

5.5 Ways to Sell a House Faster

1. Don't sell "as is." Selling a home without doing some prep work before is the easy way out, and you'll likely only attract bargain hunters. Accept the fact that painting, cleaning, decluttering, and various fix-its will be needed before you sell.

2. Get a storage unit. Excess furniture, such as a king-size bed squeezed in a guest bedroom, will make rooms look smaller. Rooms can double in size simply by getting rid of the big pieces. Also prime for off-site storage: knickknacks, photos, trophies, and everything else that will distract buyers from seeing themselves in the home.

3. Hire a home inspector upfront. Before putting the home on the market, fix any problems the inspector finds. You'll eliminate surprises that can hold up a sale. An added bonus: A clean inspection report is an excellent marketing tool.

4. Fuel their imagination. Paint rooms in neutral colors or use white paint with a tint of brown or grey. Buyers will be able to envision their own decorating touches and colors in the room. Flat paints tend to hide small imperfections and semi gloss paints work well for kitchens and bathrooms.

5. Know what adds value to the home. Improvements that generally add value to your home include landscaping, decks, floor upgrades, security system, and extra bathrooms or bedrooms. On the other hand, repairing water leaks, damaged walls, or other maintenance tasks don't typically boost value — they're expected as part of the sale. (For more guidance, check out the most recent Cost vs. Value Report.)

5.5 DECLUTTER!

Clutter is to selling a home like obesity is to a Miss America contestant. It isn't going to help your cause if buyers looking at your home are turned off by piles of clutter. Remember, people buy on emotion. They're looking for a house that evokes hearth and home emotions. For that to happen, buyers must see themselves living in and enjoying the home. These are the people who pay full price and don't lowball your price.