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Paring Down, Fluffing and Staging – Strategies To Help Sell Your Home –



At the end of the day, most buyers are looking not only for shelter but a home, a place to fall in love with and take root. One of the most effective means to appeal to a buyer is to hit the prospect at this emotional level, by creating an environment that grabs the buyers' hearts and appeals to their pocket book. If you want to enhance the speed by which you attain your price, and in the process be pro-active about moving, here are a few tips on how to make your home the preferred one to choose.

Paring Down. If you've made the decision to make a move, it's not a bad idea to prepare for the likely potential it might be soon, as closing dates are typically between 45 and 90 days from the date of sale. Rather than waiting until after the negotiations are complete to tackle emptying your property of its contents, we recommend you begin the paring down process before your property goes on market.

Paring down is straight-forward yet challenging. First you need to eliminate everything from the property that will not be moving with you. Remove furniture that has seen better days (planning to recover it? send it out now!), donate old clothing from overstuffed closets (support your favourite charity), and empty drawers of those ubiquitous odds and ends (in my last move I threw out items like a package of mystery bolts, a cap stuck crazy-glue wand and a collection of champagne corks marking a once memorable new years fete).

Next, pre-pack some of your belongings. By streamlining, your residence will look more light, airy and spacious. A property that is furnished with essentials but is free from clutter provides buyers the basis by which they can envision their own belongings without the distraction of too much happening. Pre-packing seasonal clothing, old linens, and out of season gear will make your move easier and free up your closets. Face it, nothing turns a buyer off more than opening a closet stuffed to the ceiling and being unable to close the door. It screams "this house lacks storage!"

Fluffing. Nothing demonstrates a home is well-loved more than one which is fresh and clean. If you're really looking to maximize your return on investment, spending a little money in advance of selling can realize a significant dollar. Touch-up or re-painting a feature room, placing new carpeting on your stairs, or laying new linoleum across your basement floor can work wonders in making your home stand out. Replacing old light fixtures with track lighting, changing broken handles on doors and cabinets, or adding a wall of storage shelving in the garage can give your home a discerning well-maintained edge over properties in the same price range.

Fluffing is strategic. A seller who spends a little in advance will usually realize a better price. A home that comes on market with the smell of fresh paint, new carpet and a glow from an intense scrubbing tells prospective buyers you're house proud, which provides a visual and scented cue to people that says you care about where you live. Who wouldn't find that appealing? A home that is well-loved is reflected by the care and attention an owner displays, regardless of your reason for selling.

Staging. There's an entire new industry being created called the business of 'staging', where people advise home sellers how to make their homes more appealing to buyers. Much like 'propping' in shelter magazines, where the magazine editors bring in their own pieces to create a more appealing 'stage set', there are businesses which bring in quality furnishings, rented art, and masses of flowers to produce the illusion of a beautifully 'staged' home.

Staging is effective. In our experience, a vacant property will command a lower price because it is difficult for buyers to visualize the scale of a space when furnishings are absent, and because an empty property doesn't convey the feelings of home – the very emotional connections buyers seek are missing –. Another reason are buyers, while looking at property for sale, are also frequently reading home magazines for ideas and in the process are sub-consciously looking for settings that are 'just like the Homes in magazines'. Creating an alluring dream home for a buyer to fall madly in love with is the business of staging. And its very effective. While staging is more commonly found in high-priced real estate, a function that fees can be as high as \$50,000, many properties could use a little staging to enhance the property's appeal.

It's not a ploy, it's a strategy! While we're not advocates of baking bread or chocolate chip cookies before buyers come through your home (it's a stale idea buyers read as real estate hype and an overdone trick-of-the-trade), we are proponents of encouraging the strategic placement of cues to create emotional connections. A enormous vase of fresh flowers brings life to a room, create a pleasant scent and provide a dramatic focal point that draw eyes off potential flaws like cracks in old plaster or scratches on floors. Bundles of new oversized bath sheets next to a soaking tub imply a calming escape from the trials and tribulations of everyday living. Placing accoutrements for a meal on the kitchen counter imply your space is perfect for gathering people round your table. Wood burning in your fireplace, even lightly-scented candles, are olfactory come-ons that seduce prospective buyers. We've even placed a pot of tea and croissants on a tray with the Sunday paper to convey the indulgence of a relaxing master suite. Paring down, fluffing and staging provide buyers cues that can help subliminally whisper 'home' to give you the competitive edge, ensuring you a faster sale at a better price.

Do you have questions? As real estate specialists who monitor trends and markets in housing, we offer consumers insight and assistance in making rational and educated decisions about real estate. If you are examining the prospect of selling, call us for a pressure-free consultation that will quickly put the realities of today's housing market in perspective. Offering savvy insight and expertise on real estate in the City of Toronto, we are your pro-urban housing specialists. Specializing in renovated and restored character dwellings, low-maintenance living, revenue-producing income properties and loft conversions, call us now at **416-322-8000**.

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