

10 Inexpensive Ways to Wow Buyers

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Now is the time for home owners contemplating a spring sale to spruce up their properties in anticipation of what Mike Larson of Weiss Research calls a potentially vibrant home-selling season.

"If you have been beating your head against the wall, this is going to feel a lot better," he says.

Here are 10 cheap ways to make a property more attractive to shoppers:

1. Improve first impressions. Touch up the paint on the front door and other areas that buyers see first.
2. Clean up the landscaping. Trim the hedges and trees and plant some annuals in the flowerbeds.
3. Paint the interior. A coat of light yellow or cream with contrasting white woodwork looks fresh and clean.
4. Refurbish the floors. Buff the hardwoods. Install new carpets - or at least get them professionally cleaned.
5. Take care of the big problems. If the house needs a roof or the front stoop is crumbling, get them fixed.
6. Buy warranties. Putting appliances under warranty gives homebuyers a secure feeling.
7. Improve energy efficiency. New windows or improved insulation tells a potential buyer the seller is on top of things plus they come with tax benefits.
8. Replace light fixtures. Update fixtures, especially at the entrance way and in the foyer - create a good first impression.
9. Buy a stove. Home owners whose kitchen isn't top of the line can jazz it up for a few hundred dollars by buying a new stove which gives the room a fresh feel.
10. Tidy up the bathrooms. Get rid of mildew, replace caulking, and replace stained sinks.

(Source: US News & World Report, Luke Mullins - 1/21/2010)