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Preparing Your Home For Sale On a Budget

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The old saying, *it takes money to make money*, doesn't always apply to preparing your home for sale. There are many low or no cost ways to get your house ready for the market.

***Start Preparing Early.** It is critical that you de clutter your home. The goal is to create spaces that are open, airy, and tidy. This task will be less overwhelming if you start months in advance. Begin with your storage areas. Donate or sell any items you haven't used in years. As you move to other areas in the house, continue to get rid of any unneeded items and start packing things you can live without like extra books or linens. Neatly label and stack in your newly tidied storage area. But be sure to leave decorative items out that can be used for staging. An empty house is as unappealing as an over cluttered house.

***Organize everything.** Buyers will be analyzing all of the spaces in your home including kitchen pantries, closets and bathroom storage. Your home should appear that it has adequate storage. Overstuffed linen closets and overflowing kitchen cabinets give the impression your house is lacking adequate storage. Pack away things you don't immediately need. Baskets from the dollar store are a brilliant way to declutter. Put all of the cleaning items under your kitchen sink or the items in your shower in a cute plastic basket.

***Clean, Clean, Clean.** My grandmother always said it costs nothing to be clean. One of the most important things you can do is present a fresh and clean house to buyers. The little things really do matter. Clean the glass on your light fixtures, wash your windows, clean bath vent fans and return air vents, clean your garage, your back patio, any other outdoor spaces, tidy your furnace room and even wipe down your water heater. Clean appliances instantly appear to be in good repair.

***Make any minor repairs.** A few dollars at the hardware store will go a long way. Recaulk tubs and sinks. Replace burnt out light fixtures inside and out. Fix any broken cabinets, drawers, hardware or door handles. Patch any holes or touch up paint if needed. If it is something you have been meaning to do for a long time, just do it!

***Focus on your first impression.** Your buyers will spend time at the front door while their real estate broker opens the lock box. Tidy this area, repaint your front door if needed and make sure your door handle is operating properly. Add a decorative wreath or a few outdoor decorations.

***Stage Your Home.** Many real estate brokers provide a staging consultation as part of their services. If not, visit a new construction model home to get ideas. Arrange your furniture so that each room is open and spacious. Don't block the entrance to the room or the pathways within your home. You may have to remove furniture to accomplish this. Remove personal items and replace with decorative items. A new shower curtain or towels purchased at a discount department store will brighten your bathrooms.

Your efforts will translate into dollars in your pocket. Well prepared homes receive higher offers and have fewer inspection repair requests. So, turn on some tunes, enlist the help of a friend or relative, and get started.



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