

1. De-Clutter: This one is simple. De-clutter everywhere; inside and outside. If it's taking up space it is a potential candidate to be thrown out. The sellers need to make that all important mental conversion from "home to live in" to "house for sale." Personal things are a big distraction as you want the buyers to be able to visualize their own belonging in the house.

2. Repair: Buyers want everything working so don't disappoint them - dripping faucets, broken windows, leaking roofs, damaged walls and doors, etc, beg the question in the buyer's mind... *What else is broken or doesn't work?*

3. Lots of Light: The last thing home buyers want to see is a dark home with all of the doors and windows covered. Let the light in and open some windows to let in some fresh air. Room deodorizers leave the impression of covering something up as does a window that has the blinds drawn.

4. Clean Windows: Buyers want to know and see the view they will have from every room - don't make them look through dirty windows. If they do, the impression of a having great view is literally going "out the window."

5. Kitchen and Bathrooms: Two of the most important rooms in the house. They must be spotless and first class. Just cleaning up isn't going to be good enough - you need to "deep clean" all counters, floors, cabinets and all the fixtures in the bathrooms. In the bathrooms consider new fixtures or countertops and perhaps

redoing the shower and tub enclosures. If new fixtures are not in the budget you may want to consider having them refinished. Think about having all the tile steam cleaned and make sure all grout is free from grease and dirt.

6. Odors: Absolute deal killers are cigarette or pet odors. If this is a problem - have the drapes, carpets and furniture professionally cleaned and please..."no smoking" in the house. Also, cooking odors are not a good thing. The best bet is to always for plan fresh air. Often a little lemon oil mixed with water in a spray bottle used lightly used will add just a bit of freshness without overpowering the house.

7. Paint: A fresh coat of paint on the outside or inside is an excellent way of freshening up your home. Be sure to use neutral colors and avoid accent painting. Don't try and guess what a potential buyer will like. In most cases they should use a professional painter because it's always a bigger job than most people think.

8. Yard Work: Deal with overgrown bushes, shrubs and trees. Everything in the yard needs to be trimmed, watered, manicured and "living." Remove everything lying around the yard including sports equipment, boats, trailers, toys, etc. You may also add some color by placing some annuals in planters in the back as well as in the front. Curb appeal makes that all important "first impression."

9. Furniture: The bottom line... less is best. If it's old, worn or dated, you should put it in storage. Remember that you are setting a stage and the actor needs to be the house - not their furniture.

10. Hardwood Floors: Hardwood floors can be a huge plus for buyers unless they look like a 20 year old basketball court. It may be a great investment to have them all refinished - but keep in mind that it's not a simple weekend project.