



PATHWAY TO
PREPARING YOUR
HOME FOR SALE



Professionals

It's often the little things that attract people to your home, assisting you to sell faster and at a better price. With just a small amount of effort and a few tips from this guide, you can make your home shine.



Your home

Deciding to put your home on the market can be an emotional decision, packed with past memories of milestones and celebrations. These four walls are where you have created your individual lifestyle, reflecting your desires and aspirations. As you leave this part of your life, a new person moves into the home. The decisions that this buyer makes can be aided by you, by making the right decision in the presentation of your home.

An effective way of enhancing your home for visual impact in the market is to walk around your home, inside and out and be critical of what you see. It's a good idea to have an impartial person with you for an honest opinion.

Your aim should be to 'present' your home in such a way that it looks its absolute best. Consider the best features of your home and most importantly put yourself in the buyer's shoes. If you notice any objectionable features then you can be sure that the buyer will too.

Remember the three R's, 'Repair, Revamp and Reap the rewards'.



The goal is to make your home the most appealing on the market. We want you to participate in the process of preparing your home for sale.

Street appeal

Street appeal is what initially gains the attention of the buyer. How does your house look from the street? As with everything, first impressions are crucial. A buyer should be interested enough to be enticed to come within. If it looks good from the outside, an expectation arises that it will be just as good on the inside.

The great outdoors

How to create a competitive edge

- Front door - A newly painted front door with polished fixtures and freshly painted entrance can become a welcoming invite to buyers. Make sure the doorbell works.
- Entrance - A simple welcome mat alongside flowering potted plants can contribute to the entrance appeal.
- Windows - Windows should be cleaned to sparkle, with no fingerprints or grime visible. This will create an open and more spacious aura to the house. If windows have fly screens, ensure there are no holes or tears.
- Lawn and garden - Lawns should be mowed, raked, edged and groomed to perfection. Prune the shrubs and trees to let natural light in. Ensure gardens and hedges are manicured, if there is time reseed pots and plant some annual colourful flowers to give the impression of a healthy, luxurious garden. Roll up the garden hose and put away all garden items. Clear all spider webs. Don't forget to get rid of all the rubbish and have rubbish bins out of sight.
- Driveway - Driveways should be free of leaves, dirt and oil stains. Make sure any pathways are swept clean.
- Letterbox - Numbers should be prominently displayed. All junk mail should be removed and letterboxes newly painted if appropriate.
- Fence and gate - If a fence surrounds the house it should be spotless, mould free and well secured. Gates should be well oiled with latches working. If possible they should be newly painted.

- Shed and garage - Have a good clear out of all rubbish so that the buyer can actually see the space available.
- Paint - The outdoors is an extension of the indoors, so again, tidiness is vital. If the outdoor area is painted, make sure there is no cracked paint or holes. It has been said that cracked paint can reduce the value of a home by thousands.
- Gutters - Clean out the gutters and if appropriate paint the gutters and drainpipes.
- Furniture - The outdoors can add significant value to your property, so make use of your garden, deck or verandah. Arrange some outdoor furniture, clean the BBQ and add some 'visual stunners' such as a pair of big pots brimming with healthy plants. Make sure the outdoor tables are immaculate.

A neat, tidy outdoors sends a confident message to the buyer that care for the home extends further than simply the exterior.





The inside

Buyers look for homes, not houses. The feeling inside your home will improve its desirability. Therefore, concentration needs to be centred on creating the right atmosphere and the achievement of this does not have to cost a fortune. Remember, a house is a celebration of the everyday, so a bit of natural clutter such as a notepad by the telephone, a pile of hand-picked magazines, coffee table books or a daily newspaper are expected. What is not acceptable is dirt and mess.

- De-clutter - It is vital that a home is neat and tidy. Ruthlessly de-clutter and consider removing furniture to make rooms appear larger than they really are. Take down posters, remove excess knick-knacks and keep cupboards orderly. Your items may be precious to you, but a buyer needs the visual freedom to imagine their sofa in your lounge room, their family in your kitchen and their BBQ on your deck.
- Pets - Not everyone is an animal lover. The sight of a dog bowl, animal hair and saliva on your couch can put off a potential buyer, not to mention the smell of food and litter trays. One of the most common cause of allergies is from animals, so it is more than likely that one of the potential buyers may be affected. If your home is pet friendly make sure you deodorise the entire house and remove accessories such as bowls, litter trays, beds and toys from view.
- Space - Too much furniture equates to the buyer not being able to see what they really want in a home... space. Although de-cluttering is essential, do not go overboard and create a sterile interior with minimal warmth. Buyers are attracted to a home because of its welcoming, clean and friendly ambience, presenting a lifestyle to which they aspire.
- Emotional bond - In today's marketplace, creating an emotional bond between the buyer and the home is the key to selling success. The home buyer must become emotionally involved and somewhat attached to generate a sale. By creating an environment that is conducive to a buyer's wants and needs, the seller has a greater opportunity for capturing a better sale price.



Atmosphere

Atmosphere is primarily created by lighting. The mood generated by lighting can have a vast effect on potential buyers. Bright light makes a small space appear larger and softer light creates a warm, intimate feel. So if there are dim areas in your home turn the lights on, even if there is sunshine outside. Open all window coverings and leave some doors tantalizingly open, especially doors leading to living areas. This can generate curiosity and anticipation for what is to come.

An uncluttered interior makes a house look bigger than it is and a simple coordinated décor can be very appealing. Neutral colours, soft textures and plenty of light will make a room a pleasant place to be in.

Clean unobstructed windows let the natural light in which helps bring the garden into view. Today outdoor living is almost as important as indoors. As a buyer walks through the home, every positive point builds a subtle advantage in the minds of a buyer.

Create a comfortable temperature. If it's hot, put the air-conditioning or ceiling fans on. If it's cold, a fire or heater can be very comforting.

Sense of smell

It is important to create pleasant smells, but not overwhelming aromas as this may lead a buyer to think you are trying to conceal something. Pay particular attention to strong cooking odours in the kitchen, pet smells and cigarette smoke. Make sure the rubbish has been emptied. These factors can greatly affect a buyer's feeling and attitude towards your home.

Enhance smells with the use of candles, fresh flowers, fruit bowls or try boiling a cinnamon stick or lemon peel. These will give a fresh clean scent and can heighten appeal and emotional attachment.

With the sound of music

Don't be hesitant about playing soft background music, but make sure it is the right genre. Retail specialists have proven that light classical music makes buyers stay longer and spend more time and money. Why not use it to your advantage and make your home even more attractive to potential buyers.



The bathroom and kitchen are of high importance, especially to a woman who is usually the major decision maker. As high traffic areas they are key features of a home, so they need to be functional and practical.

Bathroom

Bathrooms have the power to restore your soul and have noticeably been transformed from the purely functional to super chic. Simple ways of updating your bathroom can come from new knobs, a towel rack or the addition of fluffy towels, or some aromatherapy candles and perfumed soaps can simulate a clean, sanitary and pleasant bathroom. A good thorough clean of the shower screen, mirrors and grouting will add sparkle to this important room.

Kitchen

Make sure the kitchen benches are clean and clear of clutter. Store away all the unnecessary appliances and ensure there are no dirty dishes in the dishwasher or sink. Remove any clutter on the fridge doors. Tidy cupboards and the pantry as buyers often look in there. Polish sinks, taps, benchtops and appliances.

Laundry

Ensure there is no washing in the machines or being displayed in hampers, on lines, clothes horses or on benchtops. Store ironing board neatly away.

Bedrooms

Make the beds and create a luxurious atmosphere with large cushions. Open the curtains to allow the light in.

It's in the detail

Ask yourself if your home is physically fit? This doesn't have to equate to expensive repairs and alterations. Buyers can be poor judges of the cost of repairs and can allow a large margin for error when making an offer on such a property.

- Minor repairs - These play a part when buyers make their decision. It is highly recommended you fix broken screens, doorbells, locks and latches. Replace lightbulbs, handles or doorknobs and fix leaking taps.
- Carpets - It's amazing the difference professionally cleaned carpets can make.
- Floor tiles - Throughout the house make sure the tiles are clean. A useful tip is to use bicarbonate soda and vinegar with a toothbrush to clean any stained grouting between tiles.
- Safety and security concerns - If there is exposed wire it can cause major safety concerns, so hide any unsightly wiring to stereos, televisions or computers. Missing switch covers and electrical plates should be replaced. All doors and windows should close and lock securely. Latches should be well oiled to open and close easily.
- Appearance - An attractive and smart appearance will enhance your home's appeal. A property which is poorly presented and not well maintained is a red flag for the buyer. It exposes "beware there is too much work to be done here!"

Make sure your home is free of imperfections and do the little things you have been meaning to do. It can make the difference between making a sale or being stale.

A buyer is looking for a home, not a house. Dress your home for success.

The time has come

By now all your efforts will be evident and you may feel you want to tell the buyer how great your home is. However, most buyers will feel uncomfortable meeting you and consequently they tend to spend less time in your home and ask less questions of the agent for fear of offending you.

At this crucial stage your agent is really the best person to communicate to the buyer positive aspects and desirability of your home. Remember, your agent is working for you.

Establish the positives - Sometimes what you think may not be a selling feature can turn out to be a positive point. Consider a small garden. Some people do not want the maintenance of a large yard, especially professional couples and retired people looking to downsize.

Perceived negatives can easily become positives, depending on what buyers want and how they look at it.

Trust your agent - Your agent is a skilled professional and will work with you to highlight those special features that will win the heart of buyers.



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