

The Coldwell Banker® Home Enhancement Guide



little things
can make a
big difference

**COLDWELL
BANKER** 

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At Coldwell Banker,® our goal is not simply to sell your house, but to help you realize the best price obtainable for your property in the shortest period of time. To help achieve this goal we have developed this exclusive Home Enhancement Guide.

Based on proven marketing techniques, this informative guide will introduce you to practical ideas on how to successfully prepare your house for sale. These suggestions require a minimum amount of time and expense to complete and are designed to make your house stand out from the competition.

Your Coldwell Banker Sales Associate is ready to assist you in developing a home enhancement plan for your property that will take full advantage of the ideas presented in this guide.



the First Impression

You have probably heard how important first impressions can be. But did you know that within 15 seconds a buyer has developed an opinion of your property? This is why establishing the right first impression is critical to achieving a successful sale. The following is an outline of those elements which create the overall first impression, including suggestions on how to make sure the buyer reacts as favorably as possible.

Within 15 seconds a buyer has developed an opinion of your property

focus on

the model home effect

The best way to make a buyer "feel at home" is to create an environment similar to that found in a model home. Obviously, you cannot recreate the feeling of a perfect display home without starting from scratch, but there are some valuable techniques to be learned.

When walking into a model home you will notice several key points:

- The environment is neutral.
- The colors and interior decorating accent the home's features.
- The smell is new and clean.
- The sound is either quiet or enhanced by subtle background music.
- All details are looked after, from manicuring the lawn to a floral arrangement in the entry.



the Home Front

Your property's landscape is not limited to the lawn and shrubs but encompasses

everything from the street to your doorstep. For this reason, you must make sure each component of the visual landscape looks its best. The real estate industry refers to this as "curb appeal."

■ Street

Make sure the street in front of your house is free of litter and debris. If necessary, give it a fresh sweep.

■ Fire Hydrant

Although you do not own the fire hydrant in front of your house, you should still be concerned about how it looks. If it needs a freshening up, get permission from your town and paint it.

■ Sidewalk

Sweep your sidewalk if needed and remove weeds that may be growing between cracks.

■ Fence

A freshly painted fence gives a home a crisp look. You should never let a peeling, tired-looking fence or squeaky gate stand between a prospective buyer and a positive first impression.

■ Mailbox/Light Fixtures

A quick painting of an old mailbox will let the buyer know you care about the details. If outdoor lamps look rusted and worn out, new ones will cast a positive light on your property.



A freshly painted fence gives a home a crisp look

Neatly trimmed shrubs are essential

■ Landscaping

Neatly trimmed shrubs are essential. Taking the time to do this costs little, but has a big impact. Besides being freshly mowed and trimmed, a lawn should

look healthy. If there are spots that look beyond help, a little sod goes a long way to restoring the look of a well-maintained lawn.

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Does your yard look well maintained?

Are the trees and bushes trimmed?

Is your lawn mowed and edged?

Is your lawn free of weeds?

Are the decks and patios clean?

Does your house need painting?



■ Front Walkway

Like the sidewalk, the walkway should be clean and free of weeds. If sections are badly cracked, consider having them repaired.

■ Driveway

There are two elements of the driveway with which you should be concerned. The first is its surface condition. If stained or otherwise

worn-looking, consider resealing it with a high quality sealer product. Second, is the appearance of the car parked in the driveway. A newly waxed, well-maintained automobile will make a much different statement about you and your property than an unattractive, poorly cared for car. If you think your car will be a detriment to the look of your property, park it down the street.

■ Paint

A fresh coat of paint can be one of the best investments you can make to increase the value of your property. If you do not want to spend the money to paint the entire house, consider just the shutters or the front of the house.



The walkway should be clean

■ Siding

If you have vinyl or aluminum siding, have a cleaning service wash or repaint it using a product designed for these materials.

■ Windows

Attractive windows can help increase the appeal of your property.

- ▮ Replace any cracked or broken glass.
- ▮ Make sure the windows are sparkling clean.
- ▮ Add shutters to the front of your house.
- ▮ Install window boxes with bright flowers.
- ▮ Apply touch-up paint where needed.

■ Roof

The roof may be the single most important aspect of your home front. A well-maintained roof will say a lot about the overall condition of the property.

- ▮ Replace any broken or missing shingles or tiles.
- ▮ Repair flashing where needed.
- ▮ Paint eaves and fascia boards.
- ▮ If the roof is old and needs to be replaced, consider having the work done before showing the property.

■ Gutters/Downspouts

Neat and trim-looking gutters and downspouts make a house look shipshape. Consider replacing highly visible ones if they are in need of serious repair. If run off areas are eroded, you can install concrete (or other) “spillways.”

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Are there any exterior holes or cracks?

Are your walks and porches clean and in good repair?

Does your roof leak or sag?

Are any shingles or tiles missing?

Is your chimney in good shape?

■ Doorway

The doorway is the focal point of your house.

- ▮ Repaint the door.
- ▮ Apply new door hardware.
- ▮ Install a brass kick plate.
- ▮ Replace house numbers.
- ▮ Put a flower box or planter alongside the door.
- ▮ Install a new front light fixture.



People react more favorably to property shown under **bright light**

Appeal to the Senses

There are *many ways* to create a more

exciting and saleable interior, at surprisingly little cost. We will briefly discuss the sensory selling tools that can have enormous impact, then provide you with *suggestions on how to improve* each room.

■ Light

It is proven that people react more favorably to property shown under bright light than dark. The following steps should help you keep your room as bright as possible.

- Keep windows clean.
- Use adequate wattage in light bulbs.
- Consider replacing old fluorescent lamps, which darken with use.

- Use mirrors to magnify the *feeling of light and space*.
- Use track lights to create a *high-tech look*.
- Use light wall colors.
- *Open drapes and blinds* and turn on lights prior to showing.

■ Color

A fundamental rule when selling your house is to keep colors neutral and light. The following are specific suggestions:

- White, beige and gray are the *most popular exterior colors*.
- Shades of white, off-white and very light pastels are the *safest choices for the interior*.
- *Avoid highly patterned wallpaper* whenever possible.
- *Try to limit bright colors* to accents like fresh flowers, towels, area rugs, and shower curtains.

■ Sound

The sounds of peace and quiet are some of the best sounds to have when your home is being shown to a prospective buyer. But there are other sound considerations of which you should be aware.

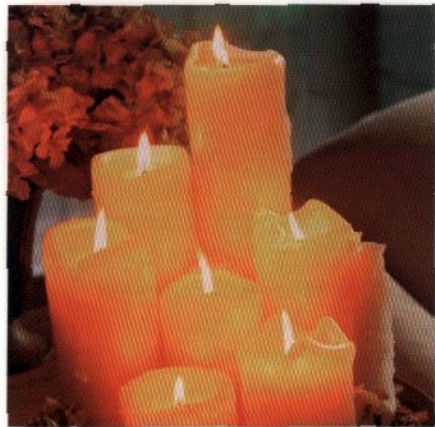
- Avoid barking dogs and noisy children, if possible.
- Also avoid sounds of work like vacuums, dishwashers and lawn mowers.
- Make sure there are no sounds of mechanical problems like banging pipes or faulty appliances.
- Light classical or instrumental music can be effective in creating a pleasing atmosphere.

■ Smell

Smell has more impact than you might expect. It can work for or against you.

- The smell of newness is positive. This scent can be achieved by applying a fresh coat of polyurethane to natural wood or latex paint to walls.
- The smell of cleanliness is important to the selling environment of your house. Beyond actually cleaning, lemon oil or lemon wax can create a lasting scent of freshness. Fresh flowers can be effective.
- For a real heart-warming touch, place a dish of vanilla in a warm oven to create the aroma of fresh baked cookies or bread.

- Sweeten the refrigerator with a box of baking soda.
- Smells to avoid include strong pet odors, tobacco, cooking and oil or gas.



The smell of cleanliness is important



focus on

personalizing your home

When considering a home to purchase, the buyer often visualizes what it would be like living there. If the home is dominated by strong personal statements, buyers are less likely to feel comfortable, and therefore less able to visualize the property as their own.

Personal statements are reflected in many areas:

- Unusual wall colors or heavily patterned wallpaper.
- Heavy odors from pets, tobacco or cooking.
- Sounds of loud music or television.
- Noisy children or barking dogs.
- Strong political or religious statements.
- Unusual art or furnishings.

Packaging the Interior

■ Entry

The entry is where the first impression of the interior is created. Here you have the opportunity to make a big statement in a small area.

- ┆ Repaint the entry using light, neutral colors.
- ┆ Move a prized antique or attractive furnishing to the entry, where it will have maximum impact.
- ┆ Apply a fresh coat of polyurethane to a wood floor.
- ┆ Tile or linoleum flooring should shine.

- ┆ Replace plastic switch plate covers with brass or porcelain.
- ┆ A new hall light fixture can make a great impression.
- ┆ Make sure the room is well lit.

The entry creates the first impression



■ Kitchen

The kitchen is perhaps the most important room in the house. It can have a major impact on the value of your property. If your kitchen needs some real help, you may want to make extensive improvements. The following is a list of ideas to increase the appeal of your kitchen without spending a great deal of money.

- Make sure the room is virtually spotless and smells fresh. Try putting a quarter section of a lemon in the disposal and grinding it up.
- Consider replacing outdated light fixtures with new track lighting.
- If your appliances are dated by colors like harvest gold or avocado, consider having them professionally refinished in a new color like almond or plain



white. This will make appliances look new at a fraction of the cost of actually replacing them.

- Spruce up kitchen cabinets by installing new knobs or hardware
- If your cabinets look especially old, you can have a professional replace the doors or door fronts.

The kitchen is the most important room

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

- Are your carpets clean and in good condition?
- Do your carpets need stretching?
- Are there any pet or smoking odors?
- Do your walls have any cracks or holes?
- Do your walls need painting?
- What about that wallpaper?
- Do your ceilings have any water stains, cracks or peeling?
- Do your ceilings need painting?



Cabinet organizers
are a good investment

- Organize your kitchen cabinets to demonstrate how much room you have. Cabinet organizers are a good investment for this.
- Remove small kitchen appliances and gadgets from countertops to create an uncluttered look.
- Chipped or damaged countertops should be repaired or replaced.

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Are your appliances clean and in good working order?

Are your cabinets in good condition?

Are your countertops in good condition?

Is your tile grout clean?

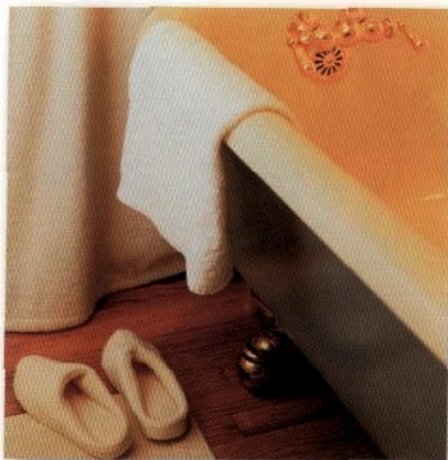
Is your sink stained, chipped, or in need of recalking?

- If your linoleum floor is badly worn, replace it with neutral no-wax flooring or tile.
- A freshly painted kitchen may be well worth the investment.

■ Bathroom

The bathroom has become an important selling feature in today's home. It is a room that has moved from the utilitarian to the exciting. There are many ways you can improve deficiencies and create interest through various levels of enhancement.

- Place a vase of fresh flowers on the vanity.
- Install a wall telephone for a high-tech look.
- Replace an old toilet seat with a new one.
- Replace an old light fixture with a new style light strip or make-up light.



Refinish an old porcelain tub

- | Refinish an old porcelain tub using a porcelain finishing service.
- | Place all personal care articles out of sight.
- | Freshen the air with lemon scented products.
- | Replace an old towel rack with a new one.
- | Add color and richness with new towels and a shower curtain.

focus on

the impact of small details

Small details make big statements about the perceived condition of your property. A house that shows poorly as a result of an overgrown lawn, peeling paint, or simply the smell of mildew, may create the overall feeling that the property has not been cared for. If your house leaves a buyer with this impression, it could cost you valuable time and money.



Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Do your faucets shut off completely?

Do your sinks drain freely?

Are your toilets in good condition?

Are your shower doors shiny?

Do your tubs need caulking?

Is your floor in good condition?

Are your vanities and mirrors in good condition?

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Is your fireplace clean?

Is the fireplace screen in good shape?

Are all drapes, shutters and shades clean and working properly?

Are any window screens bent?

Do all the windows open and close easily?

Are the windowsills clean?

Are your doors in good condition?

Do any doors sag or stick?

Do the locks work?

Is the paint in good condition?

Do the doors seal tightly?

A fireplace is one feature that everyone can appreciate

■ Living Room

The living room is an area we do very little living in yet it is a major selling point of a house. Buyers look for elegant and impressive living rooms to make the right statements to their friends and relatives.

■ Use mirrors whenever possible to enhance the perception of size. The strategic placement of a mirror over a mantle or across from a window can make a room look brighter and larger.

■ A fireplace is one feature that everyone can appreciate—show it off to its best advantage. Sweep it clean and make sure the screen is in good condition. If your house is being shown during the winter, make a cozy, crackling fire. During warmer months, you can dress up the hearth with fresh indoor plants or dried flowers.



■ Use inexpensive freestanding accent lights to create dramatic visual effects behind large plants or pieces of furniture.

■ Professionally clean wall-to-wall carpet or large area rugs. Sand and refinish stained hardwood floors.

■ Clean windows and light fixtures.

- | Make sure all cosmetic plastic cracks are repaired. (This applies to every room in the house.)
- | Use lemon oil on hardwood furniture to create the right look and aroma.
- | Liberal use of fresh flowers and plants will enhance the environment.

Buyers look for impressive living rooms



■ Bedrooms

The bedrooms can do as much to sell your house as they can to turn off a buyer.

- | Make sure the bedrooms are absolutely spotless. Rugs should be cleaned, windows washed and fresh smells from flowers or lemon oil should be in the air.
- | Organize closets to increase their perceived size. Rubberized wire closet organizers do a great job of helping fully utilize space.
- | Mirrored closet doors can add dramatically to the feeling of size in any bedroom.
- | Bedrooms should be well lit. You may want to add track lights in the master bedroom.
- | A ceiling fan can be an attractive and practical accent to any bedroom.



Fresh smells from flowers should be in the air

the Extra Details

■ Basement/Attic

The look of the basement and/or attic can say more about the condition of your house than you may think. A buyer who sees a meticulously clean and organized basement

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

Is your basement/attic organized?

Are they well lit?

Are they clean?

Are the stairs in good repair?

Do the doors open and close easily?

Are there any signs of insects or rodents?

and/or attic will have much more confidence in your property than if it were in a state of disarray.

- | Paint a bare cement floor oil-based gray.
- | Paint the stairway down to the basement and the stairway up to the attic.
- | Clean the boiler of the furnace room as well as the heating plant.
- | Make sure there are no signs of pest infestation. If needed, call in a pest control company to remedy the problem before the property is shown.
- | Hang as many objects as possible on the walls to minimize floor clutter.
- | Clean and organize your laundry area.
- | Make sure all lights are working.
- | Eliminate dampness with a dehumidifier.

Paint a bare cement floor

■ Garage

A well-organized garage says a lot for your house.

- ▮ Keep the garage neat and organized.
- ▮ Clean up any oil stains from your car.
- ▮ Paint the garage floor oil-based gray.
- ▮ Install a garage door opener.
- ▮ Hang gardening tools and loose articles on the wall.
- ▮ Hold a garage sale to dispose of unused items that create clutter and may distract a potential buyer.

■ Swimming Pool/Spa

The swimming pool or spa should be sparkling clean and in good operating condition.

- ▮ Repair or replace broken tiles.

- ▮ Patio and/or decking around pool should be clean and cracks repaired.
- ▮ Pool filter and heating equipment area should be cleaned.
- ▮ Replace worn or broken pool equipment (brushes, hoses, sweeps, pool covers, etc.).
- ▮ If your pool is stained, you may want to have a professional service drain and acid wash or refinish the surface.

Through the Buyer's Eyes...

- Is your garage organized?
- Is it well lit?
- Is the floor swept?
- Are there oil spots or other stains on the concrete?

The swimming pool
should be
sparkling clean



the End Result

By showing attention to detail and understanding the buyer's need to visualize your house against a neutral backdrop, you can dramatically increase the saleability of your property.

Your Coldwell Banker® Sales Associate will be happy to assist you with recommendations to help your house sell for the highest price obtainable in the shortest possible time.

