

Home organization expert offers tips to help sell homes

With the spring selling season around the corner, residents might be considering putting their homes on the market.

If selling a house is at the top of the to-do list this season, be sure to schedule some time to do some serious spring cleaning. Not only will a thorough cleaning make the home stand out from the others, it will motivate the homeowner to get rid of the clutter that has accumulated over the years.

Home organization expert Marty Basher of Modular Closets has some great tips for preparing to put a home on the market.

Her top tips include:

1. Declutter — get rid of all the junk that irritates you ... it will certainly turn off a buyer. Take a critical eye to your home. Maybe even have a third party do this. Living somewhere daily reduces the things you notice that might be a problem, i.e., dirty walls, scuffs and scrapes, leaks or even odors that might be present that you have become accustomed to.
2. Fix broken stuff. Yes, that garage door opener that doesn't work or the ice maker on the fridge. If it is staying with the house, it needs to be fixed. You have learned to live with it or without it, but a buyer will view it as neglectful and judge your whole house's upkeep and maintenance on those couple of broken items.
3. Know what is selling around you and why? Are homes selling quickly in your price range? Maybe you can be aggressive with your price. If you use a realtor, they will help arrive at a price but know yourself as well. A realtor may not be as familiar with your area.
4. Clean and organize the closets. With the modular closet items available today, it is easy and inexpensive to dress up your closets. Storage really does matter when considering a new home.
5. Make sure the outside entry way is in tip top shape. This is the focus from the street and also the first thing prospective buyer's see when entering your house. Fresh paint on the front door and fresh flowers can make a big difference.
6. If you are not going to sell your home by yourself, then interview several realtors. Ask them about your area, what their marketing plan will be, and negotiate commission. There are thousands of realtors and not all of them are equal. Don't get frustrated by the fact that you pick one that simply puts a sign in your yard and waits for the low hanging fruit. You are going to pay this person a lot of money ... make them work for it and for you.
7. Deep clean the kitchen and bathrooms. These areas of the home are generally the most cluttered and dirty. Both of those things will turn off willing buyers. Deep clean stove tops and ovens, cabinets and sinks. Also spend some extra time if you have a dirty shower or bath tub. If they don't already, you want these things to sparkle.
8. Pet waste and signs of damage. Clean up the backyard or whatever area your pets use outside. Buyers will walk around the yard you don't want them to be distracted from your home because they are maneuvering through a mine field of dog droppings. Also, you can't conceal damage but that doesn't mean you can't fix stuff. If the dog has chewed a door or scratched a wall ... fix it. These easy and inexpensive fixes will pay great dividends when you sell the house.
9. De-personalize your home. You want prospective buyers' to be able to visualize their family in the home and that is much harder to do with all of your family's stuff. So go ahead and pack up most of the pictures, trophies, mementos you are going to do it any way to move just get a head start.

Dramatic bedtime story: Comforters, duvets get bolder

By MELISSA KOSSLER DUTTON
Associated Press

Colored, textured and patterned comforters and duvets are telling a dramatic bedtime story these days.

"Bedding acts as a narrator to set the tone of the room," said Anthropologie's home textiles buyer Brittany Peacock. "As the focal point of the room, the bed is a natural location for a pop of color or pattern."

Taking their cue from manufacturers and high-end design projects, consumers are moving away from the pale colors that once dominated bedroom decor and toward vibrant tones and patterns, said Joy Coulter of Couture Designs in New Albany, Ohio.

"In the more upscale magazines, I am starting to see more bright colors, especially in master suites," she said. "The new trends seem to be getting away from so much neutral and gray. People are tired of having just white bedding, and they're ready to try something bold."

Louise Traficanti, creative director for Eastern Accents, a bedding company in Chicago, thinks that homeowners were decorating with muted palettes for several years in response to the economic downturn and their own financial constraints.

Things have begun to change, she said.

"Over the last two years, we've been really pushing more color, and seeing our customers respond enthusiastically to patterns and designs," she said.

More color in the bedroom also is a reflection of how much time people spend there, added Chris Chapin, co-founder at Company C, a home furnishings company in Concord, N.H. With the bedroom functioning as a place to watch television, read a book or use technology, it's not surprising that people are craving livelier looks realized through florals, prints and geometric patterns in dramatic colors, she says.

"People want color and some excitement in their lives. Color can represent what someone's passionate about," she said. "You walk in, you feel good."

The desire to decorate in a way that tells your story also has helped drive the use of color, Traficanti said. "As people get more expressive about their own personality," they are choosing more interesting colors and patterns for a "more curated look," she said.

Eclecticism is in and



SELLING A HOME — Home organization expert Marty Basher of Modular Closets offers her to-do list when residents are preparing to sell their homes. She said it's

important to do some serious spring cleaning when preparing to put a home on the market.

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