

4 Update Do's and Don'ts When Selling Your Home

In this economy, selling your home can be a daunting task. It truly is a buyer's market right now. You may look at your home and think, "Maybe a few updates here and there could help sell this place a bit more quickly." But how can you decide which updates would be good to tackle and which it would be best to avoid? Have no fear! This FREE report is here to help. In this report, you will learn exactly which updates can help your home sell quickly and which ones would be a waste of time.

In this report you will learn:

- ✓ 4 cost and time effective updates that will help your home sell more quickly
- ✓ 4 updates to avoid
- ✓ Tips and tricks to draw interest to your home
- ✓ What buyers are looking for in a home
- ✓ Pitfalls to avoid when selling your home
- ✓ And much more!

So you've made the decision to sell your home. You've hired a Realtor, put the "for sale" sign out in the yard and you're ready to start taking offers. Obviously, you want to sell your house for the highest possible price. To do that, you may decide that you need to spruce a few things up around the old homestead. But where do you even start? How do you know which things to change and which things to leave alone? Quite simply put, you want to do things that are cost efficient, time efficient, and noticeable to potential homebuyers. The following is a list of Dos and Don'ts for renovating your home in order to sell it.

Do #1: Brighten Things Up

There are several different steps you can take to brighten up your home. Check out these tips for doing just that!

Spruce up your exterior: If you live in a mobile home or any type of home with vinyl siding, it's always a good idea to pull out the power washer and give your home a nice thorough cleaning before any potential buyers come to look at your home. This holds true if you have a brick exterior, as well.

Remember: first impressions are lasting impressions. If the first thing a potential buyer sees upon arriving at your home is dingy, algae-covered vinyl siding, well that's definitely going to leave an impression, but not the kind of impression you want. You want your house to look neat, clean, and fresh.

Don't worry if you don't own a power washer, there are several vendors where you can buy or even rent one. Just look through your local yellow pages, call around and find one that fits in your budget. You'll be surprised how big a difference just washing your home can make in its appearance and curb appeal.

You may be wondering what to do if your home has peeling paint instead of vinyl. Well friend, you still have work to do, too! Now is an excellent time to break out the paint brushes and put a fresh coat of paint on your home. In the same way that power washing brightens up vinyl siding, a new coat of paint will make your home positively shine.

Be sure not to forget to touch up everything that has paint:

- the shutters
- the windows
- the door frame

You want everything to look neutral and inviting, so it's important that you choose a nice color. Don't go for anything too brash or outrageous. Go for a grey, cream and white sort of look with complimenting colors that aren't too bold.

Spruce up the inside: A fresh pristine look isn't just for the outside either. If you look around and notice that a few of the rooms inside the house could use a new coat of paint, go for it. Choose something light and airy; just as with the outside, a nice neutral palette is always a good idea.

Painting is especially price effective if you can do the painting yourself. If not, just be sure to shop around, price check, and flip through the yellow pages to find local painter#1s so that you get the best price possible. You want to make as much net profit on your home as possible, so you want to keep these updates as cheap as possible. A penny saved is a penny earned, after all.

Don't #1: Completely Refurbishing the Outside of Your Home Isn't Necessary

Sometimes there's more wrong with the outside of your home than a simple power wash or a coat of paint can fix. Don't panic. Fix what you can. Check your vinyl siding; if you find loose or missing pieces, replace or repair them. Check your shutters to see if they are loose or in danger of falling off. That's nothing that a few well-placed screws can't fix.

But if you find that you have extensive damage to the exterior of your home that will cost you an exorbitant amount of money to fix; leave it be. Chances are very good that the amount of money you would invest in a high cost endeavor would not improve the value of your home enough to warrant doing it. If you find that there's a cheap and effective fix, then by all means do it. Just remember not to go overboard. You're selling this home. You don't want to invest all of your time, energy, and money on a home that you won't be living in.

Do #2: Clean Up Your Yard

Stop and take a look at your yard. Is it the type of yard that would interest a potential buyer or would it drive them away? Will they have to fight through a jungle to get to the front door? Or is there a nicely defined pathway that's well-trimmed and maintained?

Believe it or not, your outdoor maintenance can affect the price that your home sales for. Buyers are less likely to pay good money for a home with a disorderly lawn and landscaping.

So make sure you cover all of the basics:

- Mow the grass.
- Trim the bushes.
- Remove any dead or fallen trees.
- Get rid of any unsightly weeds or ant beds.
- Remove any old or outdated lawn fixtures.

Once the basics are done, then you can go a step farther and really wow potential buyers. Put down fresh mulch around your shrubs and flower beds. Check your walkway and make sure that the path to your home is neat and safe; remove any broken pavers and replace them.

Then take that extra step and enhance the walkway. Embellish it with solar lights or seasonal plants; really draw attention to it and make the walk to your front door as pleasant an experience as possible. Potential buyers will love it and will have a good impression of your home off the bat. The neater, cleaner and tidier your home looks, the quicker it will sale at the price you're asking for. And that's most definitely what you want.

Don't #2: Going Overboard Defeats the Purpose

Yes, a nicely manicured lawn can be a major selling point to a potential buyer. Once that yard begins to look really nice, it's so tempting to keep going with it. However, this is not the right time to go out and buy a new water fountain or koi pond. Those sorts of things, although they may be wonderful to you, can actually turn buyers off.

With that being said, you want to simply be sure to straighten things up nicely and keep your lawn as lovely as it can be. Remember, there's no need to spend lots of money. This is all about making your home as sellable as possible for you while turning a nice profit. You don't want to eat up all of your potential financial influx with improvements to your yard. Just stick to the basics and you should be fine. Play up to the strengths of your yard, and watch buyers flock to your door.

Do #3: Update Old, Outdated Hardware

Chances are good that there's some hardware around your home that could use a little refreshing. A few things to check are:

- Any knobs on drawers, doors, or cabinets
- Hinges on doors and cabinets
- Your house and mailbox numbers
- Door knockers
- Light switch and outlet covers

It's always expedient to check all of the little things that make your home run smoothly. Remember, potential buyers are going to want to check things out. They'll notice if a drawer doesn't slide smoothly on its track or if a door creaks. So go through your house and make a checklist of any squeaky doors, stiff hinges, and such. Pull out the WD-40, and oil them down.

Once that's been taken care, take note of the actual physical knobs and handles on your doors. Are they rusty or outdated? If so, you need to work on them. Bust out a rag and some polish, buff them until they shine. If that doesn't help, then you may need to buy new ones.

Hardware is a fairly inexpensive fix that you can find at any number of hardware, home improvement, or superstores. And the best thing is that these are improvements you can absolutely do without the aid of a professional; the only cost you'll incur is the actual cost of the

hardware and screws to install them. This definitely keeps in with the theme of providing useful, cost efficient updates to your home that will help it sell faster and at a higher value.

Don't #3: While Updating Hardware is Great, Replacing Doors Isn't Necessary

While it's important that your hardware looks brand spanking new (whether it actually is or not), now is not the time to invest in new doors of any kind. You may have cabinet doors that are looking a little less than fabulous, or even interior or exterior doors that look rough. And you probably noticed that your new hardware is making your doors look even dingier, if that is at all possible. Don't panic! There is no need to replace these doors, which is both a pain in the neck and the pocketbook.

There are steps to take to give your doors an overhaul without spending a fortune. I actually suggest doing this before updating your hardware, but that's completely up to you.

Scrub your doors spotlessly clean using a degreaser if necessary. Magic erasers work great for getting off crayons, marker or even just set on stains. It might be that all your doors need are some good old fashioned elbow grease. If that isn't enough, move on to the next step. Take some sand paper to them to even out the rough patches, and put a fresh coat of paint, stain, or polyurethane instead. All of these products can be found at any home improvement store, mass merchandizer, or your local hardware store.

Just like the rest of the updates in this list, we're still looking for the cheapest update possible; so stay away from brand new doors which are expensive to buy and time consuming to hang. Just improve what you already have instead. This goes for windows, as well. You're shooting for quick, inexpensive fixes here; just a few touch ups here and there and your house will pop out to potential buyers as a one that they could see themselves living in forever.

Do #4: Fix Faulty Plumbing

Issues with the plumbing in your home can either make or break a sale. Not only do leaky pipes make ghastly noises, but they can also cause damage to your home. They can leave watermarks or unsightly smells at best. These types of things can quickly add up to devalue your home and make it less likely to sell for the price you have in mind.

Beyond those minor, cosmetic damages, faulty plumbing can cause major structural damage to any wood in your home. Just as bad, leaky pipes can cause mold and mildew and can even become a serious health hazard.

This is understandably not something that a potential buyer would look kindly on. Your would-be buyers may not know how much money they would have to invest to fix this damage. Furthermore, chances are good that they want to spend as little in repairs as possible once they've bought a home. Beyond that, you're going to have a hard time finding a lender who'll finance a home that has these kinds of problems, because it'll never pass an inspection.

The fix for this is simple: call a local plumber or handyman. I find it's always best to let the professionals handle plumbing snafus. Let the plumber fix any issues that you know of, and then have him or her check for any other problems that you may have overlooked or been unaware of. With that one, simple step, you have improved the likelihood of your home selling quickly and easily.

This same concept goes for sewer lines too. Has your toilet or sinks been backing up frequently? Does it take a long time for your sink to drain? Well then, it may be time to have your sewer lines checked as well. Check with your local authorities to find a qualified, certified individual to come out and perform an inspection. A sewer line with a clean bill of health is a good selling point. After all, no one wants a home that comes along with sewer trouble.

Don't #4: Replacing Your Appliances is Optional

If you're including your appliances in the sale of your home, you may be tempted to upgrade them to a newer, better looking model. Honestly, this can be a great selling point, but only if you can truly afford to take this step. It's true that buyers now really do want appliances included most of the time. However, there's no need for buying brand new appliances just to give away if you can't really afford it and your current appliances are in good working order.

As long as your appliances are functioning properly and go through some serious cleaning procedures, then they will suffice. You can always call in a local handyman to do some slight adjustments to any appliances that are in need of a little extra care and attention. If you feel that you absolutely must replace an appliance, don't rush to the nearest home improvement store! Check yard sales, the classified section, and craigslist to get appliances that work for a fraction of the cost. The goal is still to keep things as cheap and easy as possible for you.

Now that I've covered just a few projects to tackle and avoid while trying to sell your home, I wish you the absolute best of luck in getting your house on the market and sold as soon as possible. Sure, there are many other steps you can take to make your home more sellable, but these are great and inexpensive starting points.

If for any reason whatsoever you have trouble selling your home, feel free to drop me a line. As a real estate agent, I am dedicated to helping you have the easiest, smoothest experience possible while going through the selling process. There's nothing quite like helping folks like you get out from under an old home and then move on to greener pastures. Good luck!

Provided by courtesy of Tony Warfield, Associate Broker with



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