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10 Low Cost Tips to Increase the Appeal of Your Home

When selling your home, the goal is to sell it quickly for the highest price while investing as little as possible in renovations. With a limited budget and a little effort, you can greatly increase your home's appeal by focusing on what buyers will see on their first visit.

TIP #1: REFRESH THE EXTERIOR

First impressions count when it comes to selling a home. Most buyers won't even leave their car if they don't find the exterior appealing. The best ways to improve your home's exterior include:

Repair and/or replace trim, shutters, gutters, shingles, mailboxes, window screens, walkways and driveway. Paint siding, trim, shutters and mailbox posts. Pressure wash vinyl siding, roofs, walkways and driveway. Wash the windows.

TIP #2: SPRUCE UP THE LAWN AND LANDSCAPE

Home buyers associate the condition of your lawn and landscaping with the condition of your home's interior. By improving the outside, you affect buyers' impression of the entire property. The best ways to enhance the yard include:

Mow and edge the lawn. Seed, fertilize and weed the lawn. Keep up with regular lawn maintenance by frequently watering. Trim and/or remove overgrown trees, shrubs and hedges. Weed and mulch plant beds. Plant colorful seasonal flowers in existing plant beds. Remove trash, especially along fences and underneath hedges. Sweep and weed the street curb along your property.

TIP #3: CREATE AN INVITING ENTRANCE

The front door to your home should invite buyers to enter. Some of the best ways to improve your entry include:

Paint the front door in a glossy, cheerful color that complements the exterior. Clean, polish and/or replace the door knocker, locks and handles. Repair and/or replace the screen door, the doorbell, porch lights and house numbers. Place a new welcome mat and a group of seasonal potted plants and flowers by the entry.

TIP #4: REDUCE CLUTTER AND FURNITURE

A buyer cannot envision living in your home without seeing it. A home filled with clutter or too much furniture distracts buyers from seeing how they can utilize the space your home offers.

If you have limited storage space, you may want to consider renting a temporary storage unit to place items that you wish to keep. The best ways to declutter your home include:

Hold a garage sale to prepare for your move, getting rid of unnecessary items. Remove clutter such as books, magazines, toys, tools, supplies and unused items from countertops, open shelves, storage closets, the garage and basements. Store out of season clothing and shoes out of sight to make bedroom closets seem roomier. Remove any visibly damaged furniture. Organize bookshelves, closets, cabinets and pantries. Buyers will inspect everything. Store your personal photographs, unless they showcase the home. Depersonalize rooms as much as you can.

TIP #5: CLEAN, CLEAN, CLEAN!!

The cleanliness of your home also influences a buyer's perception of its condition. The appearance of the kitchen and bathrooms will play a considerable role in a buyer's decision process, so pay particular attention to these areas. The best ways to improve these areas include:

Clean windows, fixtures, hardware, ceiling fans, vent covers and appliances. Clean carpets, area rugs and draperies. Clean inside the refrigerator, the stove and all cabinets. Remove stains from carpets, floors, counters, sinks, bathrooms, tiling, walls and grout. Eliminate house odors, especially if you have pets. Use air fresheners or potpourri.

TIP #6: MAKE MINOR REPAIRS

The small stuff does count, especially with first-time home buyers. Don't dismiss the importance of repairing major items such as a leaky roof or plumbing, you do not need to spend money on replacing these items. Instead, focus on the minor repairs that will make your home visually appealing. The best ways to improve your home include:

Repair ceilings and cracks in walls. Repair faucets, banisters, handrails, cabinets, drawers, doors, floors and tile. Caulk and grout tubs, showers, sinks and tile. Add fresh paint to ceilings, walls, trim, doors and cabinets. Tighten door handles, drawer pulls, light switches and electrical plates. Lubricate door hinges and locks.

TIP #7: SHOWCASE THE KITCHEN

The heart of any home is the kitchen. If you are going to spend any money on renovations, this is the one area where you will see the greatest return. Even with a modest budget, focusing on a few key areas can make a huge difference in getting the asking price for your property. The best ways to showcase your kitchen might include:

Replace cabinet doors and hardware. Replace light fixtures, or install lighting under cabinets. Replace outdated shelving with pantry and cabinet organizers to maximize space. Bake cookies or cupcakes for a showing, to create a homey smell.

TIP #8: STAGE FURNITURE

Furniture placement can enhance the space of your home while giving buyers an idea of how to best utilize the space with their own belongings. Take some time to rethink how different areas in your house could be used. Some ideas to think about include:

Move couches and chairs away from walls in your sitting and family rooms to create cozy conversational groups. Create a cozy reading corner in the master bedroom. Clear an empty room to set up a reading space. Turn an awkward space into a home office. Set the dining room table with your best china. Set wine glasses in front of the fireplace or next to a Jacuzzi tub.

TIP #9: LIGHT UP THE HOUSE

Create a sense of openness and cheerfulness in your home through its lighting. To improve the lighting of your home you could try:

Open the shades and drapes to let the sunshine warm and brighten rooms. Turn on all the lights for a showing, Add additional lamps for ambient lighting. Install brighter light bulbs in rooms.

TIP #10: ADD FRESH TOUCHES

You can easily add color and style to your home by adding fresh touches throughout.

Some ideas to consider include:

Fill an empty corner with a leafy potted plant. Place fresh floral arrangements in the entry and master bedroom. Place bowls of brightly colored fruit in the family room and the kitchen. Display fresh towels near sinks & set new hand soap in the bathrooms.