



Get ready! 6 seller tasks that can increase a listing's value

First impressions are everything. Make sure your listing has a lasting impact in images, during showings and when buyers roll up to the curb

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Preparation is vital in all walks of life — from getting ready for a big event, exam, job interview or any monumental moment. The same can be said when it comes time to [list a property for sale](#).

Although sellers might be eager to get their home on the market and sold, preparing properly ahead of listing can make all the difference when it comes down to getting top dollar for your client.

From simple inexpensive items to some that are a little more out-of-the-box [with a higher price tag](#), below are six things agents should address with their clients ahead of listing a home on the market.

1. Call in an expert

Although I have experience viewing properties through the eyes of a developer and a real estate professional, I like to enlist someone whose job it is to be on the lookout for any issues — cosmetic or otherwise — that a potential buyer might flag.

Calling in a qualified contractor to walk the property can be extremely helpful in identifying any items that may need fixing, and it could mean a world of difference when it comes time [to negotiate an offer](#).

Some common items that often need attention include: painting, replacing or repairing:

- Fixtures in the kitchen and bathroom
- Cabinet doors
- Baseboards
- Window seals

- Grouting

But don't forget all the little things that are sometimes overlooked but may catch the eye.

2. Set the mood for a sale

[Lighting is an impactful](#) element that can and *should* set the mood as potential buyers enter the listing and tour it. Look at the lighting options at various times of day — as your showings could be morning, noon or night — and make adjustments to showcase the home in the best possible light.

You can achieve this task by switching light bulbs or knowing what lights to have switched on to create the most memorable experience.

Also, keep in mind that you can adjust lighting from the outside. When you are examining the property's exterior, take a look to see if there are any trees or shrubbery that might be blocking [natural light from streaming](#) in, and be sure to prune accordingly.

3. Put the home's best foot forward

A stain on the carpet, a warped wooden floorboard or a broken tile can all leave a lasting impression in potential buyers' minds. If possible, and if budget and time allow, [fixing or replacing flooring](#) can elevate the home's entire look and feel.

Also, be sure to know what the market demands. If the home is in an area where buyers predominately seek one type of flooring over the other, make sure to address this with your seller. Sometimes an updated flooring can create an impactful ROI when it comes time to price the property.

4. Groom the grounds

[Landscaping can drastically](#) improve the appearance of a home. Projects can range from quick fixes to engaging a landscape architect and professional team.

Depending on your price point and ROI, if employing a professional is not the right option, sellers can make some quick updates relatively easily with their agents' guidance.

Ensure sellers know that someone needs to mow the grass ahead of a showing, remove, replace or prune any dead or wilted plants, and remove debris and dead branches.

If sellers have outdoor furniture, make sure it's free of dust. They should also remove or replace rusted items or faded cushions. If your listing has no landscaping or is a dirt patch, laying wood chips or bark to cover the dirt can really lift the space for a temporary fix.

5. Look back in time

If the home is a little older, take the time to do some research with the seller to find any great images or stories that you can share with potential buyers.

Although an older home might not be for everyone, plenty of people look specifically [for historical properties](#) or those with a rich and unique past.

Searching local periodicals or online can be a great place to start, and more often than not, the seller will already have some on hand. These images and items are great to use in marketing pieces or to share while showing the home, and they can capture the heart and mind of a new homeowner.

6. Design with the times

Professionally staging a home can help potential buyers envision what life could be like at their new residence.

Also, according to the [National Association of Realtors](#), 23 percent of buyer's agents said that home staging "increased the dollar value offered between one and five percent" when compared to similar unstaged homes. Staging homes versus leaving them empty or outdated is something I'd always recommend when preparing a listing for the market.

However, other design elements also resonate with buyers in today's market. When preparing a home to list, consider calling in a feng shui expert or reading up about the practice online and adjusting items accordingly. It makes for a great talking point when showing the home, and it also gives some buyers peace of mind that the balance and energy of the home are in line.

All of these items take time, care and money when preparing a home to sell, so be sure to analyze the cost against the potential return before you roll up your sleeves and ask your client to break out the checkbook.

That said, first impressions are always the most important, so make sure your listing has a lasting impact in images, during showings and when buyers roll up to the curb.