



“CLEAN-UP” ON YOUR REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT

Don't be offended. We're not saying your house is dirty, but it does need to be showcased to its greatest advantage, if you want to get the best possible price. It involves time and effort and may cost you several thousand dollars, but the payoff will be there. This is most true in our upscale community. How much can a little elbow grease and attention to detail actually be worth? A house in tip-top shape will sell quicker for more money, while you will probably have to take less for one without the finishing touches. Realtors call this “staging” your home for sale. We, as real estate professionals, can advise you on specific ways to best present your home. Please keep in mind that these recommendations aren't meant as criticisms. Your home will be competing against dozens of houses in Ponte Vedra, many which have been updated and speaks to the current market driven by shelter magazines, internet sites and HGTV. So, enhancing your home's market value may involve one or more of these factors:

Curb Appeal You have just one chance to make a good first impression, and this is it. Does your house need painting? Does the roof need cleaning? Is the driveway free of stains? Are the lawn and shrubbery manicured? Buyers believe the condition of a home's exterior speaks volumes about the interior. Be sure your house makes a good impression.

Front Door A freshly painted or stained door, new or polished entry door hardware, and a planter of blooming flowers are warm and inviting. Stains, scratches, dents, tarnish and cobwebs create an entirely different mood.

Odors Every house has a distinctive smell that its owner gets used to. But pungent odors – pets, tobacco, food – can turn a buyer off. A deep cleaning and deodorizing may be essential. Consider hiring a service if you don't want to do it yourself. Plug-in type air fresheners are great to maintain that “just cleaned” smell.

Lighting and General Appearance As the song goes “let the sunshine in.” Even if you prefer a dark house, most buyers react positively to a light, airy home. Besides, it makes your rooms seem more spacious. Open up the drapes and blinds, make sure the windows sparkle, wipe the baseboards, remove fingerprints from the doors and light switches and dust blinds and light fixtures. Add a brand-new door mat.

Carpeting and Painting Sellers often concede that carpeting should be replaced or rooms painted, but want instead to subtract the cost of these improvements from the sales price or offer an allowance. The problem is that buyers inflate their anticipated cost of these improvements. Buyers begin making mental deductions from the moment they arrive; if something will cost \$2,000, they may mentally figure \$5,000, or if it's \$100 they may think \$1,000. In many cases, they just don't want to bother. You are usually better off having the work done before putting your house on the market.

Colors Bold, vivid colors may suit your style, but neutral tones will appeal to the widest range of shoppers. A new coat of paint will earn you far more than it costs and aid in a quicker sale.

Furnishings and Keepsakes If your rooms look crowded and your closets filled, we suggest that you rearrange or even temporarily store furniture. You may also want to protect your collectibles by packing them away. The goal is to highlight your house, not your possessions.

Kitchens and Bathrooms Kitchens and baths sell houses, and a thorough cleaning of those rooms is critical. But don't forget the extra touches: you might organize the cabinets and pantry; keep oven interiors sparkling; recaulk as needed around all sinks, tubs and showers; put out new or fresh towels and decorative soaps.

Clutter Whenever you leave your home, the beds should be made, the sinks empty and the clothes hung up. That's not all: newspapers, magazines, books, trophies, mementos and even large clusters of photos can all be costly distractions if they become the one thing a prospect remembers about your house. In this case, less is more. Also, thin out your closets and remove seasonal attire. This will make your closets appear twice as large.

Perhaps you're thinking that all this staging will strip the personality from your home. Well, experts do find that depersonalized homes sell faster and at a better price than those left as-is. Just think of the new, furnished model home – that could be your competition. You should compare selling a house to looking at a used car. The dealer keeps it in spotless condition, with no reminders of the previous owner, so shoppers can picture the car as theirs. That's just the reaction you want when you “clean to clean-up” on your real estate investment.

Remember, you never get a second chance to make a first impression!