

PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SHOWING

Make sure that buyers looking at your home are left with the best possible impression. Here is an easy checklist to get you started:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS/GENERAL

- House exterior in good repair
- House number easy to read
- Eavestroughs, downspouts and soffits painted and in good repair
- Garage/car port clean and tidy
- Litter picked up
- Cracked or broken window panes replaced

FIRST IMPRESSIONS/SUMMER

- Lawns cut and raked
- Hedges and shrubs trimmed
- Garden weeded and edged

FIRST IMPRESSIONS/WINTER

- Snow and ice cleared away from walks
- Sidewalks sanded and salted
- Boot tray inside front door

AT THE FRONT DOOR

- Doorbell works
- Door hardware in good repair
- Porch and foyer clean and tidy
- Fresh air in house

INTERIOR MAINTENANCE

- Chipped plaster repaired
- Chipped paint touched up
- Doors and cupboards latch properly
- Leaky taps and toilets repaired
- Furnace wiped down and cleaned
- Burned out light bulbs replace
- Squeaky doors oiled

BATHROOM

- Mirrors, fixtures and taps cleaned and polished

Leaky taps and toilets repaired

- Seals around tubs and basins in good repair
- Floors cleaned, garbage containers emptied
- Inside of cupboards and cabinets clean and neat
- Towels clean and matching
- Countertops free of personal care items

KITCHEN

- Sinks and taps clean and polished
- Appliances cleaned
- Countertops neat and polished
- Inside of cupboards and cabinets clean and neat, not overcrowded
- Small appliances put away

CREATE A BUYING ATMOSPHERE

- All lights turned on
- Air conditioner turned on in warm weather
- Fireplace lit in cooler weather
- Closets neat and tidy
- Halls and stairs cleared
- Drapes opened during daylight
- Background music playing quietly
- Carpets freshly vacuumed
- Fresh flowers in various rooms

PETS

- Pets containers or absent during the showing

VALUABLES

- Jewellery and valuables locked safely away or taken with you
- Valuable property, such as objects of art, vases and figurines are out of reach, out of sight or locked away



STAGED TO SELL

Six tips to prepare your home for sale and maximize your return

If you're looking to buy or sell a home, you know that first impressions count. Most people decide whether or not they are comfortable in a property within the first few seconds of entering; and when they are looking for a home, that first impression is crucial to a quick sale. Here are six things you can do to get the best value out of your investment.

1. Ensure proper lighting. Correct lighting is so important to every room – the standard staging advice is turn all the lights on throughout the house to help show off the lighting. "Daylight" bulbs are best.

2. Clean reflective surfaces. Clean the windows inside and out and check other reflective surfaces throughout the house to bounce extra light. Consider all glass surfaces, refrigerators, countertops and art.

3. Go for curb appeal. Go beyond cutting the grass and planting flowers. Think of it as drive-by appeal – review the front door, get a new mat and make sure the house number is visible from the street.

4. Review the minor details. Inspect your home for minor flaws. Pay attention to the smallest details – they are the ones



that detract equity. Repair dripping faucets, chipped paint and cracks in the driveway.

5. Ensure it shows well. Make sure all selling features have been addressed – pay attention to the focal points, sight lines and traffic patterns.

6. Put away the family photos. All family photos should be packed away, as well as any extra items smaller than your fist. Closets need attention too – pack away two thirds of clothing, bed linen and towels.

The best advice is: be sure you complete the home staging process thoroughly and effectively before any marketing starts – you'll have a hard time increasing the list price after it's on the market.

And if you think you could do with some help, consider hiring a professional. Information on Canadian Staging Professionals is available at: www.canadianstagingprofessionals.com ■

Renovating your home before selling pays back many times over with higher sale price

The bigger the job, the better the return

Province

Friday, March, 21, 2008

OTTAWA -- As much as 100 per cent of the cost of a fully renovated kitchen or bathroom, often done with the help of a contractor, can be recovered when it comes time to sell, a report released this week suggests.

Major renovations generally provide higher certainty of return than do-it-yourself projects, said the report prepared by Toronto-based Royal LePage.

"Those still are the No. 1 return on investment," said Diane Usher, a broker with Royal LePage.

But she cautioned that contracted jobs must be approached prudently to ensure a decent return, and spending should be relative to the value of the property. "To put a \$50,000 kitchen in a \$200,000 condo isn't going to give you as good a return on your investment," Usher said.

Some Improvements made by the homeowner, like replacing a worn carpet or updating light fixtures, are good ideas but can be less effective in terms of the rate of return when compared with other projects.

She explained many people have success finding quality paints, decorating ideas and techniques on their own but renovations like landscaping are more challenging and returns can be lower without professional aid.

Approximate cost vs. approximate return on your investment

Do-it-yourself renovations

- Paint the interior: \$1,000, 50-100%
- Replace carpeting with laminate (1,000 square foot space): \$2,000, 50-75%
- Install new light fixtures: \$2,000, 60-70%
- Groom exterior landscape: \$2,000, 25-50%
- Replace knobs, hardware: \$2,000, 75-100%

- Update the entryway: \$3,000, 50-75%
- Replace carpeting/laminate with hardwood: \$5,000, 50-75%
- Build a fence/deck: \$5,000, 50-75%

Renovations that may require a contractor

- Install a main floor powder room: Under \$5,000, 80-100%
- Reno bathrooms: \$5,000-\$8,000, 75-100%.
- Renovate kitchen: \$12,000-\$15,000, 75-100%

Sell it with a great first impression

It's not a magic wand, but it is key to making property stand out from the competition

By Lena Sin,
The Province
June 21, 2009

During the housing boom, home staging was all about vaulting your property into the stratosphere above the asking price.

Today, it's about getting your house sold. Period.

Matthew Finlason, of the HGTV series *The Stagers*, has witnessed the housing arc of the past two years and says home staging is perhaps even more relevant in today's turbulent market.

"Whereas the objective in the previous market was how much over asking, now it's just about selling," says Finlason, who recently won a Leo award for best TV host.

Finlason, who works for home staging company Dekora in Vancouver, says in the first episode of *The Stagers*, which aired last summer, one house sold for \$100,000 over asking.

But by the end of the first season, some homes did not even sell, an indication of how quickly the market had changed.

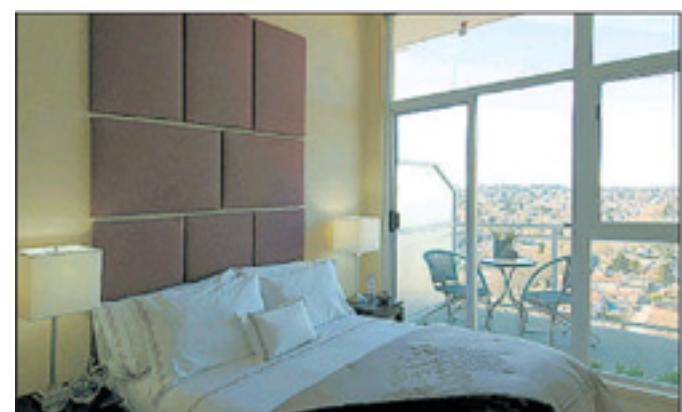
Today, many of his clients are in the stressful position of having to sell quickly and view staging as the key to getting their property stand out from the competition.

"Staging is about first impressions. It's about putting your best foot forward," says Finlason.

"The moment you list your home for sale, it becomes a product and like any product, it needs to compete."



Neutralize your colour palette and de-personalize by removing family photos. — PHOTO COURTESY OF STAGING ETC.



Master bedrooms are important. If you don't have a headboard, create one from an upholstered fabric panel. — PHOTO COURTESY OF DEKORA

Lindsay Do, who runs Staging Etc. in Vancouver with her partner Alice Tam, says staging helps buyers make decisions more quickly because they're shown how a home would meet their needs.

"It's like having a person there showing you the function of the house . Rather than saying you can fit a queen-sized bed in here, you show them," says Do.

"In today's real estate market, buyers with purchasing power want more for their buck, so showcasing the potential lifestyle of a home is equally important as the actual architectural features and design, especially on the pricier homes."

Staging companies assist with everything from carpet cleaning to painting to bringing in new furniture.

The cost of staging varies widely, depending on the size of the home, how much furniture is in the existing space and the client's budget. Some companies, such as Staging Etc., provide free initial consultations while others charge a fee. Staging costs range from \$1,000 up to tens of thousands.

But in these lean times, even staging companies are getting creative to keep their clients' costs down. Finlason, for example, might rearrange the existing furniture rather than renting new pieces or will ask clients to do some DIY.

Do says she might purchase furniture for clients so they can keep it for their next move or re-sell it at a later date.

However, Finlason is clear that homeowners should not see staging as the "magic wand" that will sell any property.

"Price will sell your home," he says.

Rather, sellers should see staging as a piece of the overall marketing strategy. To prep for a sale, start with a detached view. De-clutter your home and keep personal items stored away.

"The biggest mistake sellers make is under-estimating the value of the emotional connection a potential buyer will have with a home in the first 10 seconds of walking through the door," says Do.

"When staging a home, our motto is 'Every impression counts.'"

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Six Staging Tips

- Neutralize your colour palette -- not just with paint, but accessories, too. Avoid beiges, yellows and loud colours. Instead, try neutral linen with a warm grey or brown undertone.
- Make your own art. Take a digital photo of the beach, trees or plants in black and white and pop it into a

black frame, suggests Matthew Finlason. Or cut out pages from a picture book and pop them into a vintage gold frame.

- Master bedrooms are very important. You might try to get an upholstered fabric panel to use as a headboard. "That's as simple as going to Home Depot and getting an MDF board, some fabric and a staple gun," says Finlason.
- De-clutter. If you haven't used it in a year, you can't make money with it or it's not a family heirloom -- throw it out or give it away.
- Once you've removed all your dated, worn items from your home, beg, borrow or steal that nice rug or beautiful armchair from your family and friends. "Think of it as community staging," says Finlason.
- Make sure your home smells clean, with no pet or other odours, says Lindsay Do.
- Season two of the The Stagers is currently being aired on the Home and Garden Network. For more tips, visit www.hgtv.com/the-stagers/show/index.html and www.stagingetc.com

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How Much Does It Cost to Sell a House (Or Apartment)?



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Jul 30,2019

The old adage that you need to spend money to make money could not be more accurate when talking about the costs of selling a house (or apartment). There will be agents' fees, marketing expenses, and conveyancing costs to consider, and depending on how long it takes for your property to sell, these figures can be quite significant. You are not the only person looking to sell property, so the competition also needs to be considered.

Still, it's a necessary evil for a much greater gain, so rather than be deterred, be informed and answer the question "how much does it cost to sell a house (or apartment)?" with this guide compiled by Urban.com.au.

1. It starts with the right agent



The main reason why you should be aware of the costs involved in selling a property is to ensure that the exercise will provide the financial gain you are expecting. The three most significant expenses you will need to consider are

1. Conveyancing
2. Marketing
3. Agent's fee/commission

Choosing the right agent can be a crucial driver in the success of your sale, and this is not a decision that should be made on cost alone. The best candidate to represent you should have a proven track record of successful sales and happy clients as opposed to just the lowest fees.

Let's look at the three main costs of selling a house, why they exist, and what you should prepare for.

2. Conveyancing fees



Conveyancing entails the legal transfer of ownership for your property and is a required part of every real estate purchase. To perform this correctly, you will need licensed conveyancers and solicitors, and it is in your best interest to choose someone local.

A local solicitor has local knowledge, which can be invaluable when it comes to things like special conditions or information specific to a particular area. Conveyancing costs can land anywhere in the ballpark of \$800 to \$2000.

3. Marketing costs



The size of your marketing budget has a direct correlation to how effective and speedy your sale will be. There is often a lot of competition in the housing market, so ensuring that your property stands out above the crowd is crucial.

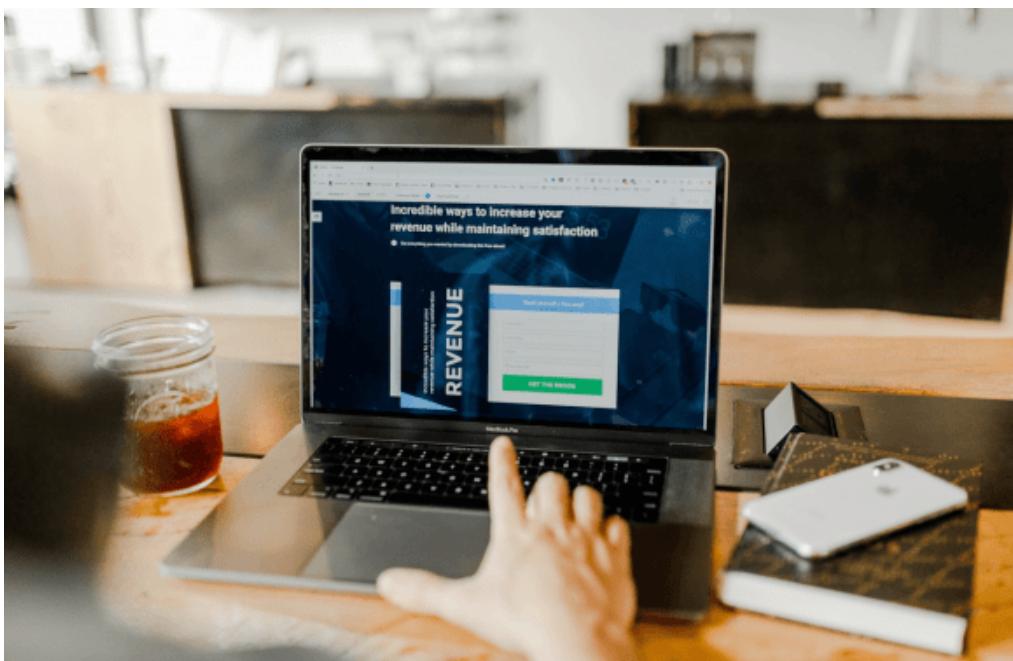
The cost of marketing your property falls solely on you. It is common that your agent will recommend a particular marketing campaign, but you are able to tweak this as you see fit. We strongly recommend listening to the agent, especially if you have followed the first point and picked them for their knowledge and expertise, but some of the common marketing strategies you may want to consider can include:

- A 'For Sale' board in front of the house
- A listing on realestate.com.au
- Professional photography
- A clear floor plan
- Engaging copywriting
- Various press advertising

You can also make use of various social media or free listing websites to increase your reach without having to add more to the marketing budget. For the most part, however, the size of your marketing budget determines the strength of your sales campaign.

A marketing campaign can cost anywhere between \$4000 to \$10,000 on average.

4. Agents' fees



When deciding on your real estate agent, it is most common for there to be two options for how they charge their fee:

A flat fee

This will be a fixed fee agreed upon between you and the agent regardless of what your property sells for

The percentage of sale fee

As the name suggests, the agent will receive a certain percentage of the final sale price, often ranging from 1% to 3% depending on property value and competition.

When deciding between these two options, you will need to keep in mind that while a fixed fee locks in your cost, an agent may work harder to get the best sale price if working for commission.

In some cases, vendors agree to incentive bonuses for the agent. This is usually a percentage-based bonus that is paid if the sale price is higher than the agreed reserve. It is common for this to be around 10% of the amount over the reserve.

Regardless of which option you take, it is vital to discuss and agree to all fees before signing anything with the agent.

5. Other fees



Outside of the main three costs, you will need to consider any applicable lender fees if you have a mortgage on the property you are selling. When paying off your remaining mortgage after the sale of your property, you will likely need to pay a discharge or early exit fee. This varies significantly by a financial institution and was probably explained to you when you first signed for the loan.

In some cases, particularly if taking out a new loan on a new property with the same institution, you can negotiate a waiver of this fee. It is also important to note that the discharge process can take anywhere between 14 and 21 days.

Maximising your sale price



You may wish to outlay some extra funds on maintenance or professional styling to help increase the attraction and saleability of the property. Keep in mind that you are trying to convince a potential buyer walking into your house that they love it and could comfortably live there. Consider the things people may look for in a new home. Styling makes the property as appealing as possible, to help the decision-making process for the buyer.

The cost of styling is very subjective. You may have an interior-design eye and are capable of arranging the rooms in such a way that they look best, or you may need to outsource this task to get the most out of your space. Either way, the importance of a well-presented property is crucial. It could be as simple as some light garden maintenance, or you may need to spend some money or more extensive repairs to damaged doors or dented walls.

Never underestimate the impact of a fresh coat of paint and some good quality carpet cleaning.

The (real) costs of selling a house (or apartment) that you need to be aware of



As with any sale, you need to take the costs of the process into account when determining your profit. If you have waited long enough, or are lucky to be in a boom area, the expenses listed above will be but a small dent in your overall profit.

If the margin is tight, this may deem your property sale a fruitless venture. This is why understanding the above charges in the context of your budget is crucial to the successful sale of your property.

Exact costs will also depend on which state your property is in, and you can also obtain an online property value estimate to ensure you are working on the correct budget. It is always a good idea to book a property appraisal which will shine a light on which maintenance tasks can help increase your home's value.

If you have an ideal sale date in mind, you can divide by the number of weeks until said date by your expected costs to form a realistic budget. Just remember to leave a buffer for any unexpected expenses that may arise — being generous when budget planning is never a bad idea.