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Maximizing First Impressions

Exterior and Curb Appeal

Experts say most buyers make their decision at first sight.

General Exterior

- Prospective buyers will react well to signs your home has been meticulously maintained.
- Manicure landscaping: mow, edge and water lawn, trim hedges, weed and fertilize flowerbeds, and prune trees.
- Keep driveway clean and free of parked cars, and keep the garage door closed.
- Repair or replace loose or damaged roof shingles.
- Minimize cracks or crumbling on walkways, walls, or steps, and keep them clean and free of obstructions like toys or snow.
- Items from RV's to waste cans left out can contribute to a cluttered or busy appearance. Make sure that from the street, your property appears clear.
- Inspect appearance of interior window coverings from the curb.
- Repair any peeling paint or loose caulking on windows or other areas.
- Take steps to eliminate insect or rodent pests.
- Pick up after your pets and neighborhood animals.

Doorway

While agents work the lockbox for a key, buyers have idle time to notice details.

- Apply a fresh coat of paint to the front door.
- Consider adding pots of flowering plants in the entryway if weather permits.
- Eliminate cobwebs and groom doorway area windows, porch light, or decorative glass.

Interior Appeal

Once inside, experts say most buyers are reaffirming their curbside decision.

Clean, Clear, Light and Bright

- Give every room in the house a thorough cleaning and remove all clutter. Hiring a cleaning service may pay for itself by adding to a buyer's perceived value of your home.
- For a sleeker, more spacious look, consider placing furniture from crowded rooms in storage.
- Clear kitchen counters of everything other than perhaps a few pretty items. Ask yourself: In a model home, would a professional decorator put your choice of items out on the counter?
- Remember: closets will be opened! Keep closets, cupboards, and even your attic orderly and neat. Since your anticipating a move anyway, consider holding a garage sale or boxing and storing unused belongings.
- If necessary, repaint or clean/replace dingy, soiled or strongly colored walls, and window and floor coverings with a light, neutral shade. Bright rooms look bigger, and neutral colors help buyers envision their own furnishings and décor.
- Repair dripping faucets, burned out light bulbs, or cracked windowpanes.
- Repair cracks, holes or damage to plaster, wallboard, wallpaper, and tiles.

Warm and Homey

- Subtle scents of potpourri in bedrooms or baths and fresh baked cookies or cinnamon in the kitchen can make your home more inviting.
- Keep an attractive set of towels in each bathroom to be brought out only for showings.

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