

Hints For Homeowners

Fast Fix Ups To Speed Your Home Sale

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(NAPSA)—You don't have to spend a fortune renovating your house to get a quick sale at the best price. Some of the most effective fix-ups may also be among the least expensive.

Just a few hundred dollars of landscaping, for example, can boost your home's value by \$1,800, according to a survey of real estate agents. Cleaning and de-cluttering your home, the survey found, could add thousands more to the price.

Tour your property as if you were a prospective buyer. Drive or walk up to your house. Ask a friend to help you spot problems you've stopped noticing. Write everything down.

For the exterior:

- Whack back overgrown bushes and trees so your house is visible from the street. Plant colorful flowers. Keep the lawn green and trimmed.

- Paint exterior doors and window trim to freshen your home's look without the expense of repainting. Replace or remove torn screens or damaged storm windows. Make sure exterior lights are working.

- Get rid of anything blocking pathways or cluttering up yards and patios.

- Clean your windows so your home looks as light and bright as possible.

Inside, inspect floors, walls, kitchen, bathrooms and closets.

- A deep cleaning is essential for a good first impression. Bathrooms and the kitchen should be spotless.

- Banish bad smells. Air out your home daily. Don't cook smelly foods. Clean the litter box. Bake cookies before buyers visit to give your place a "homey" smell.

- Remove inside clutter. Stow away knickknacks and family pic-



Small expenditures of money and time can greatly improve your chances of selling your home.

tures so buyers can picture themselves living in the house. Consider renting temporary storage space. Tidy closets look bigger and more appealing.

- Fix your floors. Real estate agents say buyers really notice the condition of floors. Hardwood should be polished, carpets shampooed or replaced. Repair broken tile or linoleum.

- If you've painted or wallpapered in recent years, you may be able to get away with just washing your walls. Otherwise, consider repainting in neutral colors.

Remember, remodeling is for buyers, not sellers. Major renovations usually don't pay but buyers expect your home to be in decent shape. Talk with a real estate agent about which projects to tackle before listing your home.

Consider hiring your own inspector to alert you to problems you may not realize, so you can fix them before they cost you a sale.

If you're thinking about using a loan for these home improvements, check out Microsoft Money's cost-of-purchase calculator to quickly determine how much the loan will actually cost based on interest percentage.

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