

Seller's Home Presentation Checklist

- Test all door and cabinet knobs. Replace mismatched or inexpensive hardware for a quick update. Buyers rarely can get beyond a knob that comes off in their hand as they attempt to use a door.
 - Take the time to paint walls, trim and ceilings. Keep adjoining rooms in the same colour palette, which will make your home appear larger and flow better. Clean up spills from messy painters. Hire professionals to paint mullions on windows and staircase spindles.
 - Slipcover mismatched furniture in a room that requires visual unification.
 - Discover ways to organize day-to-day room needs. Substantial wicker baskets or square stainless steel or brass can organize magazines, remote controls and toys. Books provide a good look, but vary them by laying some down and standing some up.
 - Wallpaper is considered fill-in-the-blank decorating . No two people have the same taste in this instant decorator wannabe. If it's more than three years old, take it down and paint in a neutral colour. And wallpaper borders are out.
 - Simple furniture rearrangement can bring new life to a tired space. Float sofas and coffee tables away from walls for a designer look. Use area rugs to anchor furniture groupings on bare tile and wood floors. Place groupings of candles and clear glass bowls filled with natural potpourri, fresh fruit or glass crystals on side and coffee tables.
 - Make sure there is balanced lighting in every room for dusk and evening showings. Dimmers help set the right tone.
 - Polish and wax hardwood floors to brighten and blend an old finish.
 - Clean every surface until it shimmers and shines. Clean can seal a deal. Don't forget the windows.
 - Purchase the best quality carpet pad that can make any new carpeting "cushy", and home buyers love cushy. Stay away from shag styles as buyers know it won't be around long in style cycles.
 - Streamline window fashions. Heavy drapes are in the minority. Think "let the light shine in" when placing blinds and shades. Light and bright can overcome other issues with home.
 - Freshen-up closets with closet organizers to maximize storage space and paint a neutral washable colour. Make sure buyers can see the back of all closets and cupboards. Lighting is often an overlooked feature in closets, but buyers will always turn on lights when viewing a closet, big or small. Thinning closets, cabinets, basements, attics and garages will also help your storage spaces look larger. If you can't part with items, rent a storage locker to hold items for decision making later.
 - Don't forget the basement; dark, dirty and musty basements are a turn-off to buyers. Add extra lighting, paint the floor and vacuum out all the cobwebs. Organize storage areas and take the time to clean the washing machine and dryer. To spruce up the hot water heater and furnace, wipe down with a strong cleaner. Scrub the laundry tub and sweep left-over leaves out of exterior stairs and window wells. Run a dehumidifier to reduce basement moisture.
 - Take a good look from the street or road at the front of your home. Look for shrubs that are over grown or dead and remove and replace with shrubs that are to scale to your home. Small inexpensive bushes send the wrong message.
 - Limit yard ornaments to a favoured few. Excess ornaments can make yards look busy and buyers might want them included in a purchase contract.
 - Paint and refresh yard lights, flagpoles, mailboxes, window boxes, fences and trellis. Don't forget the swing set or play equipment.
 - Replace broken bricks on terraces, cracked concrete patios and steps. Eliminate trips and falls on property showings.
 - Restore screens on porches and lanai's. Dirty, rusty and ripped screens limit functionality to homebuyers.
 - Don't leave pets unattended for property showings especially when you know they can be aggressive or territorial around strangers.
 - Have carpets and area rugs cleaned before showing your home to potential buyers. Those allergic to animal dander and hair, even if they can't see your pet will know when their eyes and nose start to alert them to an allergic reaction. Many will not purchase a home that poses strong allergy problems.
 - Pick up dog droppings in the yard. Buyers out to take a look at the roof don't want any "take away".
 - A barking dog or overly friendly cats can kill a showing. Be pro-active and take your pets off site for showings. Hire a dog walker to occupy pets if you can't be home.
- Compiled by and compliments of Mike Giesbrecht