

Better Homeowners

Four Things Sellers Should Do Before the Sign Goes in the Yard



Just like buyers should be pre-approved before they begin to look at houses, Sellers should have their home pre-approved. The reasons are similar: appeal to the "right" buyers, discover issues with the home early, improve marketability, increase negotiations position and close quicker.

For the seller, there are few things that need to be done before the sign goes in the yard and definitely before prospective buyers see the home. The first is to understand that once you decide to sell the home that it needs to appeal to the broadest base of buyers and that means depersonalizing your home.

Once the home is sold, you will need to pack your things for the new home. Think of this as starting the process early. Get moving boxes and make decisions on what you intend to give away or discard in each room and closet. Identify and pack those items before the home goes on the market. This will be the first wave of making your home more marketable.

When your home hits the market, it needs to be a neutral commodity and not "your" home. A good rule of thumb is to remove items that involve religion, hunting and sports. That means removing personal items like family photos or collections displayed in the room.

Next, in round two, go through every room to remove the items that make too large of a statement or take up too much room. Pool tables may be appropriate in a game room, but

they are not in a dining room or a living room.

Personal collections may have taken you years to accumulate and you're proud of them but the people who come to see your home will either not appreciate them or they will become distracted by looking at them instead of the home. The livability of your home needs to be the focal point. The buyers need to visualize themselves living in the property that will become "their" home.

The four most important rooms to address are the primary bedroom, kitchen, living room and dining room. These rooms have a major influence on buyers when determining whether "it is the right home." Bright colors, possibly used as accent walls, should be neutralized.

After you have depersonalized the home and removed non-essential items that could make the rooms or closets look small, you might want to consider another technique referred to as staging. Rearranging furniture so the room shows to its best advantage is simple and doesn't cost a thing. You might decide that a coffee table or statement piece would be nice and your REALTOR® or stager can suggest a place to rent it rather than buying it.

Once the home is depersonalized and staged, you are ready to have a professional photographer take the pictures that visually describe your home to potential buyers long before they ever look at the home physically. These will be used on websites, portal sites, MLS, and social media. Anyone with a point and shoot camera thinks they are a photographer but a pro with the correct wide-angle lens, who understands lighting and has an "eye" for what makes a great picture is worth every dime you'll spend.

One more consideration should be to have the home inspected before it goes on the market. It won't replace the buyer's inspections but it will discover any items that need repair and they should be done before the home goes on the market. This will probably save you money because it might cost less to repair them than they'll want in second round of negotiations when their inspector finds it.

Another benefit is that if their inspector identifies a problem area that your inspector did not, you have a basis for legitimate disagreement that could just be personal opinion instead of a "fact."

While the process of depersonalizing should take part before you put the home on the market, you'll want you have the benefit of your real estate agent's experience to help you with the process. At age 18, a person can expect to move nine more times but by age 45, they may only expect to move another 2.7 times. Your REALTOR®'s experience can be valuable not only in saving your time and money but actually, make the difference in a successful sale.



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