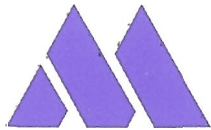




**TIPS
ON HOW
TO SELL
YOUR
HOME!**

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Before the specifics, two preliminary tasks

1. **Go and visit a couple of model-home complexes.** See what the pros do to sell homes. Model merchandising among the leading builders is nearly an art form. They've taken a sound new house and added another element-emotional appeal. They know how to push the buttons we like to have pushed.
2. **Then take a look at the old homestead.** Do it like the artist views his (or her) painting. Stand back and take a long, objective look at the whole house like you're seeing it for the first time. Suddenly, it's not Versailles (but hopefully not a river-bottom shanty). But the clinkers will immediately show up.

Now here's a step-by-step approach to getting the job done:

1. **Remove all junk (that is, anything that won't help sell) from the yard.** Fertilize the grass, trim, water, pray a little. Weed flowerbeds (if you don't have any, get busy), turn soil and plant some colorful, inexpensive plants. Remember to water. Keep sidewalks and patio hosed off, adding perhaps some pots with brightly colored plants.
2. While you are recovering from sunstroke, clean out all the closets. If you haven't worn it in the last year, odds are you never will. Trust me, it will never get that bad. If it does, you wouldn't wear it anyway!
3. **Quickly hit the kitchen cupboards.** Take out all the pots and pans and mismatched dishes (and baby cups, etc.) you never use, drag out all the stuff in the house you don't really like (including mother-in-law presents) and put it in the garage with all the junk already there and voila!
4. **Garage sale.** Both fun (think of all those longtime neighbors you haven't had the chance to speak to) and rewarding (financially). What

- you can't sell, donate. And get a receipt and a charitable deduction for your tax return. As we have only just begun, invest in some vitamins for added energy. (Remember to keep watering).
5. **Clean driveway of any grease spots.** And seeing how difficult that is, be more careful at the new house.
 6. **Paint anything that needs it.** If the exterior needs it, I recommend professionals. Chances are, you'll get the cost back, and more. Keep it neutral. Lavender is out this year.
 7. **Repair screens.**
 8. **Clean outside light fixtures.**
 9. **Make sure sprinkler system works properly.** Outside faucets handles work so it doesn't take the Incredible Hulk to turn them.
 10. **Clean up after dogs and cats.** Turnoff numero uno for non-animal lovers. Contain dogs. You know Bowser but he (or she) doesn't know people viewing your home - if we survive to that point.
 11. **Still have Christmas lights up? GO BACK TO SQUARE ONE.**
 12. **Hose out garage.** Water lawn while you are at it.
 13. **Wash windows and screens.**
 14. **Ditto sliding door tracks.** The dimes you find may be counted as tips.
 15. **Clean inside light fixtures.** Wipe all light bulbs.
 16. **Vacuum the cobwebs.** The glitter was cute at Christmas, but this is business.
 17. **Fix drippy washers.**
 18. **If necessary (and I'll bet it is), regROUT tubs and showers.** Clean tile, polish chrome, minimize displays of toiletries.
 19. **Everyone opens the oven door.** Make it shine inside. If needed, get new drip pans for the stove.
 20. **Organize under the sink.** Replace crummy piping, if necessary.
 21. **Clean and deodorize carpet.** Smokers (lovers of spicy cooking, etc.) there are odors in your

house. Ventilate well and use a good deodorizer.

22. **Throw out dying houseplants and replace.** Water.
23. **Replace the furnace filter.**
24. **Sit down for a few minutes.** You are now permitted to have a quick iced tea.

If you're knowledgeable enough (and don't have the long hours available), list your home with a well-established, active Realtor. Pick an agent who is well informed about financing and who can explain to you your costs of sale and answer your questions in language you can understand.

When it's that magic moment for a prospective buyer to arrive:

1. Put some pleasant, reasonable music on the stereo with the volume low.
2. Open the draperies wide, as well as a few windows if it isn't frigid outside.
3. Boiling some cinnamon in water on the stove provides a very homey aroma, not unlike baking apple pie.
4. No TV.
5. In wintertime (but only if you're at home) a fire in the fireplace is a reassuring touch.
6. If you are using an agent, let her (or him) show the home alone. In either case, buyers need the freedom to look around in a leisurely way, speak freely and, in general, feel comfortable in your home - hopefully soon to be theirs.
7. If you have young children, display only a minimum (and those in one piece) of toys.
8. Freshly cut (or blooming) flowers in several strategic locations. (But don't turn the place into a florist shop.)
9. Make sure all trash baskets are empty.

GOOD LUCK!