

The First Step To Selling Is Getting Your House And Yard “Right”

By J. Lennox Scott

If you're planning to put your home on the market this summer, you need to make sure that it receives maximum buyer exposure by following the five “rights” of selling a home: house right, yard right, price right, marketing right, and the right Realtor. This week I will discuss the first two steps: “house right” and “yard right.”

“House right” refers to the overall condition of your home. It starts with cleaning up, clearing out, and cosmetic improvements. Whether you do the work or hire a contractor, it's important to make sure that your house is in ideal condition for prospective buyers and Realtors. When your home is on the market, there is the potential for it to be shown at any given time, so you need to keep on top of the cleaning and organization. Keep in mind, a small amount of work can add up to a lot of value for you in the sale price of your home.

Bathrooms and kitchens are probably the two most important rooms when a buyer looks at a home, so be sure that they're immaculate. The stove, oven, refrigerator, microwave oven, and other appliances must also be very clean, inside and out. You should also scour walls, floors, bathtubs, showers, and sinks until they sparkle. Buyers will notice any strong smells as soon as they walk through the front door, so it's in your best interest to eliminate smoke, mildew, and pet odors. You can use air fresheners or candles to keep your house odor free. It's also important to have the carpets cleaned and to wash all the windows.

Eliminating clutter and excess furniture makes rooms appear larger, so it's a good idea to store, sell, or give away surplus or bulky furniture. And don't forget, closet space sells houses too, so it's important to clean and organize closets, bookcases, and drawers. It's also worth your time to make some cosmetic changes, such as giving your walls a fresh coat of paint. Neutral colors are your best choice because buyers can more easily imagine their own furnishings working within the room.

Another element that is very important when selling your home is the light. Bright, well-lit houses seem more spacious and cheerful. During the day, all the curtains and drapes should be open. If the view is unappealing, you can simply purchase sheer window coverings that let light through, but mask the view. Another way to brighten up your home is to turn on all the lamps, even during the day. And don't forget about hallways, closets and stairways—they too need to be brightly lit.

Your home's outward appearance is just as important as the inside so never underestimate the value of your yard. It's very common for prospective buyers to drive by a home to determine whether or not they want to view it. And the curb appeal of your home can be that determining factor. It's very important to keep your yard in pristine shape. A tidy, well-presented yard adds value to your home and draws in prospective buyers, which can potentially shorten the selling time. If you have flowerbeds, it helps to keep them weeded and the plants pruned. Walkways and decks should be routinely swept clean and lawns should be mowed. Regardless of the size and condition of your yard, the most important thing to remember is that just like with people, first impressions are everything.

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