

## **Increasing Your Home's Value the Most for the Least**

**The following are tips to help increase your home's value and get your home sold in the fastest time possible based on my experience working with home owners who have sold their home and feedback from home buyers that buy homes. The last two tips will be most appropriate if you are thinking you might sell your home within the next 1-2 years.**

### **TIP ONE: Painting and Carpeting**

A fresh coat of paint will make a room look new and clean and new carpets will make it shine that much more. Be sure to pick a paint color that is neutral as that will appeal to the most people. I have seen many buyers walk into a home with rooms painted the seller's favorite color and just walk out because they hated it! Buyers also will always look down at the floor when they walk into a room. So be sure that the carpets are clean, and if they are worn, consider getting them replaced. Worn or dirty carpets and badly painted or dirty walls will make a buyer think that there are other issues with your home even if there is not.

### **TIP TWO: Energy Costs**

These days, most buyers will ask me "What is the average monthly utility bill cost?" of homes they are looking at to buy. Most utilities offer free energy audits. Take advantage of this as it can help you save money now and it can help you down the road when you are ready to sell your home! I have seen buyers favor homes that have lower monthly utility costs over other homes all else being equal!

### **TIP THREE: The Kitchen**

In most homes, buyers will spend the most time in the kitchen. Make sure your kitchen is ready for

this. If you have appliances that are dirty or old, get them cleaned spotless or consider replacing them. You do not need to spend a lot of money replacing your stove or refrigerator with top end appliances, but you do not want buyers walking into a kitchen, see a dirty stove or refrigerator and then walking out because of it. And do not forget the drawers and cabinets as buyers will open these! If you need a referral to a good cleaning service, let me know and I can send you a couple of names.

## **TIP FOUR: The Bathrooms**

Your bathrooms will also get the drill sergeant review from buyers, in particular any master bathrooms. Similar to the kitchen, make sure that any old fixtures are replaced and that the floors, bathtub & shower and walls are CLEAN. You can replace bathroom fixtures easily these days without spending a lot of money. And a fresh coat of paint can go a long way here too. I have seen buyers walk out of houses after walking into dirty old bathrooms.

## **TIP FIVE: Curb Appeal**

First impressions count. Similar to a fresh coat of paint for a room, a yard that has the grass cut nicely goes a long way. Walk outside and look at your front yard and the front of the home. Does the front of the house need paint or residing? Are there any broken windows or shutters that need repair? Does the yard need cleaning? You do not need to hire a landscape architect, but you want to make sure that your yard looks clean and nice. Be sure to pick up any items in the yard, position trash bins so that they are not visible from the street and any other general cleaning / maintenance that might be needed. If you need information for a someone that does this type of work, let me know and I can send you a couple of names.

## **TIP SIX: Declutter**

If you are thinking about selling within the next year, start this now. I have seen buyers walk through homes that have too much stuff everywhere and comment to me that it just looks messy. When a buyer thinks a home is messy, they figure that there are other problems with the home as well even if there is not! This is something that even I deal with sometimes as we just get so 'used to things' laying around that we do not even see them anymore. They almost become invisible! Do decluttering in two stages.

## Stage One:

Get everything that you have not used in last few months (or years!), and do not anticipate using in the foreseeable future boxed up and in storage or the basement (neatly!). This would include clothes that you have not worn in long time, dishes / appliances that you have not used in forever, paperwork piling up, bathroom items and other things. These are items that you do not want to throw away or donate, but that you just do not need in your home on a day to day basis.

## Stage Two:

This is when you are getting close to listing your home for sale. Now you want your home to be ready for buyers to walk through and have a good impression so that they think to themselves, "This is a clean and neat home, the owner must take care of it!" This will also help make moving day easier after your home is sold! Pack up even more clothes that you are not going to wear anytime soon, pack up toys, appliances that are not being used, other kitchen items, bathroom items, tools, books, art, etc. Put these in storage or boxed neatly into the attic or basement. Be sure to label all boxes with both the room they belong to, like, "Kitchen" and what is in the box "Dishes".

## TIP SEVEN: Hire a Home Inspector

If you are thinking that you might sell your home in the next year, consider this, most buyers will hire a home inspector that will inspect your home for any and all issues. Wiring, foundation, installation, etc. In the case of a Home Inspection, you do not want to be surprised! When you accept an offer on your home, you want to close the deal with as little hassle as possible. More and more home owners will hire a home inspector and provide a home inspection report to buyers as this can make buyers more ready to make an offer on your home, especially if they are considering other homes that do not have a home inspection. The other benefit for you though is that you can use the home inspection as a 'What do I need to do' guide if you find something major. Please keep in mind that home inspection reports will be detailed and may startle you initially similar to reviewing your results from a physical if the doctor is not present! If you make the wise investment for a home inspection, have me come over after you get it to review it with you and I can give you advice on what is common in our market and what is not. Every market is different, so just because you see something that looks scary on the inspection

report, does not necessarily mean you need to fix it. But either way, you can be assured that buyers will get an inspection done and you do not want to be surprised by this when you are trying to get the home sold.

## Conclusion

Let me know if you have any questions on this. Again, this is based on my real world experience both selling homes for homeowners and helping buyers buy homes. Aside from marketing your home and generating buyer leads for it to the maximum extent in the market, negotiating the highest price possible for your home, we want to get your home sold fast and with the fewest issues as possible. I am in the area constantly with clients, so if you need me to come over for a few minutes to give any real world advice from a buyers perspective just let me know. Using my experience and knowledge now, BEFORE you are ready to sell, will go a long way in getting your more money, faster and easier when you ARE READY to sell.