

10 overlooked tips for getting a property sold



By [Christine Rae](#)
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Buyers have choices. They make decisions about a property within a blink of an eye. Here are ten overlooked tips for getting a property sold.

1. Don't get personal

Whether working with a professional stager or going it alone, cut all emotional ties. Visit each room, remember the memories and then pack the sentimentality away. It clouds judgement. Don't look at your house from the perspective of it being yours, or this is who we are – buyers aren't interested. Remove and store as many personal items as possible including all family photos, certificates, diplomas and medicine.

2. Pack and store/dispose of two-thirds of every closet and cupboard

It is a great time to start deciding what you want to keep/donate/discard. Organized storage space is one of the most frequently requested interior features.

3. First impressions are the only ones that count

Buyers have choices. They make decisions about a property within a blink of an eye. Wherever the eye rests the sale begins.

4. Understand staging is about condition more than décor

Sure the house has to look and feel good, but remember buyers are savvy – they will deduct from the offer (if they make an offer) their own perceived value for deferred maintenance. So repair anything that needs it, replace any fixtures more than eight years old and then clean like your life depends on it (your equity will). Pack and store (off property) anything you won't use in the next two or three months. Remember, buyers are buying their new house, not your old one.

5. Update the kitchen

This is the most important room in the house. If buyers fall in love here they will compromise anything on their "must have" list when the kitchen exceeds expectations.

6. Keep all bedrooms gender-neutral

Including kids' rooms and the master. Don't think, "Oh, they can make the mental shift." They can't, won't and don't. You have a three-minute opportunity to get this house sold – why would you jeopardize a single second?

7. Bathrooms are the second most important room in the house

So if you have money, upgrade what you can, at least in the main bath. Change the old cabinet-style sink for a pedestal or furniture sink and remember storage is vital. In the extra space gleaned, consider installing an organised linen closet with deep pull-out drawers.

8. Odour and allergens alert!

During the past 50 years, the rise in prevalence of allergic diseases has increased. Worldwide, sensitization rates to one or more common allergens are approaching 50 per cent. You don't know whether the future buyer is one of them. So, know when you live in your house you will not be able to smell what others do. Assume the worst and prepare. The best option is no smells at all. Open windows, don't use household or garden chemical products. If you have pets, remove them from the property for the duration of the sales process (spa, friend, family).

9. Lighting

Make sure every light bulb is energy efficient and at the highest wattage the fixture will take. Clean all the fixtures for maximum sparkle.

10. Seventy-four per cent of prospective buyers will drive by your property

Before they even think about viewing it and half of them will do it at night. What that means to you is considerable thought going into curb appeal. Never underestimate its power. Curb appeal done well is like gift wrapping on a present. The National Association of Realtors says, "Great curb appeal sells more than half of all houses that go on the market."

Outdoor lighting is vital. Light up the porch and be sure the numbers of the house are illuminated and visible from the street. Consider lighting pathways and spotlighting a feature of the property – a dramatic tree or the front façade.

Landscape experts agree there is 100 per cent ROI for money invested in front, back and side yards. Curb appeal wraps around to resort/lifestyle living in the backyard too. It is one of the most undervalued aspects of market preparedness that can actually add dollars to your bottom line. Ninety five per cent of people surveyed said outdoor living amenities are vital. Outdoor allure also extends to balconies, decks and patios.

Give people what they least expect; they don't know they want it but when they see it they can't resist. The more you can accommodate that, the easier it is to sell.

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