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#### *Make homes welcoming* **10 Low-Cost Ideas to Increase Salability**

Tiny details count as much as the big things when you're trying to sell a home.

#### BY BLANCHE EVANS

You can't always predict what will capture buyers' fancy (or what will turn them off). But most buyers respond to certain things, such as a clean, clutter-free home in good repair. Homes that owners keep in tip-top shape for showings garner higher offers than homes that aren't ready for showtime. You might have already suggested that clients paint their homes or do some major repairs. But other small-scale details can prove just as important in creating a salable home. Here are ten small-scale suggestions that you can give to help sellers prepare their homes for showings.

#### **1. Have a garage sale before the home is listed.**

Get rid of clutter to allow the buyer to really see your home. Pack away everything you can and clean out items you won't need in your next home.

Homebuyers will expect you to be preparing to move, so a few packing boxes here and there can be used to your advantage. They could be a good visual stimulant to someone who is "on the fence;" they show that you are moving and are serious about



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**For More Info:** For more tips on how to counter objections, visit the [Listing Tool Kit](#), for registered users of [REALTOR.org](#).

finding a buyer.

**2. Welcome the buyer at the entry.** Put out a new doormat, but avoid mats with cutesy sayings. Clean and polish the brass door knocker. Put potted flowers on the porch. Make sure the front entry floor is always sparkling clean and the porch and steps are always swept. First impressions count.

**3. Stimulate buyers' imaginations.** Set the dinner table with your best china. Use the coziness and romance of the fireplace to advantage. Put a pair of wine glasses and a vase of flowers on the coffee table in front of the fire. Your goal is to set a scene that will encourage buyers to imagine themselves living in your home.

**4. Be ruthless about odors.** If there is a smell, your house won't sell. Use cleansers of all kinds to make the home smell fresh, from carpet freshener to potpourri. Deodorize cat litter and scoop litter daily. Put cedar chips inside the closets. However, be careful when using room sprays as they can irritate allergies. You can also use the sense of smell to your advantage by having fresh-baked cookies on the kitchen table, creating a welcoming sensual environment for your potential buyers.

**5. Create a spacious feeling.** Make sure that all doors, cabinets and drawers open all the way without bumping into anything or sticking. Clean out the entry closet and put only a few hangers in it, so that the buyer can visualize winter coats. Move oversized furniture to a storage facility. Make sure entrances to all rooms have an open flow.

**6. Make the most of views.** Disguise unsightly views. Put a screen or a basket of flowers in front of a fireplace if it isn't in use. Let breezes move your sheer curtains at the window. Make sure the interior is visible from the street. All windows must be crystal clean and clear.

**7. Create counter space.** Store away extra appliances. Put away dish racks, soap dishes and other clutter. Decrease kitchen clutter further by removing magnets from the refrigerator.

**8. Avoid eccentric decor.** De-personalize your teenager's room, the game room or other areas by removing wild posters or any decorative item that could be construed as offensive. Remove decorations which might not appeal to the masses, from hanging beads in doorways to jars where your children store their spider collections.

**9. Let there be light.** Increase the wattage in light bulbs in the laundry room, kitchen and bathrooms. For showings, turn on lights in every room.

**10. Show how your family made the house a home.** Put photos of your the family enjoying your home in at least three different places.

Now, tell your customer to step back, stand outside the front door, as much as 30 feet away, and evaluate the feeling they get. Is the house warm and inviting? Does it feel like home? Then perhaps it will to buyers, too. Sometimes it's the little things that make the biggest difference.

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