

Successful Showings Are Key To Selling Your Home

By J. Lennox Scott

One of the key elements to selling any home is home showings. A home showing is when a buyer makes an appointment with their agent to visit a home that they are potentially interested in buying. A positive home showing can make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful sale, so it's in every home seller's best interest to understand what's involved in preparing their home to show.

Preparing a home for a showing starts with the three Cs: clean up, clear out, and cosmetic improvements. Whether you do the work or hire someone, it's important to make sure that your house is spotless for showings. Your stove, oven, refrigerator, microwave oven, and other appliances must be very clean—inside and out. You should also scour walls, floors, bathtubs, showers, and sinks until they sparkle. Buyers will notice strong smells as soon as they walk through your front door, so it's in your best interest to eliminate smoke, mildew, and pet odors. You can use air fresheners to keep your house odor free.

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.

Curb appeal draws buyers into your house, but appealing interiors are typically what make the sale. The little things you do generally give the biggest increase in value. When agents help their clients prepare for showings, they often advise them about “staging” their home. If you've ever visited a new home development and walked through the builder's model home, you probably know what staging is. Builders usually do extremely elaborate staging jobs. For home sellers, staging finishes the process you started with the three Cs.

Staging involves setting a mood within your home and making it more inviting for the visiting buyer. Fireplaces are extremely appealing and should be lit when buyers visit the home, especially in the winter months. They give off warmth and spotlight the room in which they are located, very nicely. Most people typically enjoy the smell of coffee or freshly baked goods, so some sellers will go to the effort of brewing coffee or baking before their home is shown. A great way to add color and character to a room is with flowers. Any agent will tell you, vases of colorful, fresh flowers spotted throughout the home make a wonderful impression on prospective buyers.

In the bathroom it's important to have a new shower curtain and fresh towels and soap. As mentioned earlier, the bathroom should be absolutely spotless—this is one room that buyers really take notice of. The same is true for the kitchen, so be sure that appliances and surfaces are well maintained. It's wise to clear your refrigerator of all photos and

other assorted items. This is a common place for people to post notes, etc, but these items can be distracting and make the room appear messy.

One element that is very important to staging a home for a showing 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, home sellers can purchase sheer window coverings that let light through, but mask the view. A simple way to brighten up a home that is being shown 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.

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. Prospective buyers sometimes drive by to see how your house looks before scheduling a showing, so it's always important to have it in tip-top condition. Ultimately, a small amount of work can add up to a lot of value for you in the long run.

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