

Eight Tips to Declutter Before a Listing

So you made the decision to sell your home. You've hired a real estate agent; you've chosen a date to put it on the market. Now you're getting ready for the big open house. Panic sets in because your place is a mess.

How do you get your home ready in a short amount of time? As a professional organizer and as a real estate agent, I try to remind clients that potential buyers need to be able to picture themselves living in their home.

While a deep clean and staging may be helpful before a showing, it won't eliminate the clutter, which can send buyers running the other way. And most sellers do not realize that decluttering actually precedes all other preparations to make your home look appealing.

Here are some quick tips to help you get your place looking organized and attractive before showings.

1) Inventory:

First, take stock of your belongings in every room. Divide your 'stuff' into: Keep, Donate and Trash. Don't create any 'maybe' piles.

2) Downsize:

Schedule a time for friends & family to come over and take a look at your 'to donate' items that may not be of use to you anymore. Alternatively, and if time permits, you could also have a garage sale.

3) Entry Way:

Remember, first impressions are everything. So clear out the entryway or the mudroom of clutter such as shoes, coats, book bags, boxes, etc.

4) Personal Items:

Keep personal items to a minimum by limiting the number of picture frames, sports memorabilia or travel souvenirs. Personal items are known to distract buyers from actually looking at other important aspects of a home during a showing.

5) Fridge & Laundry:

Buyers are sometimes known to open the fridge or look inside the washer or dryer during a showing. So make sure your fridge is clean and neatly organized and your laundry is put away.

6) Countertops:

Especially for the kitchen and the bathroom, remove everything from the countertops, leaving only essentials. The clutter adds to the chaos. And buyers need to be able to visualize living in the home without that sense of chaos.

7) Closets:

Buyers will open your closets and enter the walk-in closet, if you have one. So have your closets nicely organized. If you have the time, go the extra mile to color code your clothes or invest in shelf dividers and drawer separators it can make a great first impression.

8) Wires:

As much as possible, organize all your chords and wires so they are not everywhere.

These few tips will definitely ameliorate the look and feel of your place and it will also be easier for you when you are ready to move. If this sounds daunting or if time is scarce, don't be afraid to seek the assistance of a professional organizer.

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