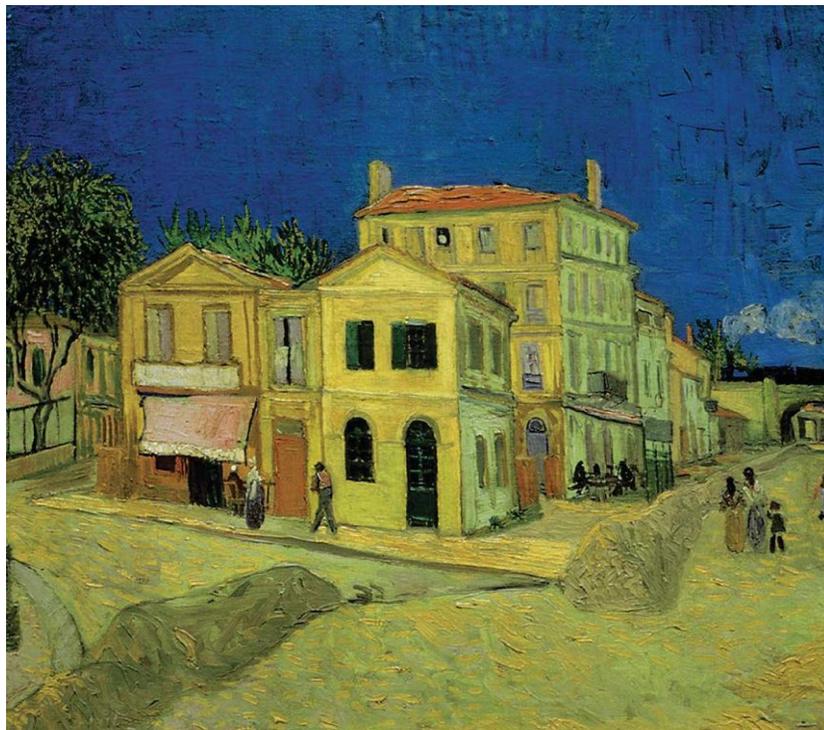


Whether it's the visionary architecture, the stunning location, or the meticulous details in a hand-carved banister, we have found that truly extraordinary homes are different at every level, and they require real estate services that are, as well.



**The Yellow House, used with permission.*

Preparing Your Home to Sell

For the ongoing collection of life.®



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

How long does it take to sell a home?

- Where your home reflects your style.

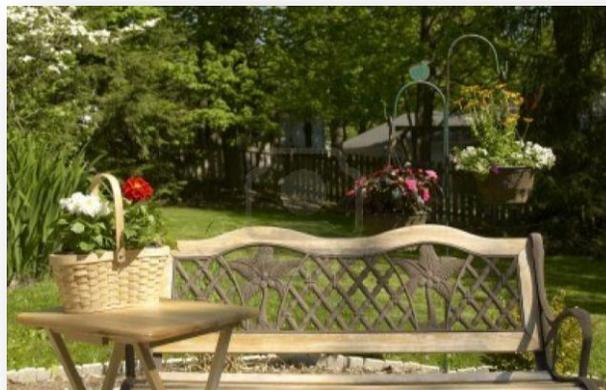
There is no easy answer – some homes sell in a few days, others may take several months. Recognizing the key factors that influence marketing can give you significant control over market time and the highest value for your home.

Location, Competition, Economic Environment, Terms, Price, and Condition are all factors and will contribute to expediting the sale of your home.

This guide was designed to address the *Condition* of your home. It will assist you in successfully preparing your home for sale and help you realize the best obtainable price for your home in the shortest period of time.

Knowing that within 15 seconds a buyer has already developed an opinion of your property, and remembering the old adage *First Impressions* are lasting ones, our goal is make sure the buyer reacts as favorably as possible when they see you home, both in-person and on-line.

The suggestions in this guide will help you in optimizing the physical appearance of your home.



We take great pleasure in discovering and bringing to life all the things that make a home unique.

KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Exterior

- The perfect home is a means of self-expression.

Your property's landscape is not limited to the lawn and shrubs but encompassing everything from the street to your doorstep. For this reason, you must make sure each component of the visual landscape looks its best. The real estate industry refers to this as "curb appeal."

Let's begin painting the picture of extraordinary curb appeal....

Street

Make sure the street in front of your house is free of litter or debris. If necessary, give it a fresh sweep.

Fire Hydrant

Although you do not own the fire hydrant in front of your house, you should still be concerned about how it looks. If it needs a freshening up, get permission from your town and paint it.

Sidewalk & Front Walkway

Sweep your sidewalk and front walkway if needed and remove weeds that may be growing between the cracks. If sections are badly cracked, consider having them repaired.

Fence

A freshly painted fence gives a home a crisp look. You should never let a peeling, tired-looking fence or squeaky gate stand between a prospective buyer and a positive first impression.

Mailbox and Outdoor Light Fixtures

A quick painting of an old mailbox will let the buyer know you care about the details. If outdoor lamps look rusted and worn out, new ones will cast a positive light on your property.



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Exterior

- Every so often, art is created with brick and mortar.

Landscaping

Neatly trimmed shrubs are essential. Taking the time to do this costs little, but has a big impact. Besides being freshly mowed and trimmed, a lawn should look healthy. If there are spots that look beyond help, a little sod goes a long way to restoring the look of a well-maintained lawn.

Driveway and Garage

There are two elements of the driveway with which you should be concerned. The first is its surface condition. If stained or otherwise worn-looking, consider resealing it with a high quality sealer product. Second is the appearance of the car parked in the driveway. A newly waxed, well-maintained automobile will make such a different statement about you and your property than an unattractive, poorly cared for car. Clean the floor, tidy the shelves and remove all unnecessary items from the garage.

Paint

A fresh coat of paint can be one of the best investments you can make to increase the value of your property. If you do not want to spend the money to paint the entire house, consider the trim and shutters or the front of the house.

Siding

If you have vinyl or aluminum siding, have a cleaning service wash or repaint it using a product designed for these materials.

Windows

Attractive windows can help increase the appeal of your property.

- ✓ Replace any cracked or broken glass.
- ✓ Make sure the windows are sparkling clean.
- ✓ Add shutters to the front of your house.
- ✓ Install window boxes with bright flowers.
- ✓ Apply touch-up paint where needed.



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Exterior

- Each home needs a proper frame.

Roof

The roof may be the single most important aspect of your home front. A well-maintained roof will say a lot about the overall condition of the property.

- ✓ Replace any broken or missing shingles or tiles.
- ✓ Repair flashing where needed.
- ✓ Paint eaves and fascia boards.

If the roof is old and needs to be replaced, consider having the work done before showing the property.

Gutters/Downspouts

Neat and trim-looking gutters and downspouts make a house look shipshape. Consider replacing highly visible ones if they are in need of serious repair. If run off areas are eroded, you can install concrete (or other) "spillways."

Doorway

The doorway is the focal point of your house.

- ✓ Repaint the door.
- ✓ Apply new door hardware.
- ✓ Install a brass kick plate.
- ✓ Replace house numbers.
- ✓ Put a flower box or planter alongside the door.
- ✓ Install a new front light fixture.

Backyard and Swimming Pool Areas

- ✓ Swimming pool or spa should be sparkling clean and in good working condition.
- ✓ Repair or replace broken tiles.
- ✓ Patio and concrete decking around pool should be clean and cracks repaired.
- ✓ Pool filter and heating equipment area should be cleaned.



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Interior

- The warmth of a home emanates from within.

Create the Feeling of walking into a “New” home

You can't recreate the feeling of a perfect display home without starting from scratch, but there are some valuable techniques to be learned.

- ✓ The environment is neutral.
- ✓ The colors and interior decorating accent the home's features.
- ✓ The smell is new and clean.
- ✓ The sound is either quiet or enhanced by subtle background music.

The sounds of peace and quiet are some of the best sounds to have when your home is being shown to a prospective buyer. But there are other sound considerations you should also be aware of:

Avoid barking dogs and noisy children, if possible.

Also avoid sounds of work like vacuums, dishwashers and lawn mowers.

Make sure there are no sounds of mechanical problems like banging pipes or faulty appliances.

Light classical or instrumental music can be effective in creating a pleasing atmosphere.

Smell

Smell has more impact than you might expect. It can work for or against you.

The smell of newness is positive. This scent can be achieved by applying a fresh coat of polyurethane to natural wood or latex paint to walls.

The smell of cleanliness is important to the selling environment of your house. Beyond actually cleaning, lemon oil or lemon wax can help create a lasting scent of freshness. Fresh flowers can also be effective.

For a real heart-warming touch, place a dish of vanilla in a warm oven to create the aroma of fresh-baked cookies or bread.

Sweeten the refrigerator with a box of baking soda.

Smells to avoid include strong pet odors, tobacco, and cooking oil or gas.



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Interior

- An exceptional home is simply a frame for an exceptional life.

Entry

The entry is where the first impression of the interior is created. Here you have the opportunity to make a big statement in a small area.

- ✓ Repaint the entry using light, neutral colors.
- ✓ Move a prized antique or attractive furnishing to the entry, where it will have maximum impact.
- ✓ Install simple chair rail molding on the wall.
- ✓ Apply a fresh coat of polyurethane to a wood floor.
- ✓ Tile or linoleum flooring should shine.
- ✓ Replace plastic switch plate covers with brass or porcelain.
- ✓ A new hall light fixture can make a great impression.
- ✓ Make sure the room is well lit.

Kitchen

The kitchen is perhaps the most important room in the house. It can have a major impact on the value of your property. If your kitchen needs some real help, you may want to make extensive improvements. The following is a list of ideas to increase the appeal of your kitchen without spending a great deal of money:

- ✓ Make sure the room is spotless and smells fresh.
- ✓ Consider replacing outdated light fixtures with new track lighting.
- ✓ Update outdated appliances or have them professionally painted in a fresher color.
- ✓ Spruce up kitchen cabinets by installing new knobs or hardware.
- ✓ If your cabinets old, you can have a professional replace the doors or door fronts.
- ✓ Organize your kitchen cabinets.
- ✓ Unclutter countertops (remove small appliances)
- ✓ Chipped or damaged countertops should be repaired or replaced.
- ✓ Make sure floor is clean and free of wear, if necessary replace
- ✓ A freshly painted kitchen may be well worth the investment.

KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Interior

- Every home is a masterpiece.

Living Room

Buyers look for elegant and impressive living rooms to make the right statements to their friends and relatives.

Use mirrors whenever possible to enhance the perception of size. The strategic placement of a mirror over a mantle or across from a window can make a room look brighter and larger. A fireplace is one feature that everyone can appreciate - show it off to its best advantage. Sweep it clean and make sure the screen is in good condition. If your house is being shown during the winter, make a cozy, crackling fire. During warmer months, you can dress up the hearth with fresh indoor plants or dried flowers.

- ✓ Use inexpensive free-standing "can" lights to create dramatic visual effects behind large plants or pieces of furniture.
- ✓ Use chair rail or cornice molding to create a feeling of elegance.
- ✓ Professionally clean wall-to-wall carpet or large area rugs. Sand and refinish stained hardwood floors.
- ✓ Clean windows and light fixtures.
- ✓ Make sure all cosmetic plaster cracks are repaired. (This applies to every room in the house.)
- ✓ Use lemon oil on hardwood furniture to create the right look and aroma.
- ✓ Liberal use of fresh flowers and plants will enhance the environment.

Bedrooms

The bedrooms can do as much to sell your house as they can to turn off a buyer.

- ✓ Make sure the bedrooms are absolutely spotless. Rugs cleaned, windows washed and fresh smells from flowers or lemon oil should be in the air.
- ✓ Organize closets to increase their perceived size.
- ✓ Mirrored closet doors can add dramatically to the feeling of size in any bedroom.
- ✓ Bedrooms should be well lit.
- ✓ A ceiling fan can be an attractive and practical accent to any bedroom.



KEY FACTORS IN PREPARING YOUR HOME

Interior

- In the ultimate home, inspiration is drawn from reflection.

Basement/Attic

The look of the basement and/or attic can say more about the condition of your house than you may think. A buyer who sees a meticulously clean and organized basement and/or attic will have much more confidence in your property than if it were in a state of disarray.

- ✓ Paint a bare cement floor oil-based gray.
- ✓ Paint the stairway down to the basement and the stairway up to the attic.
- ✓ Clean the boiler of the furnace room as well as the heating plant.
- ✓ Make sure there are no signs of pest infestation. If needed, call in a pest control company to remedy the problem before the property is shown.
- ✓ Hang as many objects as possible on the walls to minimize floor clutter.
- ✓ Clean and organize your laundry area.
- ✓ Make sure all lights are working.
- ✓ Eliminate dampness with a dehumidifier.



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