

TROTMAN



PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR SALE

© ROBERT TROTMAN

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GETTING READY

Playing up the house itself and creating a buyer-friendly environment, requires editing, cleaning and rearranging to feature the assets of your home.

Decorating usually focuses on how to add personality into a blank canvas. The goal is to emphasize the appeal of the canvas, rather than the design.

A professional can be hired, furniture and belongings can be stored/rented. Improvements can be from painting to replacing flooring.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RECONSIDER YOUR HOME'S DESIGN?

After time, you become comfortable with the imperfections. We learn to accept and eventually overlook.

Your home has been built around how you live and expresses your image. In order to present a home for sale, you need to create a way for the potential buyer to place his/herself in it.

Your home is the single largest investment you're likely to have and when it comes time to sell, becomes the single largest asset

Investing a small amount of money in improvements will bring a quicker sale and maximize your profit.

WHAT IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR A SALE?

If you want to maximize your profit, you need to exceed the buyer's expectations by presenting a home that's a showpiece.

MOST IMPORTANT STEP: Once you decide to sell your home, you need to separate from your home. Until you do, you remain a homeowner, rather than a home-seller. Your home is a commodity that you intend to market.

Learn what appeals to your local market from Real Estate Agents & visit homes for sale in your area. What common features does your home have?

List the positives and negatives of your home. Get the opinions of others.

Decide on what must absolutely be replaced or removed before anyone sees your home.

HOME IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIRS

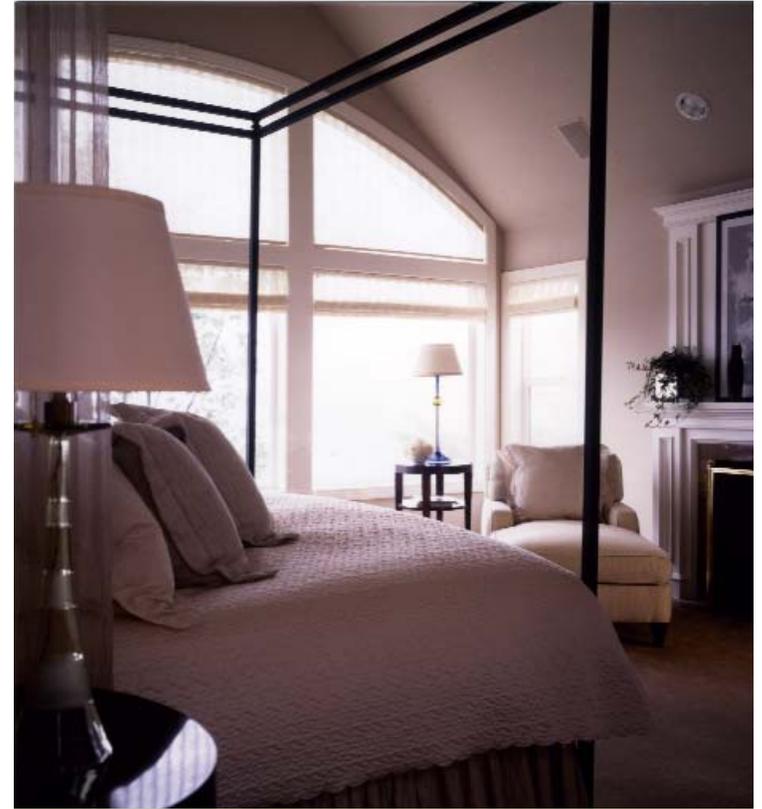
If you know something is broken, fix it!

Failing to fix broken items (especially those that are easily repaired) sends a message to the buyer that you don't care enough to get these things done.

Appliances, faucets, windows, doors, any exterior problems, are just a few basics.

Water is a home's worst enemy. Mildew is the new "asbestos". This should be taken very seriously, especially in the basement.

Paint, power wash, re-paint the outside of your home. Replace any rotting or warped wood. Seal any open cracks and places where materials are joined.



“The goal is to emphasize the appeal of the canvas, rather than the design.”



“Your home has been built around how you live and expresses your image.”

CLEANING/CLEARING OUT/ORGANIZING

While most of us have too many belongings and are collectors, the thought of buying a new home gives us a chance to envision a new start in our life. Show the buyer that they can have an uncluttered new life in your home.

Organizing creates the illusion that there is room to spare for everything the buyer may own.

Give the most attention to HORIZONTAL SURFACES. Floors, counters, bookshelves, tables, and the toilet tank and must be neat!

Remove everything from horizontal surfaces., clean and only add back up to three objects (the toilet tank should not be a pedestal). Objects you add back should not stand out or distract.

Remove family photographs and personal collections. (Who's home is it?)

When it comes to holiday decorations, make due with less inside and outside. A large Christmas tree in front of the window may obstruct a view. Lights around the windows will distract the eye and hide the elegant features of your home. The same rule applies to children's artwork and calendars.

Give away, throw away, stow away. Whatever you decide, you'll be miles ahead when it's time to pack up and move.

Keep a temporary catch-all that you can toss everything into before a showing and hide it under the bed.

Everything from floors to windows must be spotless. Clean out the oven and other major appliances. Skylights and any glass surface should be crystal-clear. Clean/replace all window screens. Make the bathroom faucets and lighting fixtures shine!

Kill the offensive odors. They're the first thing buyers notice, and often a *permanent* turnoff. No matter how clean you are, offensive odors exist if you have children, pets, smoke or cook. If you cannot remove food odors from carpeting, the refrigerator or microwave, replace it.

Keep this season's clothes in the closet and throw away, donate or store the rest. If you still have more than half of your closet filled, purchase an attractive chest of drawers or armoire.

Clear the entire garage out, sweep and scrub the floors. Try to get everything off the floor of the garage. Instead of displaying tools, store them away in chests and large plastic containers. Don't forget the attics and crawl spaces!

Also, don't forget outside tasks. Ensure that garbage cans are tightly sealed up or stored outside in a concealed bin. Clean the drain gutters. Sweep and scrub. Landscaping should be trimmed, decorations to a minimum, earth should be graded away from the house, redo the walkway if necessary, keep outdoor lighting in order and keep your house number visible and lit. If you show the house in the winter, install a heat coil on the roof to keep the killer icicles at bay.

Have someone take your pet out or drop it off to a day-kennel or friend's home during showings. No matter how controllable your pet is, it's presence can make a huge negative impression or distraction. Keep a "pet space" in your home, store the dishes and a couple of toys with the cage under a clean mat. This creates the illusion that your pet stays in one place, rather than roaming freely all over the house.

DESIGNING YOUR HOME FOR A SALE

COLORS/LIGHT

Keep colors neutral. Walls should be blank canvases for the client's imagination.

Don't forget to paint ceilings. Paint over any "home made" decorative patterning on the walls.

Lighter colors give the impression of a clean, open look. Don't worry about practicality. Most new paints are very durable and cleanable. Hopefully you'll only be living in the house a couple of months more...

Have all the lights on before your agent comes. Avoid at all costs the distraction and confusion of having to find a switch.

Make sure landscaping does not obstruct the light coming into your home.

Increase the wattage in your lamps and buy fixtures for any spaces that seem dim. Use halogen-quality/full spectrum bulbs.

Replace any fixtures that require fluorescent light bulbs for incandescent fixtures.

Turn on all the lights in your home, including closets, stairs, under cabinets and in bathrooms. Stay on light bulb patrol if any go out.

FURNISHINGS

Limit furnishings to items that are used. Any unnecessary items, i.e. decorative antiques, curios, shelves, folding screens become "decorative" and distract the buyer's eye.

Eliminate as many horizontal surfaces that ask to be decorated.

Re-arrange furniture for an easy flow for people walking in the house. The TV shouldn't be the center of the furniture arrangement. Create a furniture arrangement that fosters friendly conversations and social activities. Create a people-friendly house.

If possible, remove, replace or note any items that may appear to be included in the sale, but are not. i.e. light fixtures, bathroom/kitchen fittings, apparent built-ins, fireplace mantles or draperies.

LAYOUT & FINISHING TOUCHES

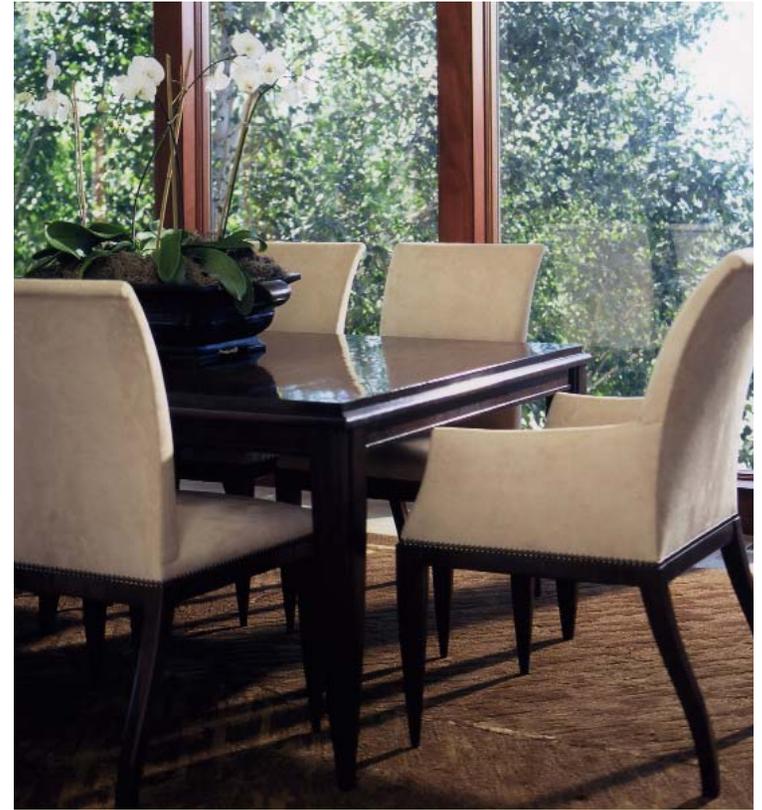
Make your front entry inviting. Decorate it, paint the door or buy a new door. It's the first look at your house, so make it a good one.

Fresh flowers are a must.

There's something enormously satisfying about having freshly laundered towels sitting next to the bath tub. It invites pleasant thoughts of soaking your troubles away.

Feature a special spot in the house for home information sheets, a sign-in book and business cards. Accent area with flowers and small wrapped candies in an open dish.

While this may seem daunting, investing the time and money will result in a *faster* sale at a *higher* price!



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