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Attract a Buyer by Making The Interior of Your Home Sparkle

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Sellers only get one chance to make a good first impression. People definitely will judge the book by its cover. Most homeowners understand the importance of curb appeal, and will go to great lengths to spruce up the outside of the home. But little turns a buyer off faster than entering the home, only to discover the pages don't match the cover. If the interior is dirty, poorly maintained, outdated, or there are lingering odours, the second impression can be a deal breaker.

In addition to neglect, trying too hard can also be a mistake. A heavy renovation just prior to selling may suggest the home was in serious disrepair, and that the problems could extend beyond the visible upgrades.

Smaller updates that suggest the house has been well maintained, and that style elements have been kept up to date, can often be just as effective, and will be better for your bottom line.

Clean it and make it smell fresh

The first thing home buyers will notice is if the home is clean. A neat, organized house is far more attractive than one that is a mess. Blasting the home with Febreze before a showing raises red flags. It should smell clean because it is clean. If your home is being shown, you may want to avoid cooking with fish, potent spices, onions or garlic.

One way to ensure that the house is well organized is actually having a designated place for everything, and seeing that items are returned after use. This is particularly important when you have children. You may want to practise getting the home tidy on short notice for a showing, making a family game of it.

Dispose of the garbage before it begins to smell. Clean any dirty dishes. Dispose of any spoiling food in the fridge and don't store dirty dishes in the dishwasher. (Like it or not, people will look in there.) Keep the home well ventilated.

Lighting

A well-lit house is welcoming. Great lighting can significantly improve the perceived value of your home. If you're thinking of selling, take a walk through the rooms to determine whether there is sufficient lighting. Lighting in this case covers both natural and artificial lighting. Make sure that the windows are not obstructed, unnecessarily limiting the amount of natural light getting inside the house. When it comes to artificial light fixtures check that the lights are all working and have the brightest bulbs the fixture ratings permit.

Having lights that were installed ten or twenty years ago can make your home appear very dated. Every time a prospective buyer sees something they're going to have to upgrade, they tend to inflate the costs of those updates in their minds. It's better to address some of the things potential buyers are going to want to change. If your home has dated or poor lighting, a very modest investment in some new fixtures can go a long way in making your home sparkle.

Hardware

The little things that don't seem to matter are often what sell homes. Your door knobs and cabinet handles, as well as towel racks, matter. A new set of knobs on the cabinets can do wonders. Also shop for some modern, attractive door knobs to replace any old worn out ones. Brushed stainless, nickel or brass are a good choice for door knobs and handles.

Painting

Holes in the walls, hand prints and other marks, and old peeling or faded paint signal neglect. Bright colours in children's rooms may please the kids, but will represent a paint job to most prospective buyers. Be cautious of bright colours and those potential clients might dislike. Warm soft colours will appeal to the broadest range of potential buyers.

If you're tackling the painting yourself, take the time to fill holes, sand any rough spots and mask the edges with care. A sloppy paint job can send a negative message.

Polish the floors

Floors are often forgotten. Female buyers in particular are likely to notice floors that haven't been cared for, and it's only natural to assume the neglect extends to other areas of the house. Inspect the floors in your home for broken tiles, cracks in the hardwood or tears in the linoleum. Also check the baseboards for damage, discolouration and scuffs. Often inexpensive repairs can be made with materials available at the local hardware store. Clean the floors thoroughly and then give them a polish.

Doors

Squeaky hinges, and broken or marked up doors, also indicate neglect. A squirt of oil on the hinges and a fresh coat of paint can go a long way. Replacing doors is generally not necessary, unless a door is broken. Choose a semi-gloss paint designed for doors and trim, and apply it with either a foam roller or Purdy brush. If you use a brush, make sure all of the strokes are parallel to the long axis.

Cabinets and counters

Give your cabinets a thorough cleaning. Tattered drawer and shelf liners should be replaced. If the cabinets look dated, they can often be refreshed with a coat of Melamine paint on the cases and perhaps a replacement set of modern doors.

If old laminate countertops are in serviceable condition, but the colour is out of date, or there are stains and burn marks, a coat of Melamine paint in a contemporary colour can bring them back to life. Granite and marble countertops can be polished to restore their original lustre.

Curtains and window blinds

Curtains and blinds must be clean and in good condition. Begin by vacuuming draperies with a gentle upholstery brush, and dusting the blinds. If your window coverings are in need of professional cleaning, you'll want to call one of the local services. Where curtains and blinds are damaged or in poor condition, or very out of date, it may be time to invest in new ones.

Electrical plates and switches

Even though your electrical plates and switches may be working perfectly, it might be a good idea to replace them with modern items. Besides looking dated, old electrical items can suggest that the home's electrical system needs work.

The modern family has many electronic devices and appliances to plug in. Older homes typically had very few outlets, and this can be a red flag to a family that loves their gadgets. In primary rooms, you may want to have an electrician come in to install a few more electrical receptacles.

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