

## Simple Tips for Better Home Showings

- **REMOVE CLUTTER AND CLEAR OFF COUNTERS.** Throw out stacks of newspapers & magazines and stow away most of your small decorative items. Put excess furniture in storage, and remove out-of-season clothing items that are cramping closet space. Don't forget to clean out the garage too.
- **WASH YOUR WINDOWS AND SCREENS.** This will help get more light into the interior of the home.
- **KEEP EVERYTHING EXTRA CLEAN.** A clean house will make a strong first impression and send a message to buyers that the home has been well-cared for. Wash fingerprints from light switch plates, mop and wax floors, and clean the stove and refrigerator. Polish your doorknobs and address numbers. It's worth hiring a cleaning service if you can afford it.
- **GET RID OF SMELLS.** Clean carpeting and drapes to eliminate cooking odors, smoke, and pet smells. Open the windows to air out the house. Potpourri or scented candles will help.
- **BRIGHTEN YOUR ROOMS.** Put higher wattage bulbs in light fixtures to brighten up rooms and basements. Replace any burned-out bulbs in closets. Clean the walls, or better yet, brush on a fresh coat of neutral color paint.
- **DON'T DISREGARD MINOR REPAIRS.** Small problems such as sticky doors, torn screens, cracked caulking, or a dripping faucet may seem trivial, but they'll give buyers the impression that the house isn't well-maintained.
- **TIDY YOUR YARD.** Cut the grass, rake the leaves, add new mulch, trim the bushes, edge the walkways, and clean the gutters. For added curb appeal, place a pot of bright flowers near the entryway.
- **PATCH HOLES.** Repair any holes in your driveway and reapply sealant, if applicable.
- **ADD A TOUCH OF COLOR IN THE LIVING ROOM.** A colored afghan or throw on the couch will jazz up a dull room. Buy new accent pillows for the sofa.
- **BUY A FLOWERING PLANT AND PUT IT NEAR A WINDOW YOU PASS BY FREQUENTLY.**
- **MAKE CENTERPIECES FOR YOUR TABLES.** Use brightly colored fruit or flowers.
- **SET THE SCENE.** Set the table with fancy dishes and candles, and create other vignettes throughout the home to help buyers picture living there. For example, in the basement you might display a chess game in progress.
- **REPLACE HEAVY CURTAINS WITH SHEER ONES THAT LET IN MORE LIGHT.** Show off the view if you have one.
- **ACCENTUATE THE FIREPLACE.** Lay fresh logs in the fireplace or put a basket of flowers there if it's not in use.
- **MAKE THE BATHROOMS FEEL LUXURIOUS.** Put away those old towels and toothbrushes. When buyers enter your bathroom, they should feel pampered. Add a new shower curtain, new towels, and fancy guest soaps. Make sure your personal toiletry items are out of sight.
- **SEND YOUR PETS TO A NEIGHBOR OR TAKE THEM OUTSIDE.** If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (ideally in the basement), and let the real estate practitioner know where they'll be to eliminate surprises.
- **LOCK UP VALUABLES, JEWELRY, AND MONEY.** While a real estate salesperson will be on site during the showing or open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
- **LEAVE THE HOME.** It's usually best if the sellers are not at home. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.