

“Start outside, look at your house like you’re a buyer.” — JILL LAKE



More Tips to Help Sell a House

- Reglaze the bathtub.
- Hide the kitchen trash can.
- Remove sheers from your windows.
- Strip floral or dated wallpaper and paint walls a neutral color.
- Remove excess furniture to make a room look larger.
- Organize the pantry; group soup, vegetables, etc.
- Remove personal photos.
- Paint the front door.
- Replace outdoor light fixtures if they’re corroded.
- Get rid of indoor plants that don’t look healthy.
- Keep the grass mowed.
- Cut down dead trees.
- Plant fresh flowers.
- Make sure your mailbox is in tiptop shape.
- Pressure wash driveways, decks and exterior walls.
- Repair loose shutters; paint if needed.
- Check the condition of the garage door.
- Clean the gutters.
- Remove wet or rotted wood outside the house.



Bathtubs shouldn’t have signs of mildew or mold. “Fresh caulk around tubs and showers is money well spent,” Smith says. “The bathroom can be a train wreck, a huge turnoff. There should be no deferred maintenance in the bathroom. If the toilet has a valve that needs to be replaced, do it.”

Eliminate The Negatives



Jill Lake
Keller Williams Realty

“Start outside and look at your house like you’re a buyer. Most people don’t even use their front door.” But that’s exactly what the potential buyer will be looking at while the Realtor® gets the key out of the lock box. “People think of what the inside will look like while they’re standing at the front door.” That means the seller needs to consider the light, the kick plate, the doormat and everything else in view.

“Walk around the house, and if you see minor repairs that need to be done, do it,” she says. “If buyers see one window with a little bit of wood rot, they’ll think it’s all over the house.

“If I had my druthers,” Lake says, “I’d have every seller have the house inspected before they put it on the market.” Depending on square footage, the inspection could cost \$300 to \$400. If there are major issues, the deal will fall apart when it goes to contract.”

Buying a house is a process of elimination, Lake says. “The house with the least amount of negatives wins.”

Lake recalls a house that was close to a highway, had a pink exterior and was reached by driving through a less than desirable neighbor-

hood. By painting the house, that eliminated one negative and the house sold, she said.

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Weigh Costs Of Remodeling Projects

Remodeling Magazine’s 2005 Cost vs. Value Report, which compares construction costs for common remodeling projects with the value they add at resale in 60 U.S. housing markets, lists two projects that recover more than 100 percent of the cost of the job. Siding replacement in the upscale category recovered 103.6 percent of the cost and bathroom remodeling in the mid-range category recovered 102.2 percent of the cost.

The study says, “When resale value is a major factor in a homeowner’s decision to remodel, the best course of action is to consult with a local remodeler about construction cost, and ask an experienced Realtor® about home prices in the neighborhood.”

And the jury’s still out on replacing kitchen countertops. While some Realtors® are telling their clients to adjust the price if the countertops are dated, Lake says at a certain price point, people expect granite countertops.

“Buyers perceive a house as worth more if it has granite countertops.” She refers to a house in River Run, listed for more than \$500,000, which had been on the market for a year. When it hadn’t sold, the owners added granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. The house went back on the market at a higher price and it sold. And the sellers got their money back, Lake says. □