



10 Tips for Getting Top Dollar

By Michael Perdue

Getting a house ready to sell is my FAVORITE part of a deal next to closing. I am happy to help my sellers get their homes ready. We are in a buyer's market now and the buyer's know it. However, homes are still purchased by emotion and sellers need to know how to tap into that. I have listed these IN ORDER for a reason, each item builds upon those that preceded it on the list.

1. **Divorce It.** This was your *home* but now you are selling it, it is an *investment*. When you decorated it, furnished it, fixed it, you did what YOU liked. NOW you have to put it into a condition that OTHER people will like. You have to remove the emotion from all those wonderful things you liked and have a professional advise you on what you need to change. Its not your home anymore: it is an investment.
2. **De-Clutter It.** I usually tell my clients to "half move out." Usually we need to move out about half of our stuff to make a home & garage look attractive to potential buyers. Of course some clutter bugs may have to do more than that, but it's a good rule of thumb. Take out half of what is in every closet, cupboard, shelf and drawer. Doing this makes people feel like there is PLENTY of room for their stuff. If you don't, the buyers will feel cramped and feel like their stuff would never fit. Rent a storage unit and fill it up.
3. **De-Personalize It.** You want to create the "I could live here, this is MY home" feeling in a buyer. Walls of family photos need to be taken down. Souvenirs, trophies and mementos need to be put in storage. Give potential buyers the feeling that they could move in today.
4. **Clean it.** I am not saying you are a bad housekeeper, but most people do not clean what cannot be readily seen too often: Under the fridge, under and behind the couches, under the sink, under the beds and eliminate the "junk drawers." Clean the tracks of your slider windows, make your bathrooms look sparkling new. And yes, clean the Garage too!
5. **Fix it.** Yes, they will notice the hinge out of adjustment, the garage door that will not open, the sagging shelf, the broken tile, the leaky faucet, etc. FIX it. Don't loose a buyer for the lack of spending a few dollars to fix things. Buyers do NOT want to buy problems, they want to move into a HOME that works.

6. **Scrape it.** “Popcorn” ceilings? Have them scraped. It costs about \$1 per square foot of your home to have the popcorn removed and the ceilings textured and painted. If you don’t do it, 80% of buyers will notice it and comment negatively about it.
7. **Paint it.** If you have lived in it the paint IS damaged, marked and dirty in places you have not noticed no matter how good a housekeeper you are. People LOVE a fresh coat of paint. Just be careful about the colors you pick.
8. **Update it.** People often sell their own homes because they are out of date. They do not want to buy another that is also out of date. Get help to know what is “in.” If you cannot afford a decorator, buy several decorating magazines and go to an upscale furniture store to get a feeling of color palates and styles.
9. **Stage it.** You may love the way your furniture is arranged in front of the TV, but that is NOT what looks best to potential buyers. Arranging furniture, art, nick knacks and books, buying new luxury towels and candles, and keeping fresh flowers on display is important. Don’t think of the outside of your house as a “yard” – think of it as a “garden” and make sure you have plenty of blooming flowers, mowed grass, no weeds, and a garden feel.
10. **What about Fido & Frisky?** Pet odors, dirt and hair are deal killers. I know you love your pet(s) and I am not suggesting that you get rid of them permanently, but if you are serious about getting top dollar, Fido and Frisky need to be absent from the inside of the house, and if you have multiple or “difficult” pets, it is even MORE important.

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