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Bjorkman*

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9 Things a Seller Must Do to Get the Most Money for their Home

1. Price your home based on homes that have sold in the last 90 days, not what is active or under contract.

Many home sellers make the mistake of basing their asking price on comparable homes around them currently on the market. This can result in an asking price that is too high, causing lower interest in your home. Instead, base your asking price on comparable homes in your area that have sold in the last 90 days. By doing this, your starting asking price will be closer aligned with what buyers in your market are willing to pay, allowing you to drive more interest in your home.

2. Critically evaluate your curb appeal and make needed adjustments.

When it comes to selling your home, first impressions make a difference, and the first impression of any potential buyer is made as they pull up to your home. Analyze the condition of the grass, landscaping, and any trees or bushes near the front of the property. Easy fixes that can bring a big return are planting flowers in your garden, placing plants on the front stairs, and updating your mulch and shrubs. Also, consider the physical condition of your home and make minor repairs to the home's paint, siding, trim, and gutters. Power washing the outside of your home along with your driveway can also go a long way.

3. De-clutter every room in your home.

It is important to understand that the way you live in your home when you are trying to sell has to be much different than the way you live in it when you're not. The first thing that differs is the need to de-clutter your home to prepare it for sale. When doing this, imagine you are converting your home into a hotel. In the kitchen, remove items from your kitchen counter tops, clear things off your refrigerator, and put away any mismatched hanging pots and pans. In the bedroom, remove clutter including jewelry. In the bathrooms, make sure you clean the counters and put away any make-up, personal grooming supplies, etc. For your living area, remove any extra furniture, remove fake plants from your mantle or coffee table, put away magazines, clear most of your bookshelves, and limit the number of throw rugs. You want potential buyers to feel your home is spacious. Remember, less is more!

4. Remove personal items from the home.

When a potential buyer views your property, you want them to picture themselves in the home, not see someone else living there. To accomplish this, you must remove all evidence of yourself. Remove at least 90% of the pictures in your home. Remove any personal items that may distract a potential buyer (books on unique subjects, awards, degrees, etc). Remove any wall hangings and any religious articles. Once you have removed everything personal, the potential buyer's focus can be solely on seeing themselves in their new home.

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5. Make interior repairs and touch-ups so every room can shine.

Just as you examine the outside of your property to improve curb appeal, you need to examine the inside of your home for repairs and touch-ups that need performed. Examine your walls, trim, and moldings for dings and worn paint, and repair/throw on a new coat of paint as needed. If you paint, use light, neutral and on-trend colors so a buyer's furniture will transition well. Check your light fixtures, ceiling fans, light switches, plumbing fixtures, caulking, and mirrors. These are all inexpensive items to fix that go a long way in the impression your home makes. Finally, look at your flooring. Clean any grout, replace any cracked tiles, and if it's in your budget, replace any old, worn flooring. New flooring can totally transform the look of your home and give it the "wow" factor.

6. Professionally stage your home.

Now that you've made your home beautiful, it's time to stage it for potential buyers. Homes that are staged get the highest price and sell faster. Many sellers make the mistake of staging their home themselves. While you may have an impeccable eye for interior design, decorating for living in a home is much different than decorating for selling a home. Always use a professional stager as they know how to make your home attractive to the widest range of buyers.

7. Have a professional photographer take photos of your home.

In today's technological age, 92% of home buyers (according to Realtor.org) use the Internet as part of a home search. Hiring a professional photographer will present your clean, spruced-up, professionally staged home in the best light (no photography pun intended). A professional will know the best angles to photograph and how to compose the photos for use of space, lines, and focus. Finally, a professional photographer will know how to best edit and color correct your photos in post-production.

8. Be ready for showings.

While events like open houses can be scheduled well in advance, it is nearly impossible to know when a buyer will be interested in seeing a showing of your home. This makes it extremely important that you keep your home in "show shape" at all times. We all have days where we feel like leaving the dishes in the sink and the laundry on the floor. We will get to them later, we think. But, when selling your home, a showing could take place at a moment's notice. It's best to assume you will have a showing at any moment and keep your home in showing condition at all times.

9. Make sure you are out when the buyers are in.

When a buyer comes to view your home, make sure you and your family are not there. Your presence in the home will cause buyers to rush through their showing. If you are there, you will be tempted to try to "sell" your home, explaining the things you love about it or the things you've upgraded. This only serves to make the buyer uncomfortable and want to leave. As hard as it may be, leave the selling to your professional Realtor.