



Sellers Tips: How to Maximize Your Return on Investment

34 Sellers Tips

These sellers' tips have been comprised out of years of buyer comments when viewing properties that are for sale. It is formulated into a checklist format to help sellers to remember all of those "little things" that can add up to make a big difference between their property and the competition. They are broken down into three categories: **(1) Exterior; (2) Interior; (3) How to Show Your Property for Maximum Profit.**

Exterior of the Property

Overall, homebuyers are looking for a home that looks clean, neat, and well-maintained. By addressing exterior issues, you immediately give your buyers a positive "first impression". Investor buyers aren't necessarily as concerned with cleanliness and neatness – they are simply looking for functionality of layout and they are trying to determine how easy it will be for either future rental or resale.

Here are **12 first impression items** to examine:

Tip #1: Get into your car and drive away from the property. Drive towards the property the way a potential buyer would. Notice your first impressions of the property. Is the landscaping well groomed? How about the driveway and curb? Can you easily see the architecture of the property, or is it blocked by trees and bushes. Notice the roof. Is it in good condition? Make a list of items that need attention.

Tip #2: Paint the front door(s) and mailbox(es). Polish the door(s) and entry hardware.

Tip #3: Make sure doorbells are functional.

Tip #4: Wash or thoroughly clean wood, aluminum, and vinyl sided properties. You can hire a contractor to pressure wash an entire house for about \$200. Pressure washing can remove dirt, grime, peeling paint, and mildew.

Tip #5: Be sure that leaves are raked, shrubbery and trees are trimmed, the lawn is mowed frequently, and even plant a few new, fresh flowers. Put down fresh mulch or pine straw around shrubs and flowerbeds.

Tip #6: Sweep and hose off the walkways and driveways. Pressure wash these areas if necessary.

Tip #7: Clean the gutters and extend downspouts to prevent flooding or basement water seepage.



Tip #8: Check the locks of the property home at the front entry, back entry, and garage. Locks can give a first impression of a property that needs maintenance. And they're the first thing a buyer sees. A small dab of graphite will make them work like new.

Tip #9: Clean oil stains from the driveway and garage. This is best achieved by using poultice with Portland cement. Scrub with a detergent and rinse.

Tip #10: Clean up any litter in the yard or walkways. Remove any leaves or debris in the yard or walkways.

Tip #11: Touch-up the paint on the exterior of the property if necessary. In some cases, it pays to repaint the entire exterior of a wood-sided property if it hasn't received a coat of paint in years. Hardwood trim on the exterior of the property can make or break its appearance. Make sure it looks clean.

Tip #12: Look for any cracks in exterior plaster, and make sure they're fixed and repainted to match exterior paint.

Interior of the Property

If the investment property you are selling could potentially be sold to a buyer who plans to live in the home (a homebuyer) as opposed to another investor, there's a little known secret about homebuyers that you need to know: People buy homes based on the emotional FEELINGS they get from the home. They fall in love, for example, with the kitchen or the master bedroom. Or perhaps the roaring fire in the family room fireplace touched off an old memory.

And while they're viewing your property, they're visualizing in their mind's eye what it would be like to live there – the backyard barbecues they'll host...Sunday dinners with family...college graduation celebrations of their children, or simply relaxing in the backyard hammock.

It's all about emotions for homebuyers. And if your property doesn't feel right, you will quickly lose interest from buyers. So remember this: Purchase decisions by homebuyers are EMOTIONAL. Once a decision to buy is made, they usually justify their purchase with logical reasons.

If in fact your property is one that would lend itself well to a homebuyer as opposed to an investor—the following 11 interior tips will help you to "dress" the interior of the property so it feels like home to potential homebuyers. Note that there is an added expense in "staging" the property but, in some cases, it may be worth it to produce a quicker sale and a higher sales price. By dressing the interior of your property right, you'll encourage your buyers to stay. People buy with their eyes, ears and noses, and the longer they stay in your home, the greater the likelihood of an offer.



14 interior tips to help you “dress” the interior of a property:

Tip #1: The entry way sets first impressions. So make sure it's in great condition with fresh paint and clean floors. If the entry tile floor has build-up, consider using a commercial stripper and re-waxing.

Tip #2: If you are staging with furniture keep in mind the saying that “less is more”. You want the home to look uncluttered and the rooms to feel open and bright. The average home has too much furniture for showing, so by staging your property with a limited amount of furniture, you could set yourself apart from the competition.

Tip #3: Do a thorough interior maintenance review. Oil squeaky doors, tighten doorknobs, clean and repair ALL windows, and repair leaking faucets and toilets. Look for chipped paint and cracked plaster or drywall that needs repairing.

Tip #4: Be sure that any window shades and blinds are clean.

Tip #5: Replace any burned-out light bulbs and clean lighting fixtures.

Tip #6: GIVE THE HOME A SPACIOUS LOOK. If you've ever toured a model home, you've noticed that the home is spacious and bright. Make your staged home look the same as a model. Make any dark rooms appear brighter by opening blinds – even repainting in a bright, but neutral color.

Tip #7: Make sure the home is clean by doing the following: 1) Shampoo carpets, 2) Clean appliances; 3) Clean and freshen the bathrooms. Hire a professional cleaning service if needed. The money you spend on these areas will come back to you in the purchase price.

Tip #8: Wax or polish floors, and glue down any seams if you have vinyl flooring.

Tip #9: Make sure windows and doors operate properly and lubricate any closet door tracks with a silicon spray.

Tip #10: Glue loose wallpaper seams and remove or paint over soiled wallpaper.

Tip #11: Clean around fireplaces and remove ashes.

Bathrooms and kitchen are some of the most influential areas of a home. Spending a small amount of money in these areas frequently nets owners many times their investment. Here are a few suggestions for each.

Tip #12: The Bathrooms. Repair loose tiles. Remove loose grout using a grout file, and apply new grout. Faded tile colors can be improved using an epoxy spray. Remove old tub and tile caulking with a hooked scraper, install new white silicone tub, and tile caulk. Concentrate on areas such as counter corners, shower corners, and base of toilet. Clean mildewed caulk by spraying Tilex, or use diluted chlorine bleach and let stand for at least 30 minutes before rinsing. Old tubs can often be sprayed with an epoxy coating. Remove all soap scum and dirt build-ups. Again, diluted chlorine bleach will help here. Clean glass doors with vinegar, and replace badly soiled shower curtains. Don't forget to vacuum exhaust fans.



Tip #13: The Kitchen. Clean ovens thoroughly. Clean cook tops and exhaust fans. Remember to clean behind the appliances. Double-check all burners to make sure they're working. Defrost freezers, and thoroughly clean the interior of the refrigerator if one will convey in the sale. Remove mold from refrigerator gaskets. Empty the water collection tray under the refrigerator. Thoroughly wash fronts of cabinets using Murphy's Oil Soap or Pine Sol. Cover counter burns with ceramic tile or heat resistant glass. Make sure all handles are securely in place. Install new shelf and drawer liners.

Tip # 14: Save your receipts. If you need to make substantial repairs to the property, save the receipts in an envelope. This will show what has been updated in the home.

How to Show the Property for *Maximum Profit*:

There's a right way to show a property....and a wrong way. Many sellers lose money or turn-off buyers because they simply didn't know how to handle a property showing. Here are **8 tips** that will help you show your property for maximum profit:

Tip #1: Save those receipts. If you have completed any substantial work on the property, save the receipts and **ONLY** take them out if someone questions the value of the work performed (in the negotiating process). Many times extra work will increase the value of your property beyond your costs. So only use the receipts if you need support to justify the work.

Tip #2: Save those utility bills. Buyers frequently have questions about utility costs of owning a property. If you have past utility bills, you will greatly increase your credibility and help provide precise answers to important questions. Save electric, gas, water, oil, sewage, and waste management bills. This is especially important to an investor buyer who will be responsible for some of these expenses.

Tip #3: Do not be present during organized showings of the property. There's a crowd when your property is being shown. The only exception to this rule is if the buyer is an investor as opposed to a homebuyer and you have specific knowledge about features of the property that a Realtor cannot answer. But in most cases, don't be present.

Tip #4: Turn on ALL lights (even those in walk-in closets). Illumination is like a welcome sign.

Tip #5: Open all drapery and bring in as much natural light as possible. Homebuyers hate dark homes. Anything you can do to brighten the home will help.

Tip #6: If the home is staged for a homebuyer sale, very soft, background music can enhance a showing.

Tip #7: Plan a pleasant aroma. A plug-in deodorizer can create a pleasant aroma and override other odors the property may have.

Tip #8: Never negotiate during a showing. Let the Realtor discuss price, terms, possessions, and other items with any potential buyers. If any negotiations arise prior to an offer, politely request the buyer to submit an offer and you can consider it.

