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H YOUR HOME

Clean Smells Help Sell

Don't discount the power of your senses. For years, retailers have benefited from pumping pleasing, odor-neutralizing scents into their stores. Appealing scents can help home sellers as well. Eliminating odors that can be off-putting to potential buyers and creating an ambiance of comfort can make any home worth a second look.

Freshen Up

Before your home is shown, run a lemon through the garbage disposal to neutralize any odors and leave the kitchen area smelling fresh. Or try sprinkling cinnamon powder or vanilla extract on a cookie sheet and warming it in the oven. The subtle, homey scents will help create a comforting ambiance that

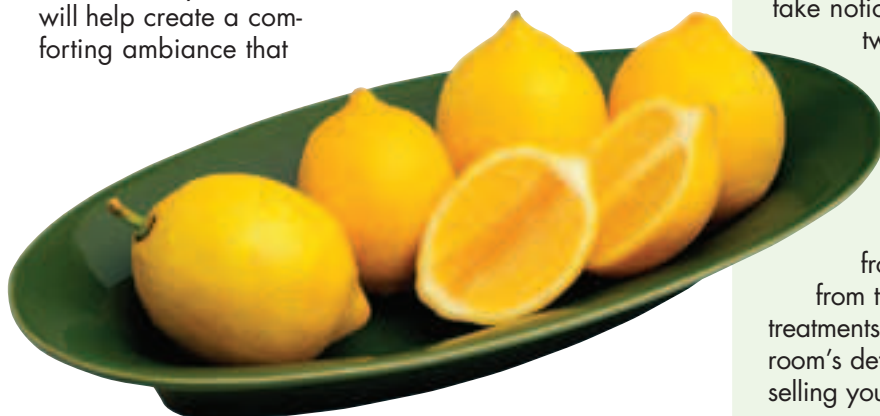
potential buyers will feel and enjoy.

Smokers' Delight?

For non-smokers, even the smallest hint of cigarette smoke can be a deal breaker. Fresh paint and professionally cleaned upholstery, combined with air filters and fresheners, will help keep non-smokers interested in your house.

Pet Protection

If you have pets, consider thoroughly vacuuming and shampooing the carpets and furniture to remove excess fur, stains and smells. Keep the kitty litter boxes clean. Once the carpets have been cleaned, keep your pets confined to certain rooms to preserve the fresh smell while the house is on the market.



The Minimalist Approach

When it comes to preparing your home for the market, it helps to keep in mind the age-old phrase "less is more." When viewing a home, potential buyers often have trouble envisioning their furniture and other possessions in the rooms. To help buyers see the potential in your home, create a more pristine canvas by reducing (but not eliminating) the number of personal objects visible in each room. One of the easiest ways to do this is by minimizing the amount of furniture and small objects in a room. Focus on making each room appear as large as possible by removing any clutter, including small pieces of furniture, that may make the room seem smaller and more cramped than it is. Clearing up space will help your home sell faster — and at a larger profit.

After removing objects from a room, it may be a good idea to put a fresh coat of paint on the walls. Painting helps to cover any marks left from wall hangings or heavy pieces of furniture. Keep in mind that neutral paint colors help a room appear big, airy and approachable, traits potential buyers will key in on.

You may also want to try the following space-maximizing tips:

Rent a Space: Don't hesitate to spend the money to rent storage space — this is a good idea if you don't have a handy place to store/hide the furniture and other objects you've removed.

Get the Green Out: Look around the room and take notice of the number of indoor plants. One or two plants in the corners of a room are fine, but keep it to a minimum. Too many plants can make a potential buyer feel like they are walking through a jungle instead of a home.

Bare it All: Fancy, detailed window treatments can not only prevent natural light from entering the room but also take away from the view. Consider replacing heavy window treatments with more minimalist shades to highlight the room's details and natural light. Remember, you are selling your home, not your decorating style.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

Lighting is a major factor in how potential buyers feel when they enter a room. Before showing a property, agents usually turn on most of the lights throughout the home to make each room more inviting. However, sellers should note: Any light fixtures they want to keep

must be taken down before the potential buyers' arrival. By contract, a buyer has rights to anything that is permanently attached to the home (including lighting). Often sellers make the mistake of leaving up an expensive lighted wall sconce or chandelier. Buyers will assume those objects come with the home. The easiest way for sellers to prevent this is to take down anything that



they want to keep before putting their home on the market. Objects such as lighting fixtures can be easily and inexpensively replaced at the sellers' local home store. Sellers can also consult with their listing agent and note in writing which items stay with the house. Be sure to list those items that you want to take (or leave) in writing before the contract is signed. Some other commonly overlooked objects are: curtains and shades; built-in-pieces of furniture (like a couch or banquette in the kitchen); a garden swing that's attached to the roof of the home or enclosed back porch; and a grill that's attached to a gas line.

Remember, if you love it, take it down, because the buyer just may love it too.

CRS: Quality Control

Choosing the right REALTOR® is the key to a successful sale. For many sellers the all-important step of picking an agent can be a daunting task. Knowing the credentials to look for in a REALTOR® will help both the seller and the buyer feel confident throughout the entire home-transaction process.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is an agent with an outstanding level of achievement in the profession. CRS agents have either a high volume of sales or high number of transactions (and often both), as well as advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing, and technology. For additional peace of mind: CRS agents maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics.



When you work with a CRS, you are working with the top 4 percent of agents in the country. He or she can offer years of experience, demonstrated success and insightful advice to help you make smart decisions about selling your home. The real estate market is tough, fast-paced and competitive, but with a CRS agent by your side, selling/buying your home becomes a profitable and enjoyable experience.