

Tricks To Selling Your Property For Top Dollar

Every property, no matter how well kept or decorated, needs to be spruced up for sale for one simple reason: How you live in your home and how you market and sell your house are two entirely different things.

You may have beautiful furniture, special collections, and pictures of family members throughout your home, but you aren't selling those things. You're selling your house, which is now simply a product on the market that the public will walk through to decide if they want your property over another that also meets their requirements. They are not visiting to admire your things or how you live, but to decide if they want to live there and how much work, structural or otherwise, they may have to do to make it their home.

Most people walking through a home have very little imagination. They only know what they see, not the way it could be. Trying to look at your property through the eyes of a buyer is a tough thing to do, but very important. If one room has been used for storage or is a cluttered multi use office/gym and you're advertising it as a bedroom, then redecorating it will help you sell the property faster.

The first step is to lighten, brighten and de-clutter. Make sure that your house is clean and neutral from top to bottom. The easiest way to get started is to begin packing for your move. Think about what you can live without while your house is on the market. Non-seasonal clothing, the pile of magazines you're planning on reading in your spare time, toys the children won't miss for a while, and the bread maker on your kitchen counter can certainly be boxed up in order to show off the size of your closets and bedrooms, and the amount of kitchen counter space you have.

Next, rearrange the remaining furnishings and accessories to showcase the assets of each room. A general rule of thumb is that less is more. Don't have seating for 10 in your dining room. By taking a leaf out of the table and placing only 4 chairs around it you make the room look larger. The strategic placement of pictures, mirrors, and lamps can make a dark corner brighter or become an interesting reading nook. Also consider the colors throughout the house. Rich blue walls in your bedroom or pink carpet in your living room may be your cup of tea, but might be a deterrent for others and difficult to coordinate with their furnishings, so they may either ask for a price reduction or move on to the next house on their list. Play devil's advocate. If you have a question about whether you need to change something, you probably should.

Then give your entire property a good spring-cleaning. Dust, mop, steam clean, deodorize, and detail the interior; power-wash, mow, weed, and add colorful plantings to the exterior. More than 50 percent of buyers will drive by a property before making an appointment, so make sure that your landscaping is in tip top shape. Remember that first impressions will make or break a deal so have your house ready before anyone views your property. The longer a house sits on the market, the less interest it will receive.

The fastest and most cost effective way to sell your home is to hire a good marketing team consisting of a qualified Realtor and an accredited stager. A Realtor will help you navigate the many legal and financial paths you must travel when selling a property, and make sure that you get the exposure you need. A stager will help to make sure that you are spending your preparation dollars in only those areas that will make the most difference to your bottom line, so that you can realize the full potential of your equity.

Stagers will help you to decide what items need to be packed up, whether to replace the flooring or to paint the walls, offer simple ways to improve landscaping, and discuss decorating ideas to show your house in its best possible light. With proper decorating and the clever placement of items, a good stager can highlight the areas you want to showcase and mitigate any concerns a potential buyer might have. Most stagers own a warehouse full of furniture and accessories that can be brought in to supplement what you already have if necessary, or to decorate a vacant home. Just as cluttered homes look small and hide the property's assets, vacant homes are difficult to visualize decorated. The rooms feel smaller than they may actually be because there is no reference to size and scale.

One of the other benefits to hiring a qualified Stager is that they consider the target market for your property and decorate accordingly. Will your house and neighborhood be attractive for first time buyers, young families, or busy professionals? The placement of furniture, the type of accessories, and the emotional relationship we create is all part of marketing and the way stagers help you and your Realtor sell your property for top dollar.

Regardless of the temperature of the market or how much inventory is out there, a properly prepared house will usually sell faster and for more money than one that is cluttered, dirty, or vacant.

(Suzanne Morrison Suzanne Morrison owns Joyful Surroundings Home Staging and Design and can be reached at 707-769-0107.)