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REAL ESTATE RESULTS

Get ready to sell

Preparation guide

top tips to achieve
the best price for your home



We've all heard the phrase 'first impressions last', and it's one that's absolutely true when it comes to real estate. Especially in today's digitally driven world, property presentation is key if you want to stand out from the competition, have the best chance of making it to the top of a buyer's shortlist and maximise your selling price.

Here are our top tips, tricks and strategies to help you make your property shine – ensuring it presents and functions at its very best.

make sure everything works

Buyers can be fickle and will be looking for any excuse to get the lowest price possible. That includes looking for any flaws with your property that could justify a discount to your selling price. Additionally, what you perceive to be minor issues – a leaking toilet or a broken curtain rail – will be significant 'red flags' to a buyer who may leave feeling that the home is not well maintained.

Understandably, they will be looking to protect their own interests by thoroughly investigating the state of repair of the property and calculating any necessary repairs or upgrades they perceive will be required should they purchase your home.

Serious buyers will also seek a building and property inspection as a condition of the sale, so even if your house has problems that aren't immediately apparent, they will soon be revealed and could impact the successful settlement of your home or require that you make urgent repairs to prevent the sale falling through.

The best strategy here is to get on top of any repairs or maintenance before your home goes to market.

- Keep up to date with any regular property maintenance including pest inspections.
- Clean and service the air conditioner.
- Check that your alarm system, heating, pool pump etc. are all functioning regardless of the season.
- Ensure all fixed appliances (stove top, oven, dishwasher etc.) are all in good working order.
- Replace any faulty light globes and choose the appropriate wattage for each room.
- If you have stairs, make sure they are safe, well lit and uncluttered.
- Seal any cracks around showers or basins.
- Patch and repaint any imperfections in plaster.
- Oil hinges, fix leaks, repair broken fixings and replace missing screws.
- Reglue or nail down loose skirting boards or flooring.
- Check all the locks and door hardware are operational.
- Inspect the roof for loose or missing tiles.
- Clean the gutters and down pipes.

make it sparkle

It sounds simple, but you'd be surprised how often sellers overlook the need to clean and tidy their property before it goes to market. On the other hand, a buyer is extremely unlikely to overlook a messy home and instead, will view the property in a negative light. An untidy home will give buyers an easy excuse to instantly discount or devalue your home.

If you don't have the time, energy or the equipment to do a thorough clean before your home is presented for sale, consider engaging a reputable professional cleaner to help.

Here is a sample 'to do' list, including our top general cleaning and decluttering tips:

General cleaning

- Vacuum and clean carpets and rugs. Engage a professional carpet cleaner if required.
- Mop, polish and refinish hardwood floors.
- Wash curtains and blinds. Dust shutters and venetians.
- Clean dust and bugs out of light fittings. Most glass fittings can be put through the dishwasher and come up sparkling.
- Dust, wipe and polish all cabinetry, skirting boards and shelves.
- Clean and polish surfaces and bench tops.
- Thoroughly clean the oven inside and out, including the oven racks.
- Clean exhaust fans, range hood vents/covers and ceiling fan blades.
- Clean all windows, including in the toilets, shed and garage.
- Wipe down walls to remove smudges, scuffs and dirty handprints.
- Sweep and clean the replace.
- Clean the ceiling, especially any stains, mildew or mould that may be appear in wet areas.
- Replace a worn or dirty shower curtain.
- Clean, repair or replace mouldy shower grout.
- Clean mineral deposits on taps and shower rose (vinegar or CLR both work well).
- Pay attention to any odours within the house that may be a potential cause of concern for prospective buyers. Most odours can be reduced or eliminated by having furniture, carpets and curtains cleaned and/or aired. You can also clean the air conditioning filter, vent covers and ducts, either personally or through a professional.
- The best way to treat stubborn odours or stains is to remove the source, rather than trying to cover it up with deodorants or air fresheners.

Decluttering

- Go through your house and remove all clutter, aiming for clean spaces and no junk.
- Store away small appliances if possible, but ensure they are absolutely clean and sparkling if you have to leave them out.
- Remove any dishes, washing liquid, sponges and brushes from around the sink.
- Clear on top of the fridge and washing machine, or use baskets and bowls to contain any items that can't be put away.
- Clean and organise all storage space including cabinets, drawers and closets. Crowded or overflowing spaces give the impression of inadequate storage.
- Donate, sell or gift items that you no longer use, or see if you can temporarily relocate them to friends or family.
- Put away any laundry – dirty or clean.
- Clear the bathroom counter tops and store toiletries and personal items neatly in cabinets or cupboards.



natural and neutral

When selling your home, it's a good idea to put any bold interior design ideas on hold. Remember that buyers will be looking for a property they feel they can easily make their own, and may be distracted by unusual carpet colours, feature walls or statement wallpapers.

Your goal here is to maximise the appeal of your house to a wide range of buyers, and that means paring it back and keeping it simple.

- Consider replacing any strong colours with a more neutral palette. Apply the same principle if you choose to repaint or recarpet.
- Buy some house and home magazines, visit a furniture showroom or check out Pinterest for inspiration on how to achieve a fresh, modern aesthetic.
- Tone down dominant colours with contrasting accessories with neutral tones. For example, if your bathroom features a bright colour, add a few neutral accents such as white towels and bathmat.
- Clever use of accent furniture, artwork and soft furnishings (think cushions and throw rugs) can be used to add vibrancy and interest to a room without making a permanent change.
- Soften unsightly views by keeping a blind partially drawn while letting as much light in as possible.
- Maximise natural light in all rooms by cleaning windows and opening awnings, blinds and shutters.
- Lamps are a great way to brighten any dark corners in your home.
- If you have fluorescent lighting, fit 'warm-white' light globes throughout the home for a warmer and more welcoming vibe.

creating focal points

Your home is likely to have some key features that make it unique and, if highlighted in the right way, will make it stand out from the competition and attract the right type of buyers.

Similarly, certain zones within each home are traditionally more important in creating the overall impression of a home. These 'first impression zones' include areas like kitchen benches, entryways, hallways, and alfresco areas. Here are some easy ways that you can make these areas really shine and work to your advantage.

- Add dried flowers or some greenery on a console table in the entryway or hallway.
- The use of mirrors can give the illusion of space and increase light in entryways, hallways and sitting areas.
- Direct lights towards unique features within the home including exposed wooden beams or a cathedral ceiling.
- Large windows can become attractive focal points when they are clean and clear of any old, tired or untidy window treatments. You may even consider removing blinds or drapes as a way to increase the natural light.
- Showcase the versatility of a large kitchen bench by setting two place settings with modern and coordinating décor.
- Draw attention to an attractive staircase landing with the use of a plant, some artwork, or a well chosen piece of furniture that is appropriate for the space.
- Showcase an elegant light fixture by polishing the metal and dusting the bulbs.

creating ambience

Creating ambience within your home is a way to make buyers feel warm, welcome and at ease. Using subtle ways to please their senses – fresh flowers, hot baked bread, candlelight, gentle music or a crackling fire – you can create a unique and memorable feeling for buyers who come to view your home.

Here are a number of ways you can create ambience within your home:

- Leave hints of relaxation and luxury around the home. A vase of fresh flowers, an open book on the coffee table, or a basket of logs by the fireplace can tell stories and make buyers feel welcome and at home.
- Consider the use of subtle scents like cinnamon, vanilla, fresh flowers or freshly baked bread.
- Utilise the fireplace with a few logs on the fire grate in summer, and a cosy fire burning in winter.
- Ensure the temperature is comfortable and appropriate.
- Place a bowl of lemons or limes in the kitchen.
- Set the kitchen table with elegant décor, using a generous bowl of fresh fruit as a centrepiece.
- Set a formal dining table with quality cutlery, glassware and fresh flowers.
- Create a 'cooking scene' in the kitchen with an open cookbook, a ceramic mixing bowl, a wire whisk, wooden spoon and clean, bright pot holders.
- Bake some cookies or pop a frozen apple pie in the oven to create homey, delicious aromas.
- Create a luxury 'suite' feel in the master bedroom by decorating the ensuite to coordinate with the colour scheme of your bedroom.
- Ensure that linen cupboards, laundry cupboards, pantries and wardrobes smell fresh and clean.
- Hang your best towels in the bathroom, or roll them up day spa style. Remove old bars of soap and set out perfumed guest soaps.
- Add greenery to any room for a pop of colour and a modern, fresh feel.
- Depersonalise your home by putting away any clothing, shoes or personal items that could cloud the buyer's imagination.
- Remove oversized TV's or temporarily replace with a smaller one. Large TV screens tend to dominate a room and impact on the sense of space.
- Remove any unusual, offensive or personal wall hangings such as posters, photo's or drawings.



creating space

As a general rule, all buyers are drawn to a home with space, open-plan design and plenty of storage space. Working within the realms of your own home, try to make what you have, appear generous and well planned.

Create a sense of flow in your home by carefully arranging furniture, using pale, neutral colours, turning all the lights on and openings curtains, blinds or shutters to maximise natural light. You can also consider our following tips and tricks to create an impression of space in specific areas of the home:

- Arrange the furniture to give any room a spacious feel. This may mean you have to remove some pieces and any that make the room feel cluttered or crowded.
- Pack away any ornaments or collectibles. They will be safe from curious fingers and your room will instantly feel bigger.
- Empty your cupboard of all off-season clothing and pack them away now, ready for when you move.
- Organise cupboards and pantries, ensuring you present them in a way that makes them look spacious and as if there is plenty of room for more.
- Clear any exposed shelves of clutter, leaving just a small stack of neatly organised books or the odd pot plant.
- Make your closet appear roomy by adding a few extra empty hangers.
- Ensure all doors are unobstructed and able to open fully and easily.
- Make any room feel bigger by choosing appropriately sized furniture.
- Remove excess chairs, beanbags, and side tables.
- Fit cupboards with hard wired or battery operated lighting to make them appear bigger.



external areas

Don't be fooled into thinking the outside areas of your home don't matter to buyers. In fact, quite often areas like sheds and garages can be deal breakers for buyers if they are not well presented or well maintained. Parking can also be a real sticking point, so be sure to present all of your space in the best possible light.

Garage

- Make sure the roller door is clean of dust and cobwebs and ensure the remote control is operational.
- Brush and wash the floor and walls to remove dirt, insects and stains.
- Organise tools, bicycles, and lawn and garden equipment and remove any clutter to enhance the impression of space.
- If you have a small garage that only fits one car, remove it before an inspection. An empty garage always looks larger.
- If you have a two car garage, remove one of the cars before the inspection to allow more room for people to see what's on offer.
- If your garage can double as a recreation zone, you could consider staging it as a teen retreat using items such as a ping-pong table and a bar fridge.

Exterior

- Stand back on the street and critique your home's street appeal, paying attention to things that may detract from a buyers first impression including dead plants, peeling paintwork, a bent gutter or dirty windows. Make a list and get everything fixed.
- Create an attractive welcome statement with a tub of potted colour or a basket of pansies by the front door.
- If you have a porch, veranda or front deck, add pots of flowers and arrange outdoor furniture to instantly add another usable zone to your home.
- Purchase a new welcome mat.
- Clean and repaint the front door if necessary.
- Use a high pressure cleaner to remove any algae or stains on the bricks or paving.
- Remove any weeds growing in the cracks of the paving (pouring boiling water over them is a quick way to kill them for easy removal a few days later).
- Sweep away any dust, cobwebs and leaves.

Garden

- Ensure the lawn is freshly mowed, raked and edged.
- Prune and shape shrubbery and trees.
- Mulch any garden beds, and around shrubs and trees.
- Consider adding seasonal colour along the footpath or in garden beds.
- In you have a large backyard, set up a game to suggest family fun. Cricket wickets, a badminton or volleyball net, or even totem tennis are all good options.
- Dedicate an area of your yard to 'outdoor living' and set the scene with a picnic table and chairs and a BBQ, or a cast iron table with a teapot, book and chair.
- If you have decking, ensure it's in good condition or give it a good oil or stain to refresh.
- Check the fence for any loose or broken pickets or damage.

Driveway

- Sweep and wash the driveway and paths.
- Repair and patch any cracks in the pavement.
- Edge the side of the driveway or footpath and remove weeds.
- Remove any oil stains if possible using a high pressure cleaner and a commercial degreaser.



checklist: preparing for photos

Outside have you...

- Remove vehicles from the driveway and the front of the house where possible.
- Clean oil stains, weed the garden and apply mulch.
- Put the garbage bins out of sight.
- Tidy away garden hoses and excess garden tools, toys etc.
- If you have a pool, make sure you remove any toys, vacuum and pool blanket and switch on the water feature.

Inside have you...

- Remove doormats, cat litter and pet bowls.
- Declutter as much as possible.
- Open the curtains, blinds or shutters and turn on the lights.
- Replace any missing or broken light globes.
- Dust and remove cobwebs.

Bedrooms have you...

- Make the beds.
- Put away clothes, toys and shoes.
- Remove jewellery, bags, books etc. from bedside tables.
- Remove portable heaters or air conditioners.

Bathrooms have you...

- Clear away toothbrushes, soap, razors etc.
- Remove items in the shower.
- Remove rubbish bins, bath mats, scales and dirty towels.
- Clean mirrors and screens.
- Put the toilet seats and lids down

Kitchen have you...

- Clear away dirty dishes, detergent, tea towels, dish racks and plugs.
- Declutter surfaces.
- Remove fridge magnets, bills and drawings from the fridge.
- Put away the bin.

Remember: all items removed for de-cluttering and presentation purposes can be temporarily stored in your garage, linen or pantry cupboards. Please call your Property Consultant if you need any further advice.

checklist: home open

Whether it is an open house or a private inspection, it's vital that you are not there. Buyers find it extremely offputting and difficult to feel comfortable if the current owners are present. Your presence will cause them to rush through an inspection, and prevent them getting a real feel for the home. We suggest you plan a trip to the shops or pop over to visit a friend for the duration of the home open inspection.

Here's a handy checklist to make sure your home is ready to shine for potential buyers:

Home open have you...

- Wipe down the bench top and stove top.
- Clean the toilet seat, rim, bowl and lid.
- Spray the toilet with air freshener.
- Make the beds.
- Empty the rubbish bins.
- Put away toys, appliances, garden hose etc.
- Shake out the welcome mat and sweep away any dust or debris from the entrance.
- Remove cobwebs from rafters, bannisters, ceiling and doorways.
- Sweep, vacuum and mop the floors.
- Wipe mirrors, basins and faucets.
- Rake leaves and mow the lawn.
- Arrange to have any pets cared for by friends, neighbours or relatives.
- Clean up any animal droppings and remove litter trays, etc.
- Add fresh fruit and flowers.
- Hide or temporarily disconnect obtrusive or unsightly cords and cables.
- Remove personal photographs where possible.

Final touches

- If possible, open some windows a couple of hours before the home open.
- Put toilet seats and lids down.
- Open the curtains and blinds.
- Turn on all lights and lamps.
- Tidy away any dishes on the bench or sink.
- Remove all clean and dirty laundry from view.
- Put away the vacuum cleaner and mop.
- If the weather is cold, put the heater on.
- If the weather is hot, turn on the air conditioner.
- Light scented candles and be sure to tell your agent where they are burning.
- Play some relaxing music at a low volume.

CONGRATULATIONS, NOW YOUR HOME IS
LOOKING ITS BEST AND IS READY FOR THE
RIGHT BUYER TO *fall in love*.[♥]



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