

Stale Listing Checklist

For Decatur & North Alabama Sellers

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If your home has been on the market and isn't moving, this checklist is built for you. Work through each section honestly — the goal is to find exactly where the disconnect is between your listing and what today's buyers are looking for. Every item includes a quick action note so you know what to do next, not just what to look for.

<p>1 AUDIT COLUMN</p> <p>Check each item that currently applies to your listing. Be honest — buyers notice what you've stopped seeing.</p>	<p>2 ACTION COLUMN</p> <p>Each checked item has a suggested next step. Use these to prioritize what to address first.</p>	<p>3 TALLY YOUR SCORE</p> <p>Count your checks at the bottom. The more boxes checked, the clearer the market signal.</p>
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01 CURB APPEAL & FIRST IMPRESSION

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?
ACTION NOTE
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Lawn is overgrown, patchy, or not recently edged</p> <p>Mow, edge, and add fresh mulch to beds before the next showing</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Exterior trim, shutters, or front door need paint or cleaning</p> <p>Power wash the exterior; repaint the front door — highest-ROI curb appeal fix</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Neighboring homes have visible neglect (fencing, yards, clutter)</p> <p>You can't control neighbors — compensate with above-average presentation on your own property</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No seasonal color at the entry — no plants, flowers, or welcoming detail</p> <p>Add two potted plants flanking the front door — inexpensive and consistently effective</p>

02 PHOTOS & ONLINE PRESENTATION

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?
ACTION NOTE
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Photos were taken on a phone or by a non-professional</p> <p>Hire a professional real estate photographer — the single highest-leverage marketing fix available</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Photos are dark, blurry, or show clutter in the background</p> <p>Reshoot before relisting — dark photos are the #1 reason buyers skip requesting a showing</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Fewer than 20 photos in the listing</p> <p>Buyers expect to tour the home online first — more quality photos means more in-person showings</p>
<p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Listing description is generic or missing key buyer search terms</p> <p>Rewrite with specific features, school zone, commute proximity, and any recent updates</p>

03 CONDITION

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?

ACTION NOTE

Pet, smoke, or moisture smells present in the home

Deep clean, replace HVAC filters, and consider ozone treatment — smell ends showings faster than anything else

Home feels cluttered or has personal items on display throughout

Declutter and depersonalize — buyers need to picture themselves there, not you

Dated finishes (old carpet, popcorn ceiling, fixtures) that haven't been updated

Get contractor estimates before spending — some updates pencil out in resale value, some don't

Floor plan or layout is a known challenge (awkward flow, poor bedroom placement, small rooms)

Layout issues can't be renovated away — they must be priced in. Don't spend on cosmetics to solve a floor plan problem

Visible deferred maintenance during a showing (sticking doors, worn caulk, dripping faucets)

Small repairs have outsized impact on buyer confidence — fix the obvious items before the next showing

04 COMPETITION YOU MAY NOT HAVE CONSIDERED

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?

ACTION NOTE

Relocation buyers in your price range are also considering Athens, Madison, or Huntsville

Ask your agent for a cross-market comparison — relocation buyers compare across counties, not just neighborhoods

An active new construction subdivision is nearby or in your same price range

Know what builders are offering (rate buydowns, design incentives) — your price and terms need to account for it

You have not reviewed active competing listings in the last 30 days

Pull current active listings at your price point and ask: why would a buyer choose mine over those?

05 SHOWING ACCESS

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?

ACTION NOTE

Showings require 24 or more hours of advance notice

Reduce to 1-hour notice or lockbox — buyers touring on Saturdays won't wait for a callback

Showing windows are limited to fewer than 5 days per week

Open every available window — access restrictions are invisible price reductions

Pets are in the home during showings

Remove pets entirely — a barking dog or pet smell can become the one thing a buyer remembers about the showing

06 PRICING & TERMS

AUDIT — DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR HOME?

ACTION NOTE

Price is based on what a neighbor sold for 6 to 12 months ago, not recent closed sales

Pull closed comps from the last 30 to 45 days only — the 2026 Decatur market has shifted from last year

Price has not been compared against currently active competing listings

Buyers compare active listings side by side — if yours is higher than comparable active homes, it will sit

Known condition issues (layout, location, deferred maintenance) are not reflected in the list price

Buyers subtract for every issue they see — price it in before they do it for you at the offer stage

No seller concessions or closing cost help offered in a market where buyers expect them

Talk to your agent about current buyer expectations on terms — price alone isn't always the right lever

Home has been on the market 45 or more days without a price adjustment

Extended days on market trains buyers to assume something is wrong — a strategic adjustment resets that perception

YOUR TALLY

of **20**

Checked Total Items

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

1-4 Minor gaps. A few targeted fixes may be all you need before re-engaging buyers.

5-9 Meaningful friction. Multiple areas need attention. A strategy conversation is worth having before a price drop.

10+ The market is sending a clear signal. Address high-impact items first, then reassess your price with current data.

Not sure where to start?

If you've worked through this checklist and want a second set of eyes on your listing, I'm glad to help. I'll tell you honestly what the market is saying and what options you have — including ones that don't involve just dropping the price.

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