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WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SALE



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Introduction



As the weather warms and the skies once again turn bright with the arrival of spring, your thoughts may turn to how you can spruce up your home and get it ready for selling. In fact, preparing your home to be listed on the market is easy and not as time consuming as you would believe.

While contemplating this process, however, you likewise may wonder if your efforts are truly needed. You may ask yourself what, if any, impact they will have on the sale of your house. Simple steps taken today can not only affect if your home sells, but it can also affect how quickly it sells and the sales price.

Do I have your attention yet? Good. Before I get started with telling you how to get your home prepared, here are some fantastic reasons why you should start preparing your home today to sell in the Spring.



Introduction



Attract Interested Buyers

By preparing your home for the market, you increase your chances of attracting interested buyers. When they see that your house is ready for purchase and they will not have much, if any, upkeep work to do themselves, they will be more likely to ask for a showing.

A well-maintained house also means that people who buy it can build equity of their own sooner.



Sell Faster

When you draw in interested buyers, you make it more likely that you will sell your house faster. A house that sits on the market for weeks or months on end is expensive and inconvenient. You can sell faster by getting your house ready for listing and showing. Buyers will see that they can move in quickly and be ready to start their lives in the new home. They will be more likely to put in an offer when they can picture themselves living there rather than picturing doing repairs.

Make the House Safer

By taking the extra steps to get your house ready for listing today, you actually make your home safer for people who visit it. You are more likely to take notice of repairs you may have been neglecting, such as tacking down loose carpeting or tightening hinges on doors. These little fixes will go a long way in improving the safety and appeal of your house.



Tender Loving Care

Buyers want to look at houses that have been well-kept and maintained throughout the years. When they walk into a home that has obviously been loved, appreciated, and well-tended to, they are more likely to establish an attachment to it as well. By getting your home ready to sell this spring, you have the opportunity to show buyers that they too can have the same happiness and comfort that you have enjoyed in the house.



Increase Your Asking Price

This is what most people care about when looking to sell their home. A house that is clean, repaired, and ready to go can fetch a higher asking price. When you want to sell your house for its maximum value, you should take the extra steps to make sure it is as appealing and sellable as possible.

A house that is ready to sell gives you leverage in the negotiations and allows you to hold firm if you wish on your price.

While it may sound obvious, most home buyers are not handymen (although many men would probably disagree). They do not actually know how much it costs to replace a hot water heater, change out a cracked window pane, or even replace the carpet. Studies show that when estimating repair costs, the average buyer will actually estimate two or three times the actual expenses. This means that the broken door that would cost \$500 to replace will be seen as a \$1000 or \$1500 repair by a potential buyer. This estimate, as wrong as it may be, will play a factor when it comes to the price that they offer. It may even determine if they put in an offer at all.

The onset of spring means that it is time to get your house ready for selling. You can commit yourself fully to this easy process by realizing what advantages lie in store for your home and its sale.

Preparing Your Home for Sale - The Basics



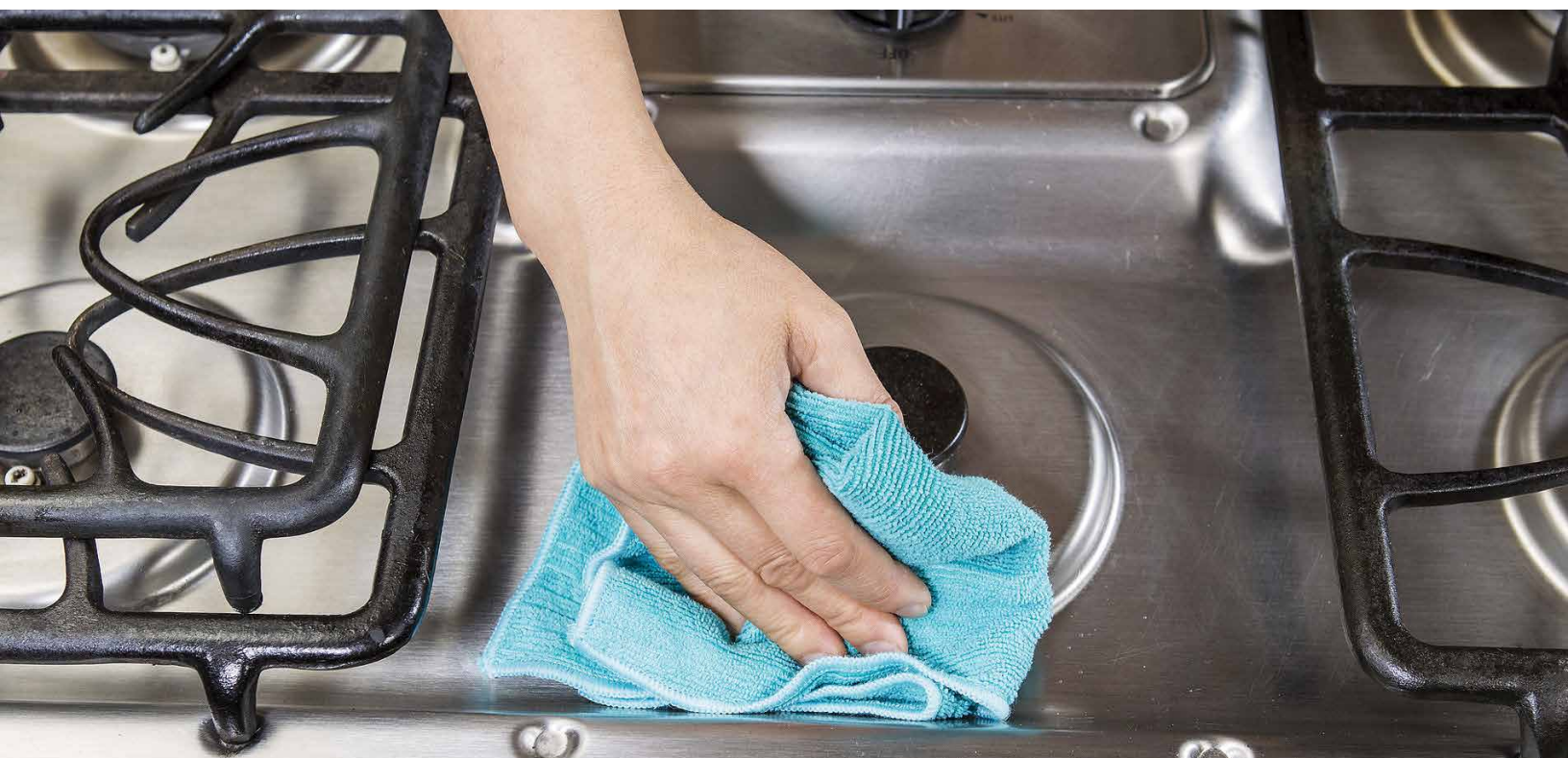
There are a few major things to keep in mind when preparing your home for sale. You have likely been living in the home for years which means you have probably developed an emotional attachment.

You have created memories there. Maybe it's your first home, where your baby took their first steps, or thoughts Thanksgiving dinner surrounded by family and friends. It is important to remember that a buyer does not have any emotional attachment, which is why it is important for you to look at the sale of your home as more of a business decision. Try to keep the emotions out of it.

The first thing to do is to start decluttering. You know all of those nicknacks, photos, college diplomas, and awards that you absolutely hate to dust? Take them down. Kids constantly have toys all over the place? Start boxing up the ones that they don't play with very often. A potential buyer needs to be able to see themselves living in the home, not trying to figure out who lives there now.

Clean, clean, and clean some more. I know, I said the "C" word, and unfortunately, I'm not talking about a simple dusting. I'm talking about the deep cleaning that is usually associated with Spring time. Clean your ceiling fans, light fixtures, windowsills, miniblinds, baseboards, crown molding.

Preparing Your Home for Sale - The Basics



Clean behind and underneath furniture. Give your oven, stove, dishwasher, microwave, and even the washer and dryer a good deep clean. The cleaner your home is today, the more that a potential buyer will know that you took fantastic and loving care of your home in the past.

If you are short on time or funds, remember that the 3 most important areas of the home are the kitchen, master bedroom, and master bath. That doesn't mean you should neglect the others, however.

Don't get stressed! You don't have to complete this list overnight unless your home is going on the market tomorrow. You can complete this over time or hire someone to come in and do it for you. You don't even have to complete 100% of these items - they are just suggestions. Remember, however, that the more that is done, the better chance you have for selling your home for the most possible money in the shortest period of time.

Time to get to work.

Preparing Your Front Yard



You are probably already confused at why this is being put first. Many people selling their homes will often go all out preparing the inside and then forget about what their front yard looks like. Your front yard is like a window to your property. If it leaves a bad impression, you may have a hard time getting buyers to come through the front door to see all the wonderful upgrades you have done in the inside.

If your yard has patches of grass missing, overgrown shrubs and piles of brush lying around, it will make a potential buyer question how much care you have taken with the rest of the house. They may skip your home altogether and not even schedule a showing. Even if they do, it may be a hard obstacle to overcome in the person's mind, no matter how nice the interior of your home is.

Before putting your house on the market pay some strong attention to your front yard. If it isn't in the greatest shape, it might be worth it to shell out the money for a professional lawn and landscaping service. Tight on money? Get out and doing some or all of the work yourself. It will be well worth it at closing time. Statistics suggest basic but well-done landscaping raises property values by at least 12 percent.



Preparing Your Front Yard



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Put down some fresh mulch in flowerbeds and around trees.
- ☐ Put a fresh coat of paint on any wood surfaces such as wood siding, window shutters, your front door, or the garage door.
- ☐ Repair and clean up water features, such as a fountain, if you have any.
- ☐ Use a power washer on and hard, non-wood, surfaces.
- ☐ Reseed or re-sod your lawn if patches of grass are dead from the Winter.
- ☐ Edge your lawn.
- ☐ Fix any issues with your irrigation or sprinkler system.
- ☐ Trim any overgrown trees or bushes. Replace any that are dead.
- ☐ Repair and paint fence.
- ☐ Replace or clean any outdoor containers like flower pots or storage.
- ☐ Replace, repair, or repaint your mailbox.
- ☐ Lead potential buyers to your door with a walkway or stepping stones.
- ☐ Replace welcome mat.
- ☐ Put some colorful flowers in a flower pot next to the door.

Preparing Your Living Room



It is important to make sure your home looks as attractive as possible. After you had made a great first impression in front of the home, many buyers will say, “It just doesn’t feel right” as soon as they walk into a home, which makes the appearance of your living room and entryway a potential make or break area of the home.

Your living room and entryway need to be warm and inviting. It should carry on that WOW feeling and make people feel welcome and, most importantly, feel at home.



Some of the most requested features from buyers today are open floor plans and natural light. While knocking down a wall probably isn’t in your budget, there are some simple ways to make a room feel much larger, more open, and brighter than they do right now.

Preparing Your Living Room



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Replace worn carpets.
- ☐ If carpet isn't worn, a good, deep steam clean is still needed.
- ☐ For wood floors, re-stain or re-finish them if needed.
- ☐ Repaint the room a bright white or other light color.
- ☐ Stage the room to maximize floor space and make it feel open.
- ☐ Remove excess furniture.
- ☐ Showcase the room's best features such as a fireplace.
- ☐ Adding an area rug will often make the room feel larger.
- ☐ Adding plants and flowers can give a room a "fresher" feeling.
- ☐ Fix any broken fixtures or lights.
- ☐ Consider replacing light switches and covers.
- ☐ Remove any nick-knacks from walls and shelves.
- ☐ Remove all personal photographs.
- ☐ Remove or minimize any clutter such as magazines and books.
- ☐ Remove or replacing any worn or damaged furniture.
- ☐ Clean the windows or glass doors.
- ☐ Replace or repair any torn window coverings.
- ☐ Replace or repair any broken or foggy windows.

Preparing Your Kitchen



One of the most important spaces to prep is the heart of the home- your kitchen. The buyer needs to be able to imagine themselves happily baking Christmas cookies and Saturday morning pancakes in your spotless kitchen, using its current layout and fixtures as much as possible.



You want to try to mask any flaws in your kitchen, such as lack of adequate storage or dim lighting, as much as possible so that the buyer does not pick up on them and use them as an excuse to choose to buy a different house or offer less than asking.

Making just a few simple updates to your kitchen before you list it will be well worth the expense, time and effort.

Preparing Your Kitchen



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Clean counters.
- ☐ Clean tiled areas.
- ☐ Clean floors.
- ☐ Re-grout any tile areas that need it.
- ☐ Consider adding in a backsplash if you don't have one.
- ☐ Update fixtures.
- ☐ Repair any leaking faucets.
- ☐ Update appliances.
- ☐ Update flooring.
- ☐ Update or paint cabinets.
- ☐ Clean inside the cabinets.
- ☐ Repaint walls.
- ☐ Clean out oven.
- ☐ Clean out refrigerator.
- ☐ Clean windows.
- ☐ Clean or replace window treatments.
- ☐ Hide most counter appliances.
- ☐ Remove clutter - this includes excessive dishes, pots, and pans.

Preparing Your Dining Area



A dining area offers more than a place to eat. For a lot of individuals, couples and families, it is the spot where many of a lifetime's worth of positive memories are made with those they love. Kid's science projects, candlelight anniversary dinners, and holiday dinners with the family all conjure fond memories.

How you prepare your dining area may vary depending on if it's a breakfast nook, dine-in kitchen, or a formal dining area, but most of the following repairs apply in some way.



Preparing Your Dining Area



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Remove clutter.
- ☐ Remove excess furniture.
- ☐ Remove, repair or replace damaged or broken furniture.
- ☐ Clean windows.
- ☐ Clean or replace window treatments.
- ☐ Clean, replace, or update floors (deep clean for carpets).
- ☐ Repaint walls.
- ☐ Update or clean light fixtures.

For Formal Dining Areas:

- ☐ Have a statement piece of art on the wall.
- ☐ Consider adding a mirror to make the room appear larger.
- ☐ Put fresh flowers or candles on the table.
- ☐ Organize and declutter your china cabinet.
- ☐ Place a decorative runner on your buffet.

For Breakfast Nook/Dine-In Kitchen Areas

- ☐ Clean or replace tablecloths and placemats.
- ☐ Add a fruit bowl or flowers for a centerpiece.
- ☐ Fun and colorful wall art is an easy add here.

Preparing Your Master Bedroom



The master bedroom is one of the most crucial aspects of home sales, so it is vital to make it as appealing as possible. Taking the time to make the bedroom feel spacious and welcoming is a foolproof way to help a possible buyer picture themselves getting a good night's rest in the home. People who can envision themselves relaxing in the master bedroom after a hard day at work are more likely to put in an offer. A stunning master bedroom might be the key thing that gets people interested in buying the home for themselves.

The master closet or closets is often overlooked during this phase. Too many people use the closet as a dumping grounds for the “stuff” they remove from the bedroom. Don’t fall into this trap! A roomy, spacious closet is just as important as the bedroom itself for both men and women buyers.

Preparing Your Master Bedroom

Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Repaint the room using a neutral color scheme
- ☐ Declutter surfaces
- ☐ Remove personal photographs
- ☐ Clean the baseboards
- ☐ Clean or repair draperies or blinds
- ☐ Clean windows (inside and outside)
- ☐ Clean the ceiling fan
- ☐ Clean carpets (professionally or with steam cleaner)
- ☐ Resurface, re-stain, or polish wood floors

For The Master Closet

Consider removing excess clothing and accessories that you aren't using frequently. Summer clothes and shoes, for instance, can be removed during the cool months to create much more space. Make sure it doesn't look jam packed, or potential buyers will see it as not having enough storage space.



Preparing Your Master Bathroom



According to US News & World Report, the time and money spent to fix up the master bath is one of the best investments you can make when you're hoping to sell. The master bath is typically the first thing they see when they wake up and the last thing they see before they go to bed. It should be a retreat for the potential home buyer, an area that represents relaxation and comfort.

A dated master bathroom is one of the biggest turnoffs for home buyers after the kitchen. Don't be afraid to spend some money to update the biggest features, but you can do the majority of these yourself.



Preparing Your Master Bathroom



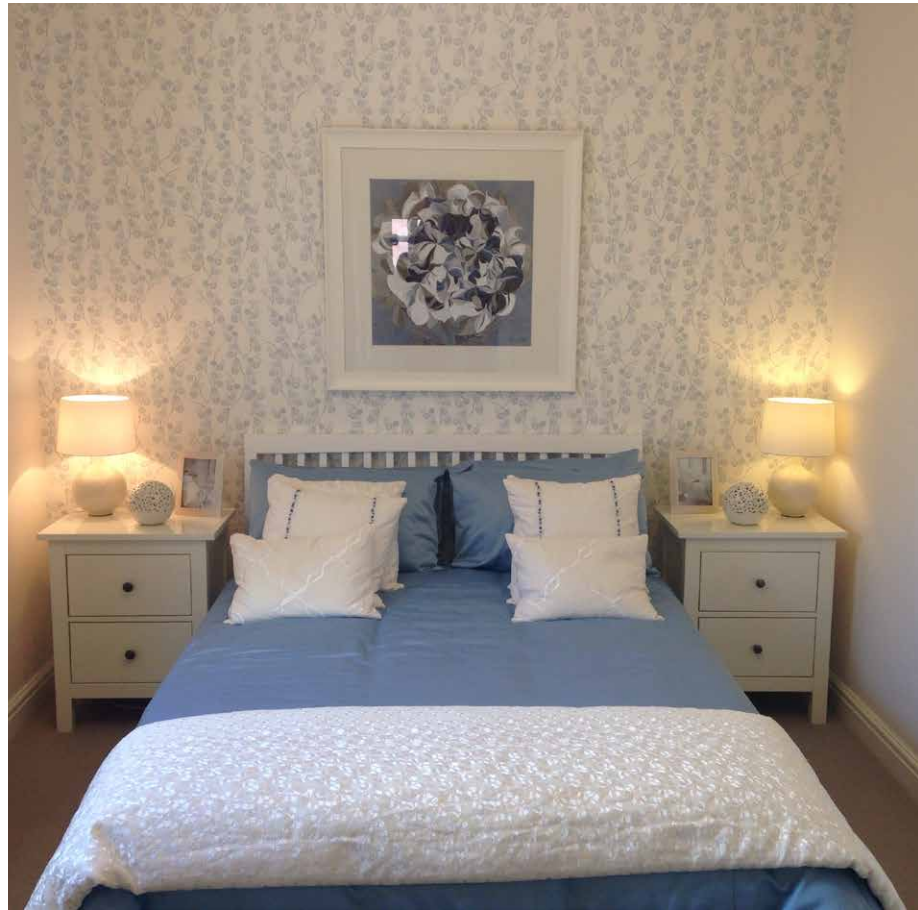
Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Remove any personal items from countertops.
- ☐ Utilize storage and cabinets for things like toothpaste and makeup.
- ☐ Remove any mildew and soap scum around the shower, sinks, and toilet.
- ☐ Repair any cracked tiles.
- ☐ Re-grout any areas that need it.
- ☐ Clean all of the grout in the rest of the areas.
- ☐ If you have carpet anywhere in the bathroom, GET RID OF IT.
- ☐ Wash or replace bathmats.
- ☐ Update lighting above sinks, showers, and toilet.
- ☐ Update faucets and knobs to avoid appearing dated.
- ☐ Repair any leaking faucets.
- ☐ Remove any wall paper if possible.
- ☐ Paint the walls a neutral color.
- ☐ Repaint cabinets if worn or faded.
- ☐ Add a floral arrangement on the counter.
- ☐ Add candles near the bathtub/shower.
- ☐ Consider adding storage space, such as cabinets.
- ☐ Consider replacing a standard tub with a jetted tub.

Preparing Your Spare Bedrooms

Spare bedrooms need to be prepared just like every other room. Too often, however, these are being lived in by children or being used as storage spaces.

Small children can often have a difficult time with moving. It may mean they are leaving their friends behind or moving to a new school. If they are too young for school, it may mean that their bedroom (and the rest of the house, no doubt) doubles as their toy box. Getting them to help in the process can be hard on both them and you.



Try to create an incentive plan. Let them know you will buy them new toys once you have moved to the new home. Let them participate by donating some of the old toys to local kids charities or shelters and praise them for a job well done. It will still be hard, but it is an important aspect of your move.

Until the home is ready to list however, remember that your young kids still have to live there. Some things will just have to wait until it's time to sell.

Preparing Your Spare Bedrooms



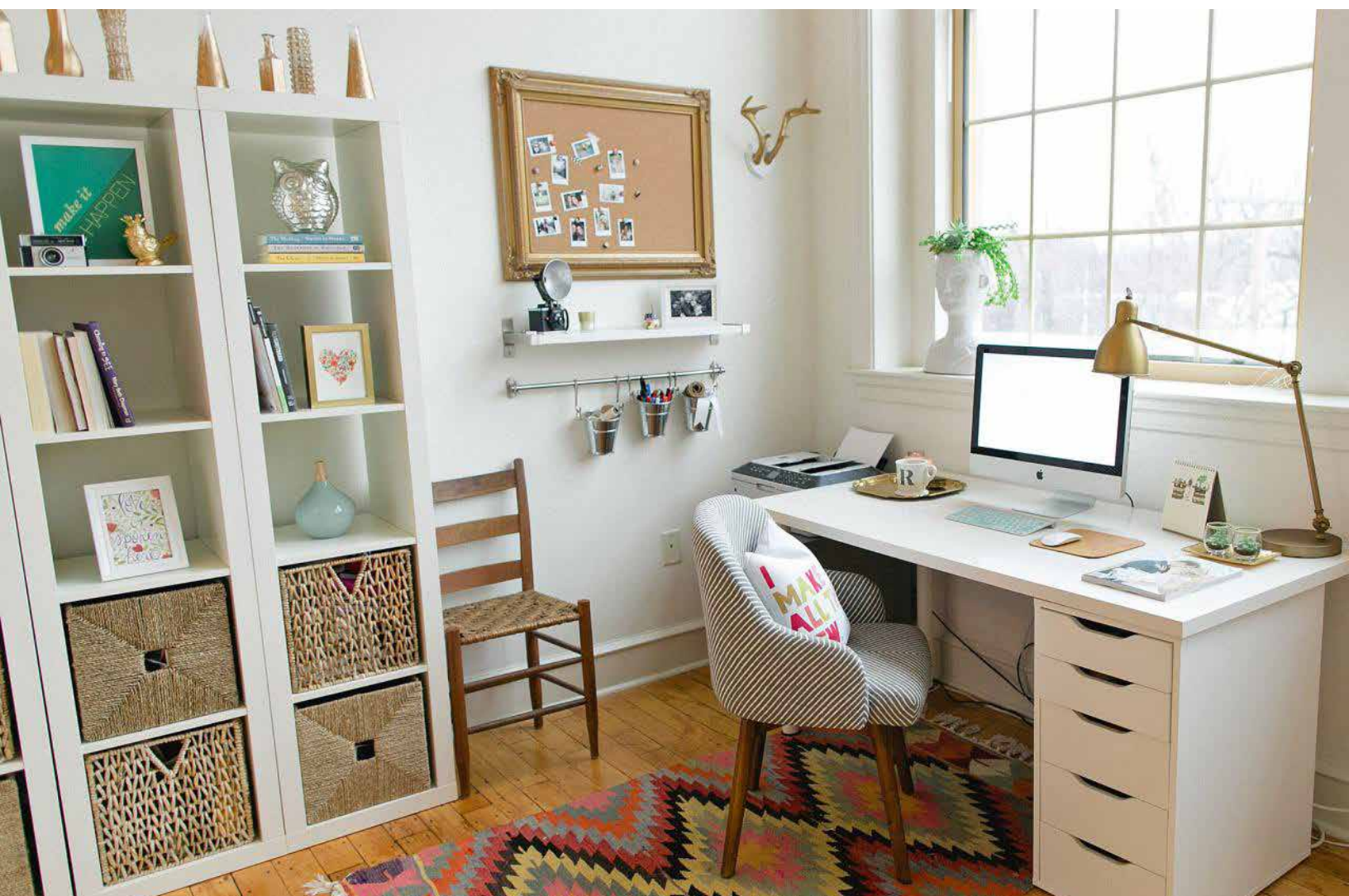
Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Clean or replace carpets or have them deep cleaned.
- ☐ Organize all of the clothes that are visible.
- ☐ Pack up off-season clothing.
- ☐ Organize all of the kids toys and get rid of as many as possible.
- ☐ Clean the walls. Painting may not be possible at this point.
- ☐ Make sure the windows are clean inside and out.
- ☐ Make sure curtains are bright colors.
- ☐ Do not have too many things hanging on the wall.
- ☐ Clean or replace light fixtures
- ☐ Make sure that that everything looks crisps and new as possible.

For Unused Bedrooms

- ☐ Remove clutter. The buyer needs to see a bedroom, not a storage unit.
- ☐ Pack up as much as possible now. It will save you time later.
- ☐ Remove personal items such as photos.

Preparing Your Home Office or Den



The home office increasingly serves as the hub of many critical activities in the home. Given the increasingly technological nature of both work demands and recreational pursuits, individuals are spending increasingly large amounts of time in their home office. The ability to do this in a comfortable setting is important to many home buyers.

Whether the prospective buyer will use this area as a home office, a sitting/reading room, or a play area for the kids, it needs the same care and preparation as the rest of the home as you get ready to sell.

Preparing Your Home Office or Den



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Paint walls a neutral, relaxing tone.
- ☐ Depersonalize the area. Take down personal photos and memorabilia.
- ☐ Organize paperwork in a filing cabinet or boxes.
- ☐ Remove clutter from your desktop and shelves.
- ☐ Hide extension cords, power strips, and other wiring where possible.
- ☐ Add potted plants to make the area welcoming.
- ☐ Add an area rug to make the room look larger.
- ☐ Minimize books to maximize shelf space.
- ☐ Clean or replace carpet or have them deep cleaned.
- ☐ Clean windows inside and out.
- ☐ Clean or replace all curtains/blinds.
- ☐ Organize any furniture to maximize the space.
- ☐ Consider adding additional light, such as lamps, to the room.
- ☐ Consider adding additional storage to the room, such as book shelves.
- ☐ Consider adding some wall art.

Preparing Your Closets



One of the main characteristics of top selling homes is that the homes provide the buyer with a lot of storage space. Often, this means closets. This may be bedroom closets, coat closets, linen closets, or whatever closets you may have in your home.

It's actually pretty ironic. Closets are intended for storage, so you would expect to store things there. However, if a potential buyer looks at your closets and they are cluttered and full of stuff, the buyer automatically thinks they will be too small to hold all of their belongings.

Cleaning and organizing all of the closets in your home will help lead you to a successful sale.



Preparing Your Closets



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ As in every other room, a fresh coat of paint never hurts.
- ☐ Lighting is an essential element in most closets. Add some.
- ☐ Donate and sell unused stuff.
- ☐ Pack up anything that can be packed up to get it out of the closet.
- ☐ Consider Installing closet organizers.
- ☐ Temporary closet racks are easy and cost effective ways to organize.
- ☐ Make closets smell good by adding a dryer sheet or two.
- ☐ Have shoe storage solutions where appropriate.
- ☐ Built-in cabinets always leave a great impression.
- ☐ Make sure the closet still fulfills it's intended purpose. If it's a coat closet, is there actually room for coats?
- ☐ It may be a good idea to empty your linen closet and refold everything and get rid of those that you no longer use.

Preparing Your Back Yard



Regardless of the condition of the home itself, potential buyers often report being turned off by a house because the backyard is in such rough shape. A beautiful kitchen might be enough for some buyers, but most don't want to take a look at the backyard and see dying grass, dirt patches, or waist-high weeds.



You don't have to turn your yard into a contest entry for a suitable return on investment, but before you put your home on the market, it's a good idea to put a little elbow grease into your yard to make the property shine.

Preparing Your Home Office or Den



Recommend Repairs

- ☐ Rake leaves.
- ☐ Cut grass.
- ☐ Repair or replace fencing.
- ☐ Put a fresh coat of paint on any wood surfaces such as wood siding, window shutters, or a faded fence.
- ☐ Re-seed or re-sod your grass.
- ☐ Install outdoor lights.
- ☐ Ensure proper drainage.
- ☐ Pick up trash & debris.
- ☐ Add flowers & shrubs.
- ☐ Remove excess or fallen trees and branches.
- ☐ Add a walkway.
- ☐ Clean out flower beds and add some fresh mulch.
- ☐ Add container plants.
- ☐ Add water feature such as a fountain or koi pond.
- ☐ Repair outdoor faucet leaks.
- ☐ Use a power washer on and hard, non-wood, surfaces.