



7 Easy (and cheap) Ways to Increase Your Home's Value

*Look at your home through buyer eyes,
not through your memories.*

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Seeing your home as a buyer sees it is not an easy task to accomplish. Buyers look at homes first through eyes trying to disqualify the home. They look for reasons to say "NO" to a house, not reasons to say "YES". This means, you have to eliminate all of the possible "NO's", even ones you compromised on because you liked something else about the home so much more.

Let's take a look at the curb appeal.

First and foremost, is it clean? Are the sidewalks, driveway, steps and porch all swept clear of debris? Are stains cleaned up? Are there cobwebs anywhere? Is the lawn mowed and edged? Are there brown spots in the grass or weeds in the flower beds?

Does the trim around the doors and windows appear faded or dull? Has your welcome mat outworn its welcome? Are your house numbers easily found? Are all of the outside lights on and working? Is the front door dirty or faded? Have you added new hardware recently? Are the windows crystal clear?

As you enter your home, what do you see first?

Remember, the buyer is looking for things you glance over after living with them every day. Is there clutter? Are your coats visible? Do you have a coat rack? Having a coat rack is a big negative – it is clutter and it shows the buyer that there is insufficient closet storage.

Does a family live in your home? Can the buyer tell?

The buyer is not interested in your family or their photos. Get rid of all personal photos and at least 75% of other wall decorations. Do you love your pets? The buyer doesn't. Your pets should not be seen, heard or smelled. Don't fool yourself... no matter how clean you keep your home, there will be evidence you have pets, somewhere. Keep the pets away from the home during showings. Get rid of the cat box during showings. Use a high end cat litter such as the silicone crystals that eliminate that 'cat litter' smell.

So you enjoy candles, it's a mask for stinky smells.

At least, that's what the buyer thinks. When a buyer walks in your home, if you have air fresheners or candles burning, their first thought is (if they don't have a personal dislike reaction to the smell) what are they trying to hide. They'll immediately react negatively. However, putting a small amount of cinnamon in a small pan on the stove on low, will add a spicy home smell that doesn't mask odors but creates a 'comfort' reaction.

I know you love your custom wallpaper and think it's a great selling point . . . but it's not.

Get rid of wallpaper, all of it. Get rid of custom paint colors. Paint your entire home a nice, neutral, beige color. Do not forget to paint the ceilings and to touch up any molding throughout the home.

Clean. Clean again. Clean yet again.

Clean your home like you are being required to eat off of every surface. Clean the ceilings, the walls, the tops of cabinets, doors, windows, blinds, curtains, carpets, floors, closets, etc. Clean every single nook and cranny. You are competing against hundreds upon hundreds of other homes. Your home must be the cleanest one out there. This is the time to go for the cleanliest home award. It'll pay you back ten-fold.

About the Authors

Chuck & Christina Ethridge lead the North Idaho Dream Team, powered by SKE Realty Group LLC in beautiful North Idaho and Eastern Washington.

They enjoy providing valuable information to home buyers and sellers that enable them to be 'seller empowered'.

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