Preparing Your Home For The Market



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When you prepare to place your home on the market for sale it becomes a product. Just like any product on the shelves at your local store it has features & benefits, pluses & minuses, and there are other products to compare yours to. To gain an edge in your marketplace you must be priced right and look better than the competition. Sometimes it is difficult to think of your home as a mere product, but it helps to think that way so that you can get top dollar for your property and sell in a reasonable amount of time.

When you sell your home, you are going to have to move. When you move, you are going to have to pack. Most of the principles of staging just mean that you are going to pack up some of your things early. It is a little bit of work, but you are going to have to do it anyway- so let's do it now so that you can get top dollar for your property.

In 15 Seconds...
YOUR HOME WILL MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION

People make snap decisions in new situations. This is especially true during a showing of a home they are considering. In preparing your home for the market, we need to put this trait of human nature to work for us. Your home needs to make an impression such that the snap judgments of potential buyers are favorable. During the showing, the buyer will make judgments about your home as they view it through the "lens" formed in that first 15 seconds.

Remember, people judge what they cannot see by what they can see. There is so much of what a home has to offer that you cannot see. So we need to make sure that what can be seen is presented perfectly. That's the purpose behind this booklet.

4 FACTORS CONTROL THE SALE OF ANY PROPERTY

1. **Price**

2. **Terms:** This refers to market conditions: Interest rates, employment levels and confidence. We do not control any of these but they impact us as we market your home.

3. **Marketing:** Our team will be working very hard on the marketing for your property.

4. **Condition:** This can be as important as price. If condition is not model home perfect, price will have to be adjusted. If you have ever been in a model or show home, you know how great they look. When homes have that kind of appeal, they sell quickly and usually for the highest price possible. Another . interesting characteristic of good- looking homes is that, usually, the transaction is remarkably free of problems.

Price and Condition

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO HAVE PRICE AND CONDITION PERFECTED WHEN YOUR PROPERTY FIRST GOES ON THE MARKET.

Implement the suggestions in this guide as soon as possible because just like you cannot duplicate the first kiss, you cannot duplicate the debut of your property on the market.

After the initial surge of interest, the only people to look at it will be those buyers new to the marketplace. The initial impression we make with your property is critical.

Use the Checklist

The blanks in the checklist are for marking items complete.

Fix What Needs Fixing

If you have a “honey-do” list or know of items that need to be addressed at your home, do them up front. Do not let the buyer wonder if you have cared for your home. Fix anything that needs addressed upfront and avoid headaches later.

We Will Help You

Our decades of experience in the marketing and sale of homes will allow us to guide you in making low cost, high value enhancements to the positioning of your property.

Let’s Get Started...

Presence and Stature

THE IMPRESSION YOUR HOME MAKES WHEN YOU DRIVE UP THE ROAD OR DRIVEWAY TO YOUR HOME.

Any agent will tell you that one of the worst things that happens to them in the course of showing property to qualified buyers is to drive up to a home and have them say: “I don’t want to look at this house” - before you have even put the car in park. This impression is nearly impossible to overcome.

GENERAL EXTERIOR

Start by standing in front of your home with this checklist and pen. Jot down anything that leaps out at you. Then, walk around the outside of your home with this checklist in hand.

FRONT YARD

☐ 1) Shrubs and landscaping should enhance, not hide, the home. Shrubs should be lowered to, at most, the height of the home.

☐ 2) As a rule of thumb, all tree limbs should be far enough from the ground so you can walk under them.

☐ 3) Flowers add color and beauty to the home. Flowerbeds should be clean, and look good in all seasons. Make sure all beds have a sharp edge and are free of leaves and debris.

☐ 4) Keep the lawn mowed and neatly edged. A perfectly mowed lawn does wonders for presence. You may have to mow twice per week during growing season.

☐ 5) Aerate and seed any bare or thin spots in your lawn. Consider using sod if necessary.

☐ 6) Arrange for a lawn fertilization company to set up an accelerated program to keep your lawn a deep green color and weed free.

...GENERAL EXTERIOR CONTINUED

☐ 7) Mulch will do wonders to boost the presence and stature of your home at any time of the year. Always make sure all beds are freshly mulched. During the winter, at the very least, front yard and approach beds should be mulched.

☐ 8) Check your flower beds, lawn areas and driveway for weeds. It is better to pull them than to use chemicals. Chemicals take a long time to work and the dead and dying weeds look awful as they go from yellow to brown. Only use herbicides to maintain these areas once the main weeding has been complete.

☐ 9) In the fall, be sure to rake leaves from your lawn and from planting beds. This may need to be done every couple of days.

☐ 10) Inspect your property and remove all trash cans, discarded wood scraps, and trash. Re-stack wood piles if necessary and remove all storage containers, children's toys and other unnecessary objects.

☐ 11) Make sure windows are spotless. This includes frames around the windows, the sills and shutters.

☐ 12) Consider painting or cleaning any ornamental fences, light posts and railings.

☐ 13) Vacuum out and clean the glass on all of the exterior light fixtures.

☐ 14) If you have a covered entryway, add a bench or attractive set of chairs to help people imagine themselves relaxing here. If these items already exist, make sure they are clean, inviting and some place a person could actually sit.

GENERAL EXTERIOR - OTHER AREAS

☐ 1) Mow, open up and clear any pathways to water or other Amenities on your property. This includes trimming low hanging branches. It is important to remove these items as they should not line the path. (NOTE : Now is NOT a good time for view enhancement unless you have a valid vista maintenance permit. An enforcement order is like a lien on your property and is not something you want as it goes on the market.)

☐ 2) Clean up, rake and check any water features or shore line.

☐ 3) Keep driveway swept. If not paved, rake and add more gravel if needed.

☐ 4) Clean gutters & wash or paint the trim if needed.

☐ 5) Consider an exterior low pressure washing.

GENERAL EXTERIOR - FRONT DOOR

☐ 1) Consider a fresh coat of paint or varnish on the front door. At the very least, clean the door and hardware.

☐ 2) Make sure your doorbell not only functions but is not cracked or broken.

☐ 3) Keep your porch swept.

☐ 4) Have an attractive welcome mat for people to wipe their feet. A second mat inside is important during bad weather.

☐ 5) Make sure the mailbox is clean, consider cost of rust proof paint.

☐ 6) Verify house numbers are large and visible. We want to make sure buyers and agents are able to find your home.

Inside Appeal

You see your home through your heart. To get the highest price, you have to appeal to potential buyers who will see your home through cold, calculating eyes. If buyers have the choice between two comparable properties that are similar in price, they will choose the one in the best condition.

The following checklist will help you give the inside of your home the greatest presence.

☐ 1) Get the home aired out. Someone who lives in a place is the last person to notice any peculiar odor that may be obvious to visitors. However, if you do notice any bad odor, search for and destroy its source.

☐ 2) Wash all the windows inside and out. Clean the window sills and the bottoms of

the window jams. Wash the blinds and vacuum the drapes.

☐ 3) If your carpets look dirty or have not been cleaned in over a year, clean them. Buyers only know what they see .. not the way it is going to be. Unless your home is a "fixer", badly worn or very out of date carpets should be replaced before coming on the market. Offering a buyer a credit to pick their own new carpet or discount off the price is far less effective and usually ends up costing more money and slowing down the selling process. Pick a light colored short plush or Berber carpet. Realtor beige is a safe color.

☐ 4) Clean or polish all floors.

☐ 5) Clean all the closets, cabinets, and drawers. Get rid of things you have not used in the past 5 years and pack everything that you have not used the past year (this will also give you a head start on moving).

☐ 6) Make sure the closets look like they have enough room to hold additional items. Make sure doors do not stick and nothing will fall out when opened. Get everything off the floor (unless very neatly arranged) and do not have the shelves piled to the ceiling. If necessary, box up off-season clothes (this is another head start on moving). All coats should be facing in the same direction.

☐ 7) There should not be too much furniture in the rooms. You will be far better off selecting the pieces that look best and putting the others in the garage or in storage.

☐ 8) Make sure fireplace mantels are not overloaded with items on display. A couple of well-placed items like a vase or small flower arrangement are all that is needed. ,

☐ 9) Make the fireplace a focal point, the star of the room. Arrange seating to face the fireplace. Remove the television, if large and in a formal living room.

☐ 10) Clear the ashes out of any fireplace if it is not being used.
☐ 11) Clear out family photos and all other items that say "You do not live here" to a

potential buyer. Fill any holes and touch up paint from taking them down.

☐ 12) Put maximum safe wattage of light bulbs in all fixtures.

☐ 13) Clean all wall switches and replace broken plates.

☐ 14) Make sure that any pull-down staircase is strong enough to be used safely.

☐ 15) Consider whether the posters currently in your children's rooms are likely to offend any buyers. If so, store those posters for now.

☐ 16) Remove all ashtrays. If there is a smoker in the residence, all smoking must be outside (not in garage) while property is on the market.

☐ 17) Invest in some new and luxurious bedding (comforter, sheets, and accent pillows). You can take them when you move, and they will improve the look of the bedrooms while your current house is on the market.

☐ 18) If your house is the least bit dated, consider changing items that will increase your home's desirability such as dated wallpaper, light fixtures, etc

INSIDE APPEAL - KITCHEN

The kitchen may be the most important room in the home. Clean this room like your sale depends on it- because it does!

☐ 1) Clean the oven and keep it clean; even if this means eating out (or getting deliveries) more often.

☐ 2) After cleaning the range, put new drip pans under the burners or foil over the old ones.

☐ 3) Clean around the seal of the dishwasher door.

☐ 4) Look at the kitchen as if you were a health home inspector. Paying particular attention to:

a) Garbage area

b) Cracks

c) Corners

☐ 5) Make certain you get rid of all junk, broken or cracked dishes. Also remove disorganized items that have accumulated in the kitchen drawers and cabinets.

☐ 6) Keep everything put away that can be put away, especially on counters.

☐ 7) Check the cabinet doors and door handles for fingerprints.

INSIDE APPEAL - LAUNDRY ROOM

☐ 1) Put soaps and supplies in cabinets or containers.

☐ 2) Keep counters and sink clean and empty.

☐ 3) This is one room to take special care with lighting. Many laundry rooms are way too dark. Upgrade wattage in light fixtures if safe to do so.

Make sure that any pull-down staircases, such as to an attic are working. Be sure that there is a working light in the attic, if equipped.

INSIDE APPEAL - BATHROOMS

☐ 1) Repair all leaky faucets.

☐ 2) Caulk bathtubs, showers, and sinks.

☐ 3) Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold clean towels in thirds and hang onto racks each day. Purchase new towels if necessary.

☐ 4) Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs except for necessities.

☐ 5) Clean or replace shower curtains.

☐ 6) If necessary, remove the shower door for cleaning. Use solution of one part muriatic acid to 10 parts water (use goggles when mixing), then scrub with plastic scouring pad and rinse clean.

☐ 7) Fresh flower arrangements do wonders for a bathroom, both in appearance and aroma. No plug-in air fresheners or scented candles.

☐ 8) If you have pets, be sure to clean around their food areas and empty litter boxes frequently. ·

INSIDE APPEAL - GARAGE

☐ 1) Clean and sweep garage. Consider painting walls flat white and floors light gray.
☐ 2) Store any dangerous tools and arrange others neatly. Use containers and tool boxes

as necessary.

☐ 3) Vacuum pipes around heating system which are visible.

☐ 4) Check garage windows and screens. Windows should be clean and screens free of rips and tears. Windows should be checked for cracks and holes. Replace as needed.

Remove all “junk” from the attic, basement, closets, garage, and tool shed. Large storage areas appeal to buyers. Rent a storage unit and clear out as much as possible to make your home feel open and roomy.

Preparing for Your Photography Appointment

To produce the best possible listing brochure and internet tour, we recommend completing the following before we arrive to photograph your home The interior and exterior of your home will be photographed from multiple angles. Every room will be photographed, including bathrooms, laundry room and garage.

EXTERIOR

1. Front and rear yards should be clear of lawn equipment, toys and debris.

2. Schedule a mowing for the day before if possible.

3. Garage doors should be closed.

4. Cars should be in the garage or parked on the street away from the front of the house, if possible.

5. Clear lawn and gardens of leaves and fallen branches. .

6. Close lid on grill and open any deck or patio umbrellas, no matter the time of year. Built- in grills need to be spotless.

7. Tidy piled up hoses, lawn decorations, etc. .

8. If you have a pet, please pick up any messes in the yard and remove the pet from the home for your photography appointment.

INTERIOR

9. Turn on all lights to make the home as bright as possible.

10. Open all window cover-ups and shades completely.

11. Clear all unnecessary articles from counter tops, coffee tables, dressers and bathrooms.

12. Remove items that would impact the buyers' ability to focus on the home such as family photos, collectibles, piles of magazines/books, coats, boots, etc...

13. Beds should be made and all unnecessary articles should be remove from floors and doorways.

14. If you have any photos, reading materials, videos or other items that would not be appropriate for all age groups to see, please put them away.

15. Put pet food dishes and litter boxes out of view of the camera.

Showtime

Your property looks great and you have a scheduled showing appointment. Here's how to get ready quickly.

- ☐ 1) Open all drapes and window shades.
- ☐ 2) Open all doors between rooms to give an inviting feeling.
- ☐ 3) Turn on all lights including lamps.
- ☐ 4) Turn off the TV.
- ☐ 5) Look around for clutter, including newspapers and magazines and clear it away. ‘
- ☐ 6) See that the kitchen counters are free of unnecessary items and that any dirty dishes are put away. ‘
- ☐ 7) Remember to take out the trash. If you have pets, get them out of the way and take care of their food and/or litter area.
- ☐ 8) Make sure beds are made and clothes are picked up.

☐ 9) Verify that the bathroom is straightened up: toilet lids down, counter tops cleared off, towels hung neatly, etc.

☐ 10) If it is fireplace season or you have a gas log, light the fire as buyers arrive.

☐ 11) NO air fresheners or scented candles. They can aggravate allergies and create an image of covering up or masking issues.

☐ 12) Keep your home well light. Buyers will drive by at odd hours and you want your home to stand out. Keep ample lights on-both inside and out-until at least 9:00p.m. every day.

Whenever you leave the house in the morning or during the day, please leave it as if you are sure it is going to be shown.

Yes, it is difficult sometimes and it might even mean you have to get up a little earlier in order to take care of these important items, but you never know when the right people are going to look at your home. This way, you will always be ready for them!

Please try to accommodate all showings. Buyers tend to look at multiple properties during each outing and may find another before you are able to reschedule.

If your electric bill does not go up while your house is on the market- you are doing something wrong! While on the market, your house will have the lights left on in case of a showing and a comfortable temperature should be maintained.

Keep pets out of the way during showings-preferably out of the house. Many people are uncomfortable around animals and may even be allergic to them.

During a showing, leave the premises. Take a short break while your home is being shown. Buyers are intimidated when sellers are present and tend to hurry through the house. Let the buyers be at ease, and let the agents do their jobs.

Agents should leave the home exactly as it was when they arrived. They do not know if you have another showing after they leave. So, if you would like certain lights turned off or blinds closed, please leave a note at your home.

If you need the name of a painter, house cleaner, handyman, roofer, electrician, etc... just give us a call. We would be glad to refer you to vendors we have worked with and from whom we have received excellent service.

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Contact Me

Dustin Cagle
Phone/Text: 208-965-3036
Email: dustin@livinginidaho.com
Website: www.Dustin.LivingInIdaho.com

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