees

For news and updates on topics geared to agents and seniors specialists, turn to the SRES® blog at sres.realtor/blog/blog-home.

Connect with Other SRES® Designees on Facebook



Take advantage of the [Seniors Real Estate Specialists® \(SRES®\) Referrals & Networking Community](#) on Facebook, where you can exchange tips, news, and referrals with over 450 other SRES® designees. It's a rapidly growing community and a great way to network with other senior specialists!

Are You an SRES® All-Star?

This issue of *The SRES® Professional* features numerous insights from our 2020 Outstanding Service Award (OSA) recipient, Jill Hart. We'd love to know if you, or someone you know, are delivering exceptional service to seniors!

Consider submitting an application for this award when the nominating process begins in May.

> Learn more at bit.ly/SRES-OSA.



7 WAYS TO SIMPLIFY THE PRE-LISTING PROCESS

No one enjoys preparing their home for sale. It's a process that usually gets harder with age. If your clients are older and have lived in their homes for decades, they've probably accumulated lots of stuff and haven't made many recent updates.

It's a stressful time. How can you help ease the pressure?

This is a situation where SRES® designees can shine! For insights, we asked Jill Hart, our most recent SRES® Outstanding Service Award recipient, to share several of her favorite tips and advice for simplifying the pre-listing process.

Jill is affiliated with Blue Ridge Real Estate, which is based in Hendersonville, NC, and serves the areas surrounding Asheville in the western part of the state. In 2015, she entered the real estate industry specifically to help seniors navigate late-in-life moves.

Typically, Jill starts working with people a year or two before they're ready to move and long before they've signed a listing agreement. It's all about nurturing relationships and learning how their plans to move are shaping up at the early stages.

Unless the client is facing a crisis that requires an immediate move, the pre-listing process can span months. Here are seven ways to make it flow easier.

1. Create short to-do lists.

Moving is overwhelming. It's much easier to tackle everything in bite-size pieces. Jill's rule is to give clients a written list of not more than three tasks to focus on.

Depending on the situation, the items on their to-do list might include "Clean off kitchen counters." or "Re-home the extra furniture."

Be sure the list is in writing and tell them, "Call me back when these things are done."

For each client, Jill envisions an entire process, with a logical set of steps. "The sequence is essential," says Hart. "But it's counterproductive to lay out the whole plan. Instead, I help clients tackle it in small chunks."

2. Help clients prioritize.

It's also essential to help clients focus on the highest priority projects. Otherwise, Jill finds they may decide they need to clean out the garage or an attic while ignoring imposing, random piles all over the house, which is a much bigger issue.

She also points out that any client, regardless of age, may need help staying focused. Even younger sellers cannot see their own clutter. They need help understanding how clutter will affect buyers' perceptions and making a plan to keep it under wraps during showings.

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7 WAYS TO SIMPLIFY THE PRE-LISTING PROCESS

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3. Show versus tell.

If you're having a hard time convincing clients that they need to clean and declutter their home, try showing them "before" and "after" photos of other clients' pre-listing preparations. Sometimes, a picture is worth a thousand words and makes it easier to embrace the process.

You might even be able to help a client see possible results using photos of their own home. For example, [BoxBrownie.com](https://www.boxbrownie.com) offers a virtual item removal service. Snap a pic of one or more rooms and submit them for digital decluttering.

BoxBrownie charges \$4 to \$8 an image to remove items. It's an interesting way to help clients see how their home can be transformed and appear more attractive to potential buyers.

Even if clients don't need convincing, Jill likes to take "before" photos. Once the listing photos are taken, these images can be a rewarding reminder of how far they've come in the process of selling their home.

BEFORE



AFTER



Images courtesy of [BoxBrownie.com](https://www.boxbrownie.com)

4. Share helpful tips.

Jill also provides suggestions for making it easier to tackle the projects on clients' to-do list items. For example, when decluttering a room, she tells them, "only worry about the flat surfaces right now."

This makes it easier to focus on clearing out all the items on countertops, tables, nightstands, mantles, etc. instead of cleaning out cabinets, drawers, and closets.

Of course, if they're moving into smaller quarters, it will also be essential to go through the items hidden from view at some point in the process. Jill suggests, "Let's agree on a place to put everything you're taking with you."

Likewise, spaces should be reserved for items that will be tossed, donated, or gifted to friends and relatives. The goal is to set things up so clients can touch objects once and decide where they go (which collection area), instead of shuffling items all over the house.

5. Pitch in.

Too often, clients don't have family members helping them tackle the projects on their to-do list. In this case, Jill will offer assistance, but only after they've accomplished some of the work independently. If they haven't put in an effort to purge some things on their own, they may not be serious about a move.

She tells them, "I'll come over for a couple of hours and help in any way you'd like." This time, she puts the onus on her client to decide on the tasks.

Some clients are comfortable asking her to help box up items. More often, she's asked to help move boxes into the garage or

another staging area because clients aren't physically able to move things, but she's still in good shape.

Once, a client was planning to hold a yard sale but didn't want her for-sale furniture outside where strangers would be touching and sitting on her things. Jill offered to take pictures and make prints, so she could display photos of the furniture at the sale.

6. "Don't worry about staging."

In Jill's market, staging is not a significant part of the conversation. Decluttering and cleaning are the top priorities.

But her clients often ask about staging. She tells them, "I don't need anything for staging. If you have an opportunity to move the furniture along, do it! Don't save anything for my benefit."

When clients are thinking about staging, it usually complicates and bogs down the process, adding stress.

Plus, if furniture is dated, it isn't very useful in enhancing the home's appearance.

If you are forced to have a conversation about your clients' possessions and staging, be sure to tread carefully.

Jill tells her clients, "I'm not making a judgment on the way you live. I'm making recommendations on what will help buyers envision themselves in this space. And that's hard for them to do when your things are here."

Jill will include "less than ideal" furniture in the listing photos if it hasn't been removed from the home yet. But she would never say anything that implies, "you need to get rid of this." That only adds unnecessary stress.

If the home is empty, Jill's photographer will add virtual staging to the images (and disclose that the staging is virtual), especially in living rooms and master bedrooms.

7. Discuss potential renovations.

In some instances, Jill will also talk to clients about making small renovations to raise their listing price. It's always on a case by case basis, depending on the home and the owners' energy and enthusiasm for making upgrades.

For example, one client had extremely old, unmatched appliances and bold paint throughout the first floor. Jill told them she could list the home for \$20,000 more if they updated these two features, which required a \$6,000 investment. It definitely paid off for them with a quick sale at a much higher price.

It's easy to use digitally altered photos to show your clients how these types of changes will help increase potential buyers' excitement about the property.



Help Seniors Select High-ROI Renovation Projects

Can your clients substantially improve their selling price with one or more of these updates?

Wallpaper and border strips - remove, prime, and paint.

Unpleasant wall colors - add a fresh coat of neutral paint.

Heavy drapes - remove to enhance natural lighting.

Outdated light fixtures - select inexpensive replacements.

Light bulbs - use the maximum rated wattage; make sure the bulbs match in multiple-light fixtures.

Kitchen and bathroom cabinets - update hardware and consider painting.

Floors - replace dated, worn, and stained carpet or vinyl floors.



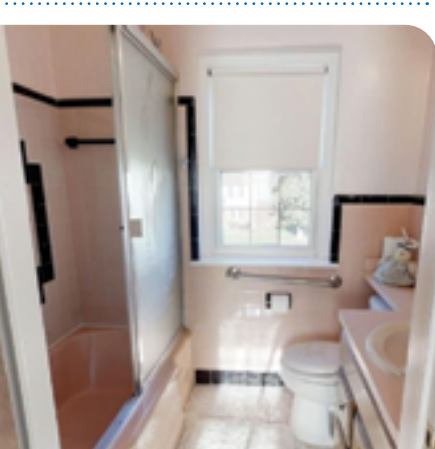
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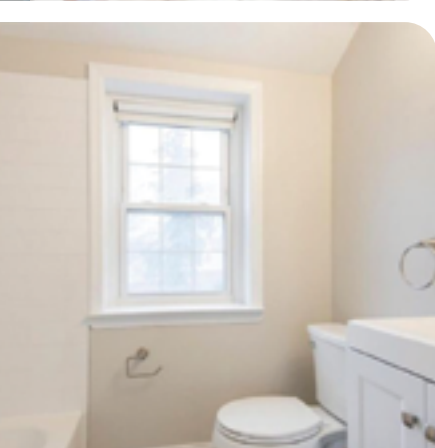
AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



Consider Curbio for Pre-listing Renovations

Many seniors' homes are prime candidates for pre-sale renovations. But the owners lack the time, money, or energy to tackle these projects.

Curbio may be an ideal solution. The company helps agents deliver exceptional results for their clients through ROI-focused, pay-at-close renovations.

Curbio was built by a team of construction experts and technology innovators. They were a member of NAR's 2019 REACH Accelerator Class, the industry's leading technology accelerator. Curbio also won the Pitch Battle at NAR's second annual Innovation, Opportunity & Investment (iOi) Summit in August 2019.

How Curbio Works

Curbio stands for "Curb Appeal Inside and Out." Besides kitchen and bathroom updates and other interior remodeling projects, they can also help sellers declutter rooms, store their belongings, and manage exterior and landscaping projects.

You can submit photos or videos of your client's home or schedule a virtual walkthrough. If you prefer, they'll send out a rep to create a 3D Matterport video at no charge. Curbio uses these images to review the home with you and your clients online so you can discuss recommendations and agree on the scope of the work.

An on-site project manager takes care of all the details and provides a single point of contact. You and your client can monitor progress from any location with their app, including schedule updates, progress photos and videos, and real-time chats.

There are no time limits for selling the home. All payments are deferred until closing, as long as the home stays on the market. If the owner changes their mind and wants to remove the listing, they must pay for the completed renovation work.

Markets Served

Curbio currently operates in 21 U.S. metropolitan areas, typically within a 40-mile radius of each city.

It recently raised \$25 million in a new round of funding led by Comcast Ventures and including NAR's Second Century Ventures and several capital funds.

Note: When recommending any professional, licensees should offer more than one provider in writing and ensure clients fully understand the terms of the agreement.



Learn more about Curbio

> Visit [Curbio.com](https://www.curbio.com).

Images courtesy of [Curbio.com](https://www.curbio.com)



GETTING READY TO LIST YOUR HOME?

Preparing a home for sale is always a significant undertaking. For seniors, in particular, the pre-listing process can feel overwhelming. An agent who has earned their Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation can guide your efforts and help make the transition go as smoothly as possible.

You can trust your SRES® designee to help you:

1. Map out a plan.

An SRES® understands that each client faces different circumstances and challenges. They can advise you on a sequence of steps tailored to your situation. And they'll guide you through the process at whatever pace suits your needs. Your SRES® will take a no-pressure approach and look for ways to make your move more manageable and less stressful.

2. Set priorities.

Please don't assume that every aspect of your home has to appear picture-perfect before listing it for sale. Your SRES® understands what matters most to buyers in your market and can help you focus on the most critical projects. The top priorities are often decluttering living spaces and cleaning your home thoroughly, immediately before it is listed.

3. Evaluate renovations.

Is it essential to update your flooring, paint your walls, or replace your appliances? Your SRES® knows local buyers' top priorities and understands which renovations offer the biggest bang for the buck. They'll explain your options, but it's up to you to decide if you want to add these projects to your list.

Count on an SRES® to guide you through the process of buying or selling your home, making the transaction less stressful and more successful.

The Seniors Real Estate Specialist® (SRES®) designation is awarded by the SRES® Council, a subsidiary of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR).

To learn more about SRES® and access various consumer resources, please visit seniorsresource.realtor.



MAP OUT A PLAN

SET PRIORITIES

EVALUATE RENOVATIONS

SUGGEST TRUSTED RESOURCES

DISCUSS STAGING OPTIONS

4. Suggest trusted resources.

If you need help with any aspect of your move, your SRES® can provide suggestions. They've already vetted related service professionals that understand seniors' concerns and can assist in decluttering, packing, renovating, and more. The choice is always yours, but it's nice knowing you can turn to these trusted resources.

5. Discuss staging options.

Many sellers assume they need to stage their home before listing it. Again, this depends on your local real estate market and your personal situation. Often, staging isn't mandatory. Today's property marketing options include virtual staging techniques, which might be a good alternative. Your SRES® can discuss your options and offer recommendations tailored to your concerns.

Regardless of when and where you are moving, you'll have a better experience if you work with an agent who has earned the SRES® designation—someone who is committed to helping seniors navigate their housing transitions successfully.





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LEVERAGE ONLINE LEARNING AND SAVE 20%

Online learning is an excellent and safe way to expand your knowledge on whatever schedule is convenient for you while also showing clients that you can handle a wide range of real estate needs.

Enroll during February 2021, and save 20% on two popular online courses:

Pricing Strategies: Mastering the CMA (PSA certification course)

In today's hot real estate markets, it's especially essential to employ best practices when pricing residential properties and to be able to explain your pricing recommendations when presenting comparative marketing analyses (CMAs). This course teaches vital pricing skills and is the main requirement for earning the Pricing Strategy Advisor (PSA) certification.

Moving With Pets

With the millions of pets and animals in homes across the country, it is only natural that they have an impact on the buying and selling decision of their owners. This online course will help you provide best-in-class service to this large subset of clients.

To learn more and take advantage of this special promotion, [Visit **onlinelearning.realtor**](http://onlinelearning.realtor).