

SELLING YOUR RESIDENCE: HOME STAGING



By Virginia Leeming

Take out your pen and jot down these words, “Home Staging”. In today’s real estate market your home must make a favourable impression on the potential buyer. Presenting it in the best possible condition, or home staging, will make the difference between a quick sale at a high price or a lengthy sale at a lower price.

“I’ve had clients who’ve not understood the value of improving their property before marketing it and I’ve had clients who have put in that extra effort. Time and again it’s been proven to me that with the extra effort, a property will sell for a better price and in a shorter period of time,” says Tennyson Haughton, a realtor with Sutton with a 15-year track record of successful selling.

Matthew Collinge of Royal LePage concurs. He advises removing the kids’ drawings, the clutter and the dated painting over the couch. “Remember, they (the buyers) want to buy a house to make their own. They have to be able to picture their lives in your house.”

So where to begin the transition from a pumpkin into a coach? Haughton advises to look at your home’s exterior through the eyes of the buyer. The first impression is a lasting one. It’s called curb appeal.

Painting has the greatest impact with the least amount of cost, adds Haughton, and will make the exterior look fresh. Repair cracks in the driveway and paths. Trim grass and hedges; add colourful flowers and place potted flowers on the doorsteps. Paint the front door a fresh colour and replace any burnt-out lights. Put out a new doormat.

Indoors, repair any cracks in plaster, and replace anything that is broken or missing. Clean as if your mother was coming over to give it the white glove inspection. If you don’t have the time or the desire, hire professionals.

Remove glass light fixtures and clean out bugs. Repaint a dark or intensely coloured wall in a neutral shade. Bear in mind that lighter colours will make a room appear larger. Decorate to please the market, not yourself. Be sure to clean inside ovens and fridges.

Open and close all doors to ensure they don’t stick. Have windows perfectly clean and be sure to open curtains or blinds to allow in the maximum amount of light.

Floors must be sparkling clean, ditto for carpets. If the carpet is worn, remove or replace. Remove carpeting over hardwood floors and have refinished and stained if required. Hardwood floors are very popular and will add value to your property.

Once the repair work is completed and you have cleaned thoroughly, go around each room and remove,

remove, remove. This includes personal photos, stacks of magazines and bric-a-brac. Invest in a fresh floral arrangement.

Go into closets and clean out the clutter. Rent locker space to store the overflow. If closets are bulging, remove as much as possible to make the closet space seem larger and well organized. Replace any wire hangers with plastic or wooden ones. Buy fresh bed linen and pillows to give the bedroom and upscale appearance.

Rover or Fluffy may be a cherished pet, but they won’t enhance your home. Buyers will be thinking about flea-infested carpets or pet hair and dander if they have allergies. Animals should be absent during open house.

Some seller will store their furnishings and accessories to give the home greater appeal. Vancouver-based DEKORA specializes in preparing properties for sale, and according to the testimonials of clients, it gets results. The company offers cleaning, organizing, painting, landscaping and repair services. It also rents furnishings and art, based on your budget and style requirements.

Check grouting and caulking around the tub. If water is collecting behind the tiles a housing inspector will be sure to discover it and your asking price will fall like a stone. Remove everything from the medicine cabinet. Buy a new shower curtain and clean the chrome until it shines.

Have something fragrant on the stove such as cinnamon and cloves in a simmering pot of water.

If you take the extra time and effort you will reap the benefit when it comes to signing on the dotted line. If you’re still not convinced, consider this comment in Newsweek –

“People who don’t spend a few dollars to prepare their homes, whether it be \$5,000 or \$10,000 or even \$30,000, depending on the price point, are out of their minds.” – *Barbara Corcoran, Founder & President, The Corcoran Group – New York City’s premier real estate company with 11 offices, 700 salespeople and 4 billion in revenue.*

And a friendly reminder, empty spaces are not welcoming. If the space is empty it is less likely to sell than one that is tastefully furnished.

If your prospective buyer asks why you are selling, keep the reason to yourself. “My housing needs have changed” is all you need to say. If they think you are in a rush to sell or that you have to relocate by a certain month, the might try to negotiate the price down.