



Preparing your property for sale



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Once you have decided to sell your property, it's important that you give yourself the best chance of achieving the maximum price possible. Your home's appearance when you put it on the market will determine the speed and price of sale. Spending a little time and money to prepare your house for sale is one of the best ways to get ahead of your competition. Here is our ten-step approach to getting your property ready.

1. First Impressions Last

The most important rule that you should remember is that *first impressions last*. House buying is as much an emotional decision as it is a logical decision, and people tend to make up their minds within the first few minutes about whether they like a property. Once a buyer has emotionally decided that they like the property, they tend to start to look for reasons why they shouldn't buy. It's human nature. The logical side of the brain kicks in when buyers realise they are about to make one of the largest financial commitments of their lives. To set a good first impression and to tap into the emotional and logical aspects of the purchase decision, you should focus on two things when preparing your property;

- ✓ Ensure that potential buyers quickly recognise the positive aspects about the property
- ✓ Eliminate any distractions that might dissuade a buyer to make an offer.

2. Be prepared

When you make the decision to sell your home, start the preparations early so that by the time photographs are taken and viewings commence, your home is presented in the best possible light. Also, keep in mind that despite the best plans, viewings are sometimes arranged at short notice – so you should be prepared for this.

3. Declutter

This is possibly one of the most important steps in preparing your property for sale. Buyers will want to “visualise” themselves in your home so you should try to declutter and hide as many of your personal items as possible. Decluttering serves two useful purposes; it can make a room look bigger and it can remove distractions from the mind and eye of the buyer. Certainly, you don't need to make your home feel like a hotel room and you should leave some personality in it, but try to



give people the opportunity to visualise how a room would look with their items and possessions. For example;

- ✓ Get rid of, or put into storage, any excess things that are laying around but serve no useful purpose.
- ✓ Ensure all surfaces, sinks etc are clear and tidy.
- ✓ Remove, or put into storage, any furniture that is oversized for the room or serves no real purpose.
- ✓ Make sure only essential toiletries are on display in bathrooms.
- ✓ Also remember to declutter cupboards. One of the key things buyers look for is whether there is enough storage space. Having each cupboard jammed full will potentially give a buyer a cause for concern.
- ✓ Don't have bikes, pushchairs etc in the hallway. Make it easy for potential buyers to move around the property without undertaking an obstacle course.

4. Deep Clean

Undertake a deep clean of the property and maybe think about a professional carpet clean. Clean all windows, curtains, descale sinks and baths etc. Once everything is clean and fresh, try to maintain the property in that state through the viewing process.

5. Basic Repairs

Deal with small repair items that could create a negative impression. Remember that every time that a buyer sees something that is not working or is broken, they are making a mental deduction from the value that they place on the property. Do things such as;

- ✓ Touch up paint
- ✓ Fix broken doors, handles etc
- ✓ Ensure all lights are working
- ✓ Deal with leaky and dripping taps
- ✓ Repair any plaster damage or small cracks
- ✓ Think about new shower curtains, blinds etc
- ✓ Replace any cracked tiles if possible
- ✓ Re-grout bathroom or kitchen tiles to freshen them up
- ✓ Ensure cushions, bedspreads etc are fresh and add to the coordination of the room



6. Don't forget outside

When it comes to first impressions, the kerb appeal of the property is critical. Remember that people frequently “drive by” a property first before they decide to request a viewing. Improving kerb appeal can be achieved by;

- ✓ Keeping gardens well-tended to
- ✓ Removing weeds, especially from garden paths leading to the front door
- ✓ Ensuring gutters are cleaned
- ✓ Consider paint touch ups or brick work repairs as necessary.
- ✓ Ensure windows and front door are clean and well presented.
- ✓ Fix broken fences, walls and keep hedges trim and well presented.
- ✓ Hide bins away from sight from the road or approach to the property.

7. It's Not Just the Look

First impressions don't just come from what potential buyers see. Make sure that you eradicate any lingering odours in the property, ventilate the property before each viewing so it feels fresh, regulate the heating so it's not too hot or cold etc. Avoid cooking any food that will have a lingering smell before a viewing. All of these senses have an emotional impact on a buyer.

8. Be Neutral

You might have that “out there” wallpaper on a feature wall, or a “dramatically” painted room that you absolutely love. But remember that not all tastes are the same. The golden rule is to use neutral colours so as to make it easier for buyers to visualise their furniture and effects in the property. If you are going to spend any money in preparing your property, then a lick of paint is a good place to start, but keep everything neutral and allow the imagination of a buyer to do the rest.

9. Let there be light!

People tend to like light and airy rooms. Ensure that all curtains and blinds let in the maximum amount of light. If it's warm enough, consider having windows open. If there are patio doors to the garden then show them open to create the impression of a larger living space. If rooms are very dark, then use “cool” light bulbs instead of “warm” bulbs to give more of a feel of natural light.



10. Staging

You don't need to rush out and rent or buy "show room" furniture. But some plants, neat and tidy bedding, throw cushions, colour coordinated rugs, fresh flowers, fresh towels etc are all simple and low-cost and effective ways of staging your house.