

Exterior

As the buyers drive up to your home, the mailbox typically is the first thing they see; it should be free of dents, clean, and fresh in appearance. Are trees or shrubs along the driveway properly trimmed back? Is the lawn mowed; hedges trimmed, and the garden pruned? If you are selling your home in the fall, try to keep the leaves raked and the lawn cleared of other debris.

Interior

One word of restraint: do not undertake any major redecorating unless it is absolutely necessary. That beautiful new Berber carpet in the living room and dinosaur wallpaper in the children's bedroom may not be to the buyers' liking. They see it as decoration they'll have to replace when the home is theirs. In most instances you are not likely to recoup the added expense of any such work. Here are a few things you should consider:

- Repair or replace worn-out and broken accessories. Badly chipped tiles on the kitchen counter, a broken hand railing on the staircase, or noisy hot water heater create a negative impression of the home's overall condition. The minimal expense of eliminating these problems is usually worthwhile.
- Clean up! It doesn't have to be boot camp spotless, but your home should be generally clean and uncluttered. Wash and wax hardwood floors, vacuum carpets thoroughly, remove grease and grime from walls. Clean kitchen and bathroom tiles. Polish and dust your furniture, and vacuum, if necessary.
- Make certain all faucets, sinks and toilet bowls are cleaned and properly functioning.
- Thin out closets. If your clothes are packed

to the rafters, place enough in temporary storage to give the impression that your home has adequate closet space.

- Garage and basement: Get rid of the junk! You may think you can't live without your collection of 25 fishing rods, but your buyers will want to see a neat, orderly space with enough room for their favorite odds and ends. Also, put a fresh coat of white paint on the walls; it's a minor expense and it goes a long way toward creating the right feeling of freshness.
- Furniture: Take an hour to visit an apartment complex or condo model. Note how these typically small rooms are made to appear larger than they are, with very little furniture. Traffic patterns are open and accessible; doors to bathrooms often removed. Apply these ideas at home. Remove two or three chairs, an end table and lamp, or other objects that are not absolutely necessary in each room. Make sure your own traffic patterns within and between rooms are generous and cleared.

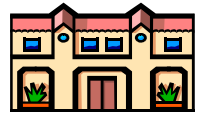
Showing Tips

When your Realtor calls to bring a prospective buyer to your home, prompt attention to last-minute details can enhance your home's appeal:

- Straighten up minor messes ~ newspapers to the garage, china and silverware in cupboards, ironing board back in the closet.
- Clear tables. That collection of magazines may be handy on the cocktail table, but it creates an unwanted air of clutter.
- Confine your pets. Some people may tremble in fear at the sight of your pet, even if it is a miniature Schnauzer; so keep dogs or cats in transport kennels in the garage or basement.
- Leave the lights on! Even your Realtor

won't necessarily remember that the light switch for the recessed ceiling lights is hidden in the closet.

- When using a Realtor, leave home whenever possible. Your Realtor has been hired because of his or her expertise at home sales. Stay out of the way. Besides, buyers may be uncomfortable if they feel you're watching their every move.
- If you can't leave, greet your guests politely and retreat to another room. Send the kids and the dog outside. That way your Realtor will be able to best answer questions and most effectively show your home.



Team with your Realtor

Your Realtor typically has a wealth of experience in every aspect of home selling. Take advantage of his or her knowledge and work together for a quick, successful sale:

- Ask your Realtor what else you might do to frame your home in the best light.
- Be sure to make your home available for showings.
- Your Realtor spends considerable time and effort to advertise, qualify prospects, show the property, and ultimately negotiate the sale. Try to accommodate requested appointments whenever possible.
- Compile a short packet of information on your neighborhood: local schools, transit systems, parks, libraries, municipal services, etc.
- Put together small photo collages to show the home during different seasons. For example: if you have a pool and selling your home during winter months, have pictures showing the pool open in the summer time with family members enjoying a cool swim.

In today's competitive real estate market you need to look at your property from the buyers' vantage point. The presentation of your home will either give you the competitive edge you need to close the deal; or it will turn away a qualified prospective buyer. A poorly maintained lawn, blistered paint on a windowsill, even a cluttered basement can cause buyers to move on to the next home on their list. So take a little time to make certain the buyers love what they see at first glance. The rewards might be substantial. After all, your home is usually your most important significant asset. Here's a brief checklist of steps to take before that first client arrives at your door.



For Sale By Owner

If you are selling your property by yourself, following these tips will greatly improve your competitive edge. However, give yourself a timeframe to sell; if you do not have a buyer within that timeframe then I recommend that you consider using a professional Realtor. Here is something to consider: figure out what the property is costing you each month in taxes, insurance, utilities, and lost income on equity. Multiply that by the number of months you've had the property standing empty, or not sold.

In addition, before you decide to become your own salesperson ask your self a few questions: How do I know my property is priced right? Do I have the sales skills to deal with prospective buyers? Am I able to negotiate the deal? How will I advertise? A professional Realtor is trained to handle these tasks. If you cannot fully handle any of these then once again I recommend that you consider using a professional Realtor.

Why Choose Balsam Real Estate Settlement Company

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Sellers Increase Your Home's Appeal



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