

THE **90** THINGS
YOU CAN'T AFFORD
TO **NEGLECT**
WHEN SELLING
YOUR HOME!

FOR SALE 

WORLD IMPACT

Real Estate

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Congratulations, you've made the decision to sell your home! This guide is designed to assist you as you market your home and to provide insights into how prospective buyers and their agents view your home.

Let me reassure you that selling without an agent can be done. It does take a significant amount of time and knowledge of the industry to do it, so check out these tips for selling your home before you do anything else.

You will likely have additional questions as you move forward, so I have put together additional information about the process that you might find useful. Please contact me with any requests for specific topics. My marketing services are proven effective over time, so you'll know you have the best information available to you while you market your home.

If you determine that you would like professional assistance with the marketing and sale of your home, my team and I will be ready to step in to help at any point. I am committed to helping our clients reach their real estate goals.

If I can be of help to you in any way, please don't hesitate to call or text me anytime at 850-217-4530 or e-mail me at 850homesforsale@gmail.com I'd love the opportunity to view your home at your earliest convenience, so I can see if perhaps it is a fit for one of my clients.

Sincerely,

SHANNON WADE HENLEY/ Realtor

850-217-4530

P.S. When I come to preview your home, I will also bring you a list of 15 free websites where you can list your For Sale By Owner home for additional exposure!

PREPPING YOUR HOME FOR SALE



- 1 Invest in a professional home inspection.** The cost of a home inspection is worth every penny simply because of the peace of mind that comes from not worrying about unexpected issues or repairs. Prospective buyers see this as a sign that the home is well care for and establishes a foundational level of trust.
- 2 Repair any significant deficiencies found during the inspection.** Buyers and their agents tend to drastically overestimate the repair costs and often use any necessary repairs as a leverage tool for negotiating a lower price or other concessions after the initial offer has been accepted.
- 3 Hire a licensed professional to make necessary repairs.** Any good buyers' agent will advise their clients to require this for any repairs as well as written documentation of repairs made and receipts for payment.
- 4 Bonus—If you are concerned about pricing, you can pay for a professional appraisal of your home.** Appraisals are technically good only for the date they were made, but unless something drastic has happened to the home, the area, or the economy, it should give you a fairly accurate picture of your home's worth.

SUCCESS IS IN THE DETAILS

- 5 Cut the clutter.**—Remove magnets, pictures, souvenirs from the refrigerator. Use the general two-thirds rule: remove 2/3 of everything on any flat surface in your home. Since you are already planning to move, this is a great time to donate unused items, get rid of things you don't need or want, and start packing for your new home. Store boxes in a rented storage unit rather than in your garage.
- 6 Take time to do a deep cleaning of every part of your home.** If you can afford to use a cleaning service, you will find that outsourcing this cumbersome task will free you to take care of other aspects of your move.
- 7 Pay attention to detail**—Don't forget to clean baseboards, tops of doors and doorframes, as well as your carpet, hard floor coverings, and grout.
- 8 Clean and polish woodwork and cabinetry.** This is especially important in the kitchen where most buyers plan to spend the most time.

- 9 Clean light fixtures and replace burnt out bulbs.** Consider changing to brighter bulbs if the fixture is rated for higher wattage than your current bulbs. Dead bugs and cobwebs detract from the appeal of the home and often indicate neglect to buyers.

- 10 Thoroughly clean all windows, windowsills, and screens.**—For the best impression, both the outside and inside should be cleaned regularly during the time your home is on the market.

WELCOME TO THE PARTY

- 11** While you may have great taste and love your unusual color schemes, most buyers prefer to see your home as something of an empty canvas that they can customize to their own liking. It is very difficult for most people to see "past the paint", so make it as easy as possible for them to fall in love with your home.
- 12** Fill nail holes and repaint walls that are in less than stellar condition. Buyers want everything "move in ready", so the more you do to assist the process, at least in their perception, the easier it will be to sell your home.

MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT YOU HAVE

- 13 Rent a storage locker**—Any unnecessary furniture, collectibles, kitchen items, equipment, etc. should be removed from the home to present the maximum amount of space possible.
- 14 Rearrange furniture to create more space.** You may need to remove furniture from a room in order to open it up, but consider simply moving things around in creative ways. A professional home-stager can also provide suggestions and advice for staging your home.
- 15 Come out of the closet**—buyers want space. Lots and lots of space... So help them picture the closets as large enough for their clothes and extensive shoe collection.

HOME IS WHERE THEY FEEL AT HOME

- 16 Let there be light**—Open the blinds, curtains, and shades. Dark areas appear smaller and are not very inviting. Consider adding lamps or other lighting where needed and placing mirrors on the walls to reflect the light and give an even larger appearance.
- 17 The Nose Has It**—Odors are a huge turnoff to potential buyers and indicate that the home has not been cared for well. Clean, sanitize, and deodorize EVERYTHING. Have an impartial third party give an honest assessment of any odors to which you may have become accustomed and treat the source of the odors.
- 18 Use plugin air fresheners or wax warmers**—Since you will be accompanying any prospective purchasers, you can also light candles, but avoid leaving flames unattended.

- 19 Scents often elicit fond memories**—Freshly baked cookies, bread, or pies are perfect mood setters, but steer clear of overly spicy, strong ethnic scents, or burnt anything.
- 20 Pet urine will drive away prospects like nothing else**—For small areas, treat with enzyme based treatments, but realize that the only way to completely eliminate the odor, the carpet and padding must be removed and replaced. Be ready for the request to either change the carpet or provide a carpet allowance.
- 21 Hire a professional carpet cleaning service to clean all carpeted areas.** Most companies will also steam clean drapes, hard surface flooring, and grout.
- 22 Dirty laundry is for social media, not floors, closets, or even hampers**—Wash laundry daily and don't allow it to accumulate while your home is on the market.
- 23 A rose by any other name**—Fresh flowers not only enhance the positive scent of the home, but they also provide color and add beauty to everything. Best bets are mildly scented blooms such as daisies.

THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE DETAILS

- 24 Accessories, lighting, and color make a huge difference.** Attend a few open houses or walk through several model homes and note the visual appeal of homes that are "staged" to sell. Take notes and replicate the look or use them for inspirations for your own model home.
- 25 Coffee table books, fireplace logs, and fresh fruit baskets** all convey a homey atmosphere, so display a few items that make your home feel welcoming.
- 26 Change drapes to sheer panels or white blinds.** Be sure to check all light fixtures, lamps, and sconces for burnt out bulbs; clean glass and globes as well.
- 27 If you feel the need to display photos, choose a few from different seasons and place in decorative frames.** Whether inside or outside the home, showing prospective buyers how great your home is during the summer, spring, Christmas, etc., encourages thoughts of their own family experiencing those seasons in your home and makes it feel like their own.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE LASTING

- 28 Check your curb appeal**—stand across the street from your home and look at the exterior and the yard as if you were planning to buy your home. Buyers will notice smaller details than the homeowner, so use a critical eye or borrow a friend who will be honest with you.
- 29 Update the landscaping**—in addition to making certain the lawn is neatly trimmed and edged, pay attention to flower beds, trees, and shrubs. Remove or replace dead or dying plants and add fresh mulch if necessary.

- 30 Rent a high-quality pressure washer or hire a professional**—this is the quickest and easiest way to improve the look of your home's exterior. Don't forget to clean all porches, decks, windows, and eaves as well as the walls.
- 31 Shut the front door**—at a minimum, clean the door and hardware. Consider painting the door and doorframe and polishing or replacing the hardware.
- 32 Lubricate hinges and use graphite spray in the lock**—Make it easy to get into the home by ensuring that the lock functions freely, hinges swing smoothly, and it doesn't sound like entering a haunted house because of squeaky hardware.
- 33 Add potted plants and/or colorful flowers to your porch or front steps.** Even small entryways can benefit from greenery and it gives the impression that the home is well cared for.
- 34 Use seasonal items such as wreaths, flags, or decorations to enhance the entryway**—A festive home implies a happy home and a happy home implies a "good" home. Don't underestimate the power of suggestion.
- 35 Keep a clean welcome mat to encourage visitors to wipe their feet**—It's also subtle psychological suggestion that they are home.
- 36 Inspect all windows and screens**—Repair or replace screens with holes or tears. Imaginary expenses add up quickly, so remove as many potential objections as possible.
- 37 Clean the gutters and check for loose or missing shingles**—If you don't have gutters, consider having them installed.
- 38 Wash the outside of all windows and frames**—choose an overcast day or late afternoon. Bright sunlight and high temperatures cause cleaners to evaporate quicker and causes streaks.
- 39 Replace or repair any broken windows or windowpanes.** Shattered glass is not only a huge turn off; it is also a safety and a security risk.



THE BACKYARD OASIS



- 40** Remove clutter and unnecessary items from your backyard to showcase the maximum amount of room. Fill in any holes, pick up any doggy bombs, and clear any stray toys or other objects that can be tripped over, stepped in, or hide snakes.
- 41** Look like you love there—that's not a typo... Set up a sitting area around a fire pit or keep a (clean) patio table and chairs to accompany a barbecue grill.
- 42** Remove large items such as trampolines—Not only does it maximize space, it also removes the inherent safety risk.
- 43** Secure pool items and ensure that gates are closed so a child doesn't accidentally end up in the pool while the parents are checking out the outdoor kitchen.

DRIVEWAY WITH A VIEW

- 44** If your home has a driveway in front of the home, be certain that it is clear of clutter, clean, and any cracks are filled. If you have an in ground basketball goal, make sure it is in good repair and remember that if it is attached, it is considered to be real property and therefore part of the sale.
- 45** Put away the bikes, toys, and extra children. Again, these tend to be obtrusive and dangerous.

COME ON IN

- 46** Pay extra attention to flooring, lighting, and walls in this room—Consider adding centerpiece plants or flowers to enhance dull entryway tables and eliminate other clutter than often gravitates to flat surfaces.
- 47** Make it smell like home—The scent that meets prospective buyers should be pleasant and not overwhelming.
- 48** Add a rug—Protect your flooring and improve the aesthetics with a tasteful, quality area rug.
- 49** Place a mirror in the entryway or foyer to increase the light and create the illusion of extra space.

THE LIVING ROOM



- 50** Remove toys and anything else that doesn't belong—A tidy home is a welcoming home. On the other hand, a cluttered home gives the impression that there is a lack of storage and usable space.
- 51** If you have a mantle, use a seasonal theme or decorate it with interesting arrangements—Follow the rule of three as a guide to decorating. Pictures, vases, or candles look best in groups of three in varying sizes.
- 52** Remove all unnecessary furniture to maximize space—Or simply rearrange the furniture to provide a smooth flowing walkway through the room.
- 53** Take advantage of high ceilings—Drawing attention to interesting light fixtures or ceiling fans gives the appearance of spaciousness because the eye travels upward from the furnished areas.
- 54** Clean the fireplace and hearth—Keep ashes at bay and wood chips under control during the winter months. When not in use, remove all ashes and debris and add a display of candles, flowers, or other items to create a focal point in the room. Pinterest has great ideas for ways to repurpose your fireplace outside the winter months.

THE DINING ROOM



- 55** Remove unnecessary furniture—Remove leaves from the table and store unused chairs.
- 56** Set the table—Use your nicest dishes to arrange place settings and place fresh flowers as an attractive centerpiece.

KITCHEN



- 57 The kitchen is called the heart of the home for good reason, so make it work to your advantage**—Clean EVERYTHING including cabinetry, walls, and both inside and outside of all appliances.
- 58 Repair or replace appliances that are not working or are barely holding on**—Everything should work as intended. Buyers (and their agents) pay a lot of attention to detail in kitchens. Any repair or replacement cost they foresee is multiplied far beyond actual cost because of the added inconvenience to them.
- 59 Take a good, hard look at your countertops**—Regardless of what you currently have on your counter; remove two-thirds of it. Make it easy for the buyers to see themselves working or entertaining comfortably and without being cramped.
- 60 The toaster is toast**—If you don't use an appliance, utensil, or other item daily, remove it and either store out of site if you'll need it prior to moving or pack it up for the move.
- 61 Let out your inner OCD**—Details are critical in the kitchen, so go above and beyond to ensure that everything is sanitary, neat, and spotless.
- 62 Clean and polish cabinets and walls**—Don't neglect the things you wouldn't normally notice. Even in the cleanest homes, grease builds up on the most unlikely places and collects dust and debris that are not easily removed with a duster.
- 63 Remove everything from the top of your refrigerator**—This is never a good storage area because of the heat from the fridge, but especially now, it's important to make it appear that there is adequate storage without resorting to every available flat surface.
- 64 If you have a kitchen table, keep it clean and clear**—With the exception of an attractive bowl of fresh fruit or flowers as a centerpiece, the table should be kept free of all clutter and dust.
- 65 Take advantage of the sense of smell by baking or using candles in the kitchen**-- Use seasonal scents to evoke familiar and pleasant memories in the prospective buyers.

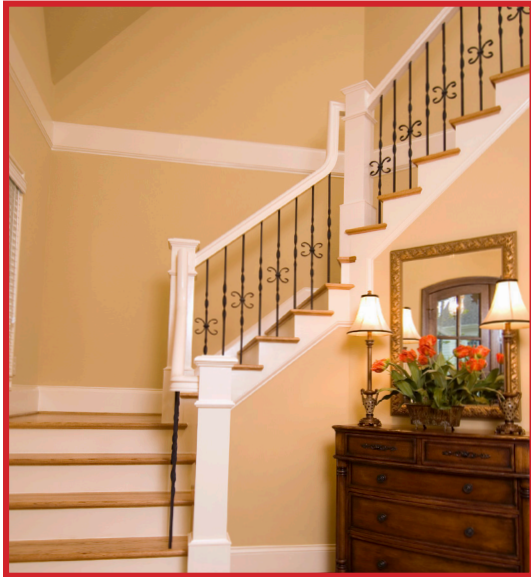
- 66 Place fresh citrus fruits on your countertop**—The goal is a fresh scent, so natural scents are a great way to enhance the atmosphere.
- 67 Out of sight, please**—Put dishwashing liquid, sponges, and other cleaning items under the sink prior to showing your home.
- 68 Emphasize windows and natural light**—Clean, repair, or replace blinds or curtains and make sure they are always open during showings.
- 69 Place bar stools at the counter and add place settings**—This will give buyers subtle suggestions of ways to maximize the space.
- 70 Stage a cookbook or mixing bowl and whisk on the counter**—If it appears that you are at home in your kitchen it will feel more inviting to buyers.

LAUNDRY ROOM



- 71 Add lights, new wallpaper, or a fresh coat of paint**—Make the room seem larger and dare I say, inviting?
- 72 Cover bare floors with a decorative rug**—This improves appearance and also reduces noise from the washer and dryer.
- 73 Wash the washer**—And the dryer... Dirty washers have an unpleasant odor and dirty appliances are unattractive. This is especially important if they will be staying with the home upon purchase.
- 74 Store cleaning supplies neatly**—Use decorative baskets or add shelving if there are not cabinets for built in storage.
- 75 No dirty laundry allowed**—It doesn't matter that the purpose of the room is laundry, buyers do not want to see or smell it, so wash frequently and keep the room neat.

STAIRWAYS



- 76 Stairways can be dangerous**—Remove everything from the steps, provide adequate lighting, and check the stability of handrails.
- 77 Accessorize with pictures or sconces.** Repaint your walls and consider adding new wallpaper.

BEDROOMS



- 78 Increase the space in your master bedroom by removing unnecessary furniture**—If you have a large treadmill or other equipment in your bedroom, remove it while you are marketing your home.
- 79 Update and refresh bedding**—Use lighter colors and completely make the bed EVERYDAY!
- 80 Enlist the kids**—Have them help clean up before every showing and keep their bedrooms neat and clean. It might help if you offer rewards for cooperation.
- 81 Give it away, give it away now**—Help those less fortunate and yourself by collecting unused, unloved, or unnecessary clothes, shoes, toys, etc. and donating them to a local homeless shelter.
- 82 Let there be light**—If your closet doesn't have adequate lighting, add battery operated lights

- 83 Store out of season clothing**—Anything you don't currently wear on a regular basis should be boxed and stored while you are showing your home. Keep the shelves neat and organize shoes, bags, and scarves or accessories.

- 84 Use dehumidifiers or desiccants to eliminate stale smells and stuffy atmosphere**—Add mild air fresheners or fabric softener to maintain a pleasant scent.

BATHROOMS



- 85 Clean, clean, clean**—Above all, make sure the bathrooms are spotless and frequently sanitized. Wipe counters and mirrors daily.
- 86 Replace shower curtains**—Or wash with sanitizer. Mold and mildew grow quickly in this warm, moist environment
- 87 Repair or replace old caulking**—This will eliminate any ugly stains and prevent water damage.
- 88 Repair leaky faucets or toilet stoppers**—This will prevent those annoying stains, even more annoying noises, and the most annoying thing about leaky faucets—large water bills.
- 89 Keep the seat down**—And the lid closed. Other peoples' bathrooms are gross enough without being greeted by an open toilet.
- 90 Close the drawers**—Put away everything when you are finished with it. Keep your toothbrushes off the counter and store makeup and perfume neatly.
- 91 *Organize cabinets and storage areas**—Toss outdated or unusable products and keep chemicals stored safely out of site.
- 92 *Keep floors clean and shiny**—At a minimum, sweep up hair daily and mop at least once per week.

*BONUS: GARAGE

- 93 *Pack unused tools or toys and put them into storage.**
- 94 *Remove all cars from the garage before each showing.** A garage without cars always looks bigger.



SHOWING YOUR HOME

Always be willing to show your home whenever the need arises.

Get your kids involved and create a quick-response showing plan. When an unexpected showing occurs, everyone will be prepared to make it happen.

Prior to showing, turn on all lights. A bright, clean home always appears bigger and more welcoming.

Keep your home at a comfortable temperature. In temperate conditions, open a few windows for a breeze to freshen the air.

Turn off the TV, radio, and computers. Replace the white noise with soothing background music.

It will also be helpful to prepare important and relevant information for your buyers. **Compile monthly and annual utility expenses in a binder for the buyers.** Also include information about cable, electric, garbage disposal, and any warranty information on the appliances you are selling with the house.

Relax when you present the house and resist the urge to “sell” the home’s features. Anything you say, no matter how seemingly innocuous, can and usually will be used against you during negotiations.



ONE MORE THING

As you can see, there are a lot of details to cover, but if you keep these things in mind, you’ll have a much better chance of a successful “by owner” sale. Remember that buyers’ agents work for the buyer, so use extreme caution when asking or answering any questions. If you find that you have additional questions, concerns, or if you want to outsource this process, please call me today at 850-217-4530

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