

Selling YOUR HOME?

**IT MAY BE
TIME FOR A
MAKEOVER!**

**Special Report Presented
by**

Randall Brennan
Equity Colorado
303-909-2365
RandallBrennan.com

SELLING YOUR HOME? IT MAY BE TIME FOR A MAKEOVER!

You only have one chance to make a good first impression, and the same goes for your home! Making sure your home makes a GREAT first impression on a potential buyer will speed up the sale and ensure that you get the best price possible. Invest the necessary time, effort and money in a “makeover” for your home **before** you put it on the market.

Preparing your home for sale does not have to entail major remodeling. The aim of a home makeover is to bring out the appealing features of your home and to make minor repairs and cosmetic improvements that draw the buyer’s attention to the value of your home. Not only will you increase the value and marketability of your home; a makeover gives you the chance to make a pre-emptive strike on repairs that the buyer or the buyer’s home inspector could request. Leading the way looks a whole lot better than just following along.

Take a look at your home through a buyer’s eyes.

Grab a friend and take a tour of your home. Have a long, hard, critical look inside and out, as if you were seeing it for the first time (that’s where an objective friend comes in handy). Make a list of all the things that need fixing. Keep track of everything from the cobwebs in the corners of the garage to the doorframe that the dog scratched up trying to get out to chase the raccoon in the back yard.

If necessary, have an electrician and a plumber come in and do a checkup and suggest improvements. Some of the items on your list will be simple and cosmetic, some more substantial.

Some guidelines.

Every home is different but here are some repairs and improvements you may want to consider:

Outside:

1. Does the driveway and/or walkway need resurfacing?
2. Could the front door, garage door or others use a coat of paint, or replacement?
Are screen doors in good shape?
3. Green up the lawn (a small investment in sod is a quick solution to bald spots), get rid of weeds, spruce up flowerbeds and prune overgrown bushes. Depending on the season you can brighten up the yard by planting beds of colorful flowers, annuals are cheapest.
4. Power wash the siding and deck.
5. Paint, paint and more paint. Did I mention paint? Repaint doorframes, trim, or the whole house if necessary. This is the cheapest makeover trick that gives you the biggest return on your investment.

6. Check all the window frames and consider upgrading to double or triple-pane or storm windows if applicable.
7. Let there be light - install porch and entrance lights or just make sure the bulbs in existing fixtures are working. Consider installing motion detector lights for dark areas of the yard. (This suggests that you are security conscious, that's a good thing)
8. Make sure gutters and drain spouts are clear of debris.
9. Repair or replace the roof if required – get it inspected professionally before making such an important decision. You may also want to discuss it with your realtor as it may be difficult to recoup the costs of this major repair.
10. Seal cracks in outside walls and foundation and keep the area near the foundation clear of heavy ground cover plants, stones and landscape timbers. Keep mulch at least 12 inches from the foundation as defense against insects and moisture.

Inside:

1. Wash walls, ceilings and windows. Decide whether a new coat of paint in a neutral color will improve the appearance of any or all rooms. Make sure the painting is done by professionals or, if you do it yourself, that you follow the manufacturer's instructions to the letter, paying particular attention to proper cleaning and priming of surfaces to be painted.
2. If necessary, consider replacing dated floor coverings with modern carpeting or vinyl or ceramic tile and re-finishing wood floors so they look like new. You may want to discuss this with your realtor first.
3. Lighting is important. Would ceiling fans, new light fixtures and recessed or track lighting improve the appearance of your rooms? Don't forget to replace shabby or outdated switch and outlet plates and register vents.
4. Clean the curtains and invest in relatively inexpensive blinds if yours have seen their best days.
5. Spruce up the kitchen. Invest in modern cupboard and drawer handles and decide whether to paint or replace cupboard doors. Clean every nook and cranny, including the inside of the stove and the microwave!
6. Update bathroom lighting and replace toilet seats and bathroom hardware if necessary.
7. Clean furnace filters and make sure weather-stripping is in place to provide maximum energy efficiency. A conscientious buyer will notice these details.
8. Tidy up! Remove clutter from all rooms. Put extra furniture, knickknacks and other extraneous material into storage. Be ruthless, even if a home is clean clutter suggests dirty nooks and crannies.
9. New furniture? If the living room or family room furniture that you are planning to buy for your new home would improve the appearance of your current home, buy it now.
10. Don't forget the garage. Get rid of trash. Have a garage sale to get rid of the stuff you don't plan to take with you. Do a thorough cleaning and organize what's left. Clean the floor, repair cracks and remove stains and re-finish the floor with a stain resistant concrete finish.

What about major improvements?

Most major home improvements do not necessarily raise the property value dollar for dollar. Concentrate on the basics – wiring, plumbing, a high efficiency furnace and repairs to the foundation. These are what the buyers and a home inspector will be looking for.

Consider adding practical square footage to the living area of your home. If you don't plan on making major improvements to your home before you sell then studies show that the best investments (i.e.: you can recoup the costs from the sale of the home) are projects like finishing the basement, remodeling the kitchen or the bathroom and adding a family room or deck. These projects were the types that most substantially increased the value of homes.

It's the little things that count.

Sometime it's the simple things that make the most difference. You should strongly consider making those improvements that include lightening and brightening, both inside the home and out. New lighting fixtures and new paint with lighter colors all improve the appearance of a home for a moderate outlay.

Don't forget "curb appeal" and that first impression. You want the buyer to like what they see and to want to own the home along with the lifestyle and status it represents. A well-manicured lawn, attractive landscaping and a clean and bright exterior all contribute to curb appeal.

Those qualities of your home that can't be seen are equally important. Don't underestimate the value of updating your home's energy efficiency with new windows, added insulation, fresh weather-stripping, modern air conditioning and heating systems. Ask your realtor for their opinion, they know what buyers are looking for and can be the source of valuable advice.

Last minute touches.

The job isn't over when you've done all the major work and have listed your home. Attention to detail will pay off when you are expecting potential buyers for an open house or individual appointments.

Make sure you've vacuumed and removed pet and cigarette odors. Everything should be clean and sparkling. Don't forget that your buyers will be looking in closets and corners so have everything organized and neat. Send the kids and pets to visit grandma for the day if you're having an open house.

A bouquet of fresh flowers on the dining room table is a welcoming touch. And don't be afraid to fire up the bread machine, it's cliché but the smell of fresh baked bread still works.

In Conclusion:

Consider the work you do in preparing your home for sale as an investment and an opportunity to prepare for your own move. Get rid of everything that is just taking up space. Have a garage sale, give the extras to friends or to a local charity and get the kids to do the same.

Get professional advice from both your realtor and a home inspector to determine what repairs and upgrades are in order and get the work done professionally. If you do it yourself make sure you do it like a professional! The effort you put into preparation will pay off. Not only will you get the best price for your property, but you will have taken major steps in your move to a new home as well.

Additional Information:

The Internet is a valuable source of information on makeovers and remodeling:

1. Home & Garden Television – www.HGTV.com
2. Homestore.com – Home & garden improvement advice - www remodel.com
3. Home Builder Online – the information source for the home building industry
www.builderonline.com
4. HomeTime.com – lots of “how to” information for your remodeling project plans
www.homemprovement.com.