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# Maryland Real Estate Professionals

## 44 Moneymaking Tips For Preparing Your Home To Sell

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*Here's A Quick And Easy Checklist Of  
Inexpensive Ways To Make Buyers  
Instantly Attracted To Your Home...*

# The Way You Live In A Home And The Way You Sell A Home Are TWO Very Different Things!

Dear Homeowner,

Each year thousands of homeowners unnecessarily lose money when they sell their homes. They don't lose money because someone took advantage of them. And they don't lose money because it wasn't "marketed" well.

## **Even Seasoned Homeowners Lose Thousands of Dollars Because They Didn't Know About The Important Factors That Influence The Value Of Their Homes**

If you desire to sell your home for top dollar, and in your time frame, you need to do two things: 1) Get control of your personal emotions about your home, and 2) Place yourself in the shoes of potential buyers. Look at your home the way they would, and make it appealing in the right areas.

I know that putting your "homeowner emotions" aside may be tough to do. But doing so will help you to position your home to sell for top dollar, and in your time frame.

After all, selling your home is very different from any other financial transaction. Your house isn't just a "*thing*." It's your HOME!

It's the place where you raised your children. The place where you hold countless family memories...Thanksgiving dinners, family reunions, birthdays, anniversaries and more. It's the place where you solved problems over the kitchen table late at night.

So it's no surprise that selling your home may involve a bit of sadness, fear...or even excitement for the next move in your life.

Try not to let these emotions get in the way of a prudent sale. The tips and suggestions in this report will help.

## **Here Are Six Problems Your Home May Have That Can Instantly Turn Buyers Off**

Potential buyers are much more likely to return to a home that impresses them at first glance, while homes that appear disorderly or poorly maintained seldom sustain buyer interest.

- 1. Home Odors.** Because homeowners become desensitized to the odors in their homes, they rarely realize how obvious odors can be to visitors. This is particularly true of pet owners and smokers.

2. **Carpet and Flooring.** One of the most visible areas of your home is your flooring. If your carpet is worn or dirty, get it replaced or cleaned. If you have vinyl flooring with corners coming up, get it glued down. Special note: Replacing flooring in smaller areas, such as kitchens, with high quality flooring can bring in premiums in price.
3. **Paint and Walls.** Paint is one of the least expensive ways to “spruce-up” your home. Consider painting outside trim and interior walls and doors.
4. **Clutter.** Excess clutter is a big buyer turn-off. You have to move anyway, so you might as well pack away items that make your home feel good to you, but turn off buyers. This includes nick-knacks, furniture, pictures, wall hangings, plants, etc.
5. **Signs of Pests.** If you have any sign of mice, rats, roaches, spiders, or bees, you should immediately contact a local pest control company and have them eliminated. There’s no better way to show your home is filthy than by infestations. Remove all spider webs with a broom.
6. **Landscaping.** If your landscaping is messy, overgrown, or looks cluttered in any way, you need to fix it. Buyers make positive or negative conclusions about your home within the first five minutes. Don’t lose the battle before you’ve even begun.

There’s no doubt about it: first impressions count with buyers. That’s why I prepared this 44 fail-proof list of simple, quick, and inexpensive things you can do to prepare your home for sale.

I divided them into three categories: **1) Exterior of home, 2) Interior of home, and 3) How to show your home for maximum profit.**

## **Exterior Of Your Home**

Overall, buyers are looking for a home that looks clean, neat, and well-maintained. By addressing exterior issues, you immediately give your buyers a positive “first impression.”

Here are 13 first impression items to examine:

- Tip #1: Get into your car and drive away from your home. Drive towards your home the way a potential buyer would. Notice your first impressions of your home. Is the landscaping well groomed? How about the driveway and curb? Can you easily see the architecture of the home, or is it blocked by trees and bushes. Notice your roof. Is it in good condition? Make a list of items that need attention.
- Tip #2: Paint your front door and mailbox. Polish your door and entry hardware.

- ❑ Tip #3: Make sure your doorbell is functional.
- ❑ Tip #4: Wash or thoroughly clean wood, aluminum, and vinyl sided homes. You can hire a contractor to pressure wash an entire house for about \$200. Pressure washing can remove dirt, grime, peeling paint, and mildew.
- ❑ Tip #5: Rake leaves, trim shrubbery and trees, cut the lawn, and plant a few new, fresh flowers. Put down fresh mulch or peat moss around shrubs and flower beds.
- ❑ Tip #6: Sweep and hose off the walkways and driveways. Pressure wash if necessary.
- ❑ Tip #7: Clean the gutters and extend downspouts to prevent flooding or basement water seepage.
- ❑ Tip #8: Organize the garage. Get rid of clutter by either putting it in boxes, or pack ahead of time and rent a storage locker for your garage belongings. Make sure you wash your car.
- ❑ Tip #9: Check the locks of your home at both the entry, back entry, and garage. Locks can give a first impression of a home that needs maintenance. And they're the first thing a buyer sees. A small dab of graphite will make them work like new.
- ❑ Tip #10: Clean oil stains from your driveway and garage. This is best achieved by using poultice with Portland cement. Scrub with a detergent and rinse. Clean rust stains beneath rails with the commercial product, Zud.
- ❑ Tip #11: Clean up any litter in the yard or walkways. Remove any leaves or debris in the yard or walkways.
- ❑ Tip #12: Touch-up the paint on the exterior of the home if necessary. In some cases, it pays to repaint the entire exterior if it hasn't received a coat of paint in years. Hardwood trim on the exterior of the home can make or break its appearance. Make sure it looks clean.
- ❑ Tip #13: Look for any cracks in exterior plaster, and make sure they're fixed and repainted to match exterior paint.

## **Interior Of Your Home**

There's a little known secret about home buyers that you need to know. People buy homes based on the emotional FEELINGS they get from the home. They fall in love, for example, with the kitchen or the master bedroom. Or perhaps the roaring fire in the family room fireplace touched off an old memory.

And while they're viewing your home, they're visualizing in their mind's eye what it would be like to live there – the backyard barbecues they'll host...Sunday dinners with

family...college graduation celebrations of their children. Or simply relaxing in the backyard hammock.

It's all about emotions. And if your home doesn't feel right, you will quickly lose interest from buyers.

So remember this: Purchase decisions are EMOTIONAL. Once a decision to buy is made, we usually justify our purchase with logical reasons.

By dressing the interior of your home right, you'll encourage your buyers to stay. People buy with their eyes, ears and noses, and the longer they stay in your home, the greater the likelihood of an offer.

Here are 18 interior tips to help you "dress" the interior of your house so it feels like home to your buyers.

- Tip #14: The entry way sets first impressions. So make sure it's in great condition with fresh paint and clean floors. If the entry tile floor has build-up, consider using a commercial stripper and re-waxing.
- Tip #15: Clear out about one-third to one-half of your furniture. You want your home to look uncluttered, and the rooms to feel open and bright. The average home has too much furniture for showing, and you need to move anyhow. So you might as well pack away any furniture that clutters any rooms in the home.
- Tip #16: Put away nick-knacks and items that make the home look overly personal to YOU. You do not want your buyer feeling that they would never fit in the home because it has so many of your personal items in it. Put away cluttered photos and other objects that will detract away from the home.
- Tip #17: Do a thorough interior maintenance review. Oil squeaky doors, tighten doorknobs, clean and repair ALL windows, and repair leaking taps and toilets. Look for chipped paint and cracked plaster or drywall that needs repairing.
- Tip #18: It is a good idea to have all windows professionally washed. And clean all window shades and blinds.
- Tip #19: Replace all burned-out light bulbs and clean lighting fixtures.
- Tip #20: GIVE YOUR HOME A SPACIOUS LOOK. If you've ever toured a model home, you've noticed that the home is spacious and bright. Make your home look the same by: 1) Clear out stairs and halls of clutter and excess furniture, 2) Clear counters in the kitchen and bathrooms, and 3) Make closets and storage areas neat and tidy.
- Tip #21: Make sure your home is clean by doing the following: 1) Shampoo carpets, 2) Clean washer, dryer, and laundry tubs, 3) Clean the furnace, 4) Clean the

refrigerator and stove, 5) Clean and freshen the bathrooms. Hire a professional cleaning service if needed. The money you spend on these areas will come back to you in purchase price.

- ❑ Tip #22: Wax or polish floors, and glue down any seams if you have vinyl flooring.
- ❑ Tip #23: Make sure windows and doors operate properly and lubricate closet door tracks with a silicon spray.
- ❑ Tip #24: Glue loose wallpaper seams and remove soiled wallpaper.
- ❑ Tip #25: Clean around fireplaces and remove ashes.
- ❑ Tip #26: Organize all closets, pack up unnecessary items for storage, and put all toys away.
- ❑ Tip #27: Make sure all beds are made, bedrooms are neat and clean, and laundry is clean and folded.
- ❑ Tip #28: Consider holding a yard sale BEFORE you place your home on the market to get rid of excess items that can make your home look cluttered or small.

Bathrooms and kitchen are some of the most influential areas of a home. Spending a small amount of money in these areas frequently nets owners many times their investment. Here are a few suggestions for each.

- ❑ Tip #29: Your Bathrooms. Repair loose tiles. Remove loose grout using a grout file, and apply new grout. Faded tile colors can be improved using an epoxy spray. Remove old tub and tile caulking with a hooked scraper, install new white silicone tub, and tile caulk. Concentrate on areas such as counter corners, shower corners, and base of toilet. Clean mildewed caulk by spraying Tilex, or use diluted chlorine bleach and let stand for at least 30 minutes before rinsing. Old tubs can often be sprayed with an epoxy coating. Remove all soap scum and dirt build-ups. Again, diluted chlorine bleach will help here. Clean glass doors with vinegar, and replace badly soiled shower curtains. Don't forget to vacuum exhaust fans.
- ❑ Tip #30: Your Kitchen. Clean ovens thoroughly. Clean cook tops and exhaust fans. Remember to clean behind your appliances. Double-check all burners to make sure they're working. Defrost freezers, and thoroughly clean the interior of your refrigerator. Remove mold from refrigerator gaskets. Empty the water collection tray under the refrigerator. Neatly arrange soaps and cleaning accessories. Thoroughly wash fronts of cabinets using Murphy's Oil Soap or Pine Sol. Cover counter burns with ceramic tile or heat resistant glass. Make sure all handles are securely in place. Install new shelf and drawer liners.

- ❑ Tip # 31: Save your receipts. If you need to make substantial repairs to your home, save the receipts in a manila envelope. This will show what has been updated in the home.

## **How To Show Your Home For Maximum Profit**

There's a right way to show a home...and a wrong way. Many homeowners lose money, or turn-off buyers because they simply didn't know how to handle a home showing. Here are 13 tips that will help you show your home for maximum profit:

- ❑ Tip #32: Save those receipts. If you completed any substantial work on your home, save the receipts and **ONLY** take them out if someone questions the value of the work performed (in the negotiating process). Many times extra work will increase the value of your home beyond your costs. So only use the receipts if you need support to justify the work.
- ❑ Tip #33: Save those utility bills. Buyers frequently have questions about utility costs of owning a home. If you have past utility bills, you will greatly increase your credibility and help provide precise answers to important questions. Save electric, gas, water, oil, sewage, and waste management bills.
- ❑ Tip #34: Go away during organized showings. There's a crowd when your home is being shown. The only exception to this rule is if you have specific knowledge about features of the home a Realtor cannot answer. But in most cases, don't stay.
- ❑ Tip #35: Turn on **ALL** lights. Illumination is like a welcome sign.
- ❑ Tip #36: Open all drapery and bring in as much natural light as possible. Buyers hate dark homes. Anything you can do to brighten your home will help.
- ❑ Tip #37: Turn off any radios and TV's. Turn off the football game. Tell the kids that the loud music will need a reprieve while the home is being shown. Occasionally very soft, background music can enhance a showing. But generally, no music at all is your best bet.
- ❑ Tip #38: Plan a pleasant aroma. Cinnamon sticks or vanilla boiled in a pot of water on the stove emit pleasant aromas and make a home smell inviting. Apple and cherry wood smoldering in a fireplace do the same. And who can resist the smell of apple pie or fresh bread baking in the kitchen. Often, these pleasant smells can override other odors your home may have.
- ❑ Tip #39: Keep pets out of the home during showings. It's best to keep them out of the home for an entire day before an open house.
- ❑ Tip #40: Do **NOT** volunteer conversation. Be courteous but don't force conversation with a potential buyer. They want to inspect your home, not make a social call.

- ❑ Tip #41: Stay positive: Never apologize for the appearance of your home. Let the showing Realtor answer any objections – they’re trained to know how.
- ❑ Tip #42: DO NOT Tag Along. It makes buyers fearful and uncomfortable. The showing Realtor knows the buyer’s requirements and can better emphasize the features of your home. They will call you if needed.
- ❑ Tip #43: Never negotiate during a showing. Let your Realtor discuss price, terms, possessions, and other items with any potential buyers. If any negotiations arise prior to an offer, politely request the buyer to submit an offer and you can consider it.

### **Tip #44: Protect Your Largest Investment By Getting REALTOR® Representation**

Do you remember the old riddle that goes, “*What do you call the person who graduated dead-last in their medical school class?*”

Answer: “DOCTOR!”

Well, it’s the same with real estate agents. Someone with vast experience and extraordinary professionalism usually costs the same as someone with little or no experience, or with compromising standards. You need to know how to tell the difference up front.

Choosing a competent and experienced realtor can mean the difference between a higher negotiated sales price and losing money, selling in less time or in more time (costing you potentially \$1,000’s in added interest), and experiencing problems and hassles or a problem-free transaction.

Our community is loaded with agents who are wrong for you, your area, and your home. Some agents are in business part time for a little extra cash. Others are subsidizing other businesses or careers. And then there’s your “*cousin Harry,*” whom you feel obligated to because he “*really needs your business.*”

Selling your home is probably the most important financial transaction you will ever make. That’s why I take my business so seriously. It’s also why I have developed customized home marketing programs meant specifically for your situation.

### **WHY ME?**

Here’s why you should consider my services to market your home:



- I have a full time assistant, a full-time marketing specialist, two offices, three computers, two cellular phones, a pager, three phone lines, six voice-messaging hotlines, a dedicated fax, and a toll-free phone number.

**I'm not telling you these things to impress you, but to impress UPON YOU the difference between agents who simply "sell" real estate, and those who commit to whatever it takes to serve a client beyond their expectations!**

- I've been in real estate for five years, and sold over \$35 million of homes. I am intimately familiar with [neighborhood/area], and specialize in selling homes in [price range].
- I am a full-time REALTOR®. I am well-educated. I have a complete resume for your review, and make it a priority to educate YOU on every aspect of your transaction.
- I have a list of references, past clients, and professional associations whom you can call at any time to discuss the quality of service I have provided to other people just like YOU.
- I have developed an EXCLUSIVE [28 Step] marketing plan that is unequalled by anyone in the business. I do this because my dedication to selling your home is also unsurpassed. There's no other way I can live up to that expectation without extraordinary marketing capabilities.
- I have specifically designed marketing tracking systems for every home I sell. I also have specific update systems so you are fully aware of ALL activity and progress updates on your home on a weekly basis. You will never feel out of touch with me!
- I guarantee everything I do! If you're not happy with me, you may fire me. This places the burden of risk to perform on ME, not you.
- I have references for reliable title companies, escrow companies, financing sources many agents are clueless about, insurance companies, inspectors, attorneys, and others directly relating to your transaction. If you choose to use any of them, you won't be dealing with arbitrary people. These are professionals I have used personally in other transactions.
- I schedule showings around your schedule, and to respect your personal and family time. This requires special planning and forethought most agents do not consider.
- Each day, I speak with over 80 people directly related to real estate buying or selling. This allows me to create a communication link of properties to people.
- Most importantly: I generate over 80% of my clients through referrals alone. I do very little traditional marketing. Instead, I focus 110% of my efforts into providing such outstanding service, my clients are inclined to refer my services to family, friends, and acquaintances.

On the surface, it may seem there are many Realtors from which to choose. But just because there are many Realtors out there doesn't mean they can all do the same job for you.

## **Real Estate Agents Are NOT All The Same!**

I have enclosed with this report a special coupon. By simply calling my toll-free number at 301-418-8640, I'll share with you my exclusive "*Maximum Home Value Audit.*" Here's what you'll get, absolutely FREE and without obligation whatsoever:

- I'll conduct a careful, thorough valuation of your home, based on real world facts, in an EASY to understand format. You won't get any inflated values just to pressure you into listing with me.

And you won't get anything like "*I have a buyer right now who's interested in your specific home, and if you list with me, I'll bring him by right now.*"

With me, you'll get NO pressure. No arm twisting. Just a real world, honest, fact-filled analysis.

- I'll tour your home to identify items that could negatively affect your selling price. As I mentioned earlier, many of my findings could bring as much as \$10 in extra sales price for every \$1 you invest. By the end of my tour, you'll have a checklist of strategies designed to "*position*" your home to sell for the most money possible.
- I'll share with you my *28 Step Exclusive Home Marketing Plan*. My plan will give you insider secrets on how to promote your home properly, how to handle buyers, how to avoid crime, and much more.
- I believe in incentives, so here's one just to "sweeten the pot." If you call before the expiration date marked on the coupon, AND if you select me to market your home, I'll provide a FREE HOME INSPECTION by a licensed inspector to identify potential problems that could kill a sale. That's a [\$400] value I'll include absolutely FREE.
- PLUS, I guarantee everything I do. If any other agent won't guarantee their services, ask them why? You're staking the successful sale of your home on their abilities, why shouldn't they stake their commission the very same way. I place my priorities in the same place as yours. We're in this together!
- When selling your home, the LAST thing you need is added pressure. That's why I'll answer all of your questions. And give you one less thing to worry about during these hectic times.

**But Please Don't Wait!**

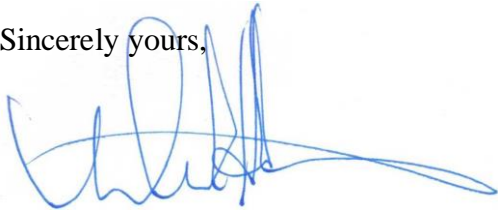
You'll notice I placed an expiration date for your Free Home Inspection on the attached coupon. I did this for a very good reason. I enjoy working with clients, and sometimes my practice gets booked up fast. In order to make sure I have undivided time for you, I need to hear from you immediately so there are no conflicts in scheduling our meeting.

Plus, I know there's a natural tendency to procrastinate—to put off important decisions. But the more you procrastinate, the more pressure ultimately rests with you.

**By Not Acting Now, You Could Open Yourself To  
Losing Thousands Of Dollars**

So call now at 301-418-8640, and I'll immediately arrange a convenient time to meet, and share with you my *Maximum Home Value Audit*. It's Free. It's FAST. And it could save you \$1,000's on your home sale.

Sincerely yours,



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P.S. Once you have read this report completely, make a list of areas you would like to discuss. Call me at 301-418-8640 to schedule your *Maximum Home Value Audit*. My exclusive audit could save you thousands of dollars. And it's Free, and without obligation. So before you get distracted, call now!

**Sell Your Home For TOP DOLLAR, Eliminate Costly Pitfalls, And Get A FREE Home Inspection [\$400 value]...**

*Maximum Home Value Audit*  
**COUPON**

The bearer of this coupon is entitled to receive a Free, No *Obligation Maximum Home Value Audit*. Your audit will include:

- A complete, fact filled, easy to understand valuation of your home.
- I'll tour your home to identify items that could negatively affect your selling price. Many of my findings could bring as much as \$10 in extra sales price for every \$1 you invest.
- Reveal to you my exclusive [*28 Step Home Marketing Plan*] designed to sell your home for every penny it's worth, in YOUR time frame, and with the least pressure and hassles!
- A RESULTS Guarantee of my services.
- **SPECIAL BONUS:** There's no obligation whatsoever, but if we end up working together, I'll provide a **FREE HOME INSPECTION**, a [\$400 value.] to identify potential pitfalls that could jeopardize a successful sale and cost you thousands. You'll feel confident your home's ready to sell!

Call now at 301-418-8640 or write [FREEAudit@MDREPros.com](mailto:FREEAudit@MDREPros.com)

Mark Hewitson  
Maryland Real Estate Professionals w/ REMAX Realty Plus