

Improvements that Give the Biggest Bang for the Buck



1

Decluttering.

Buyers want to be able to see themselves living in your home. That means removing personal pictures, awards, magnets on the refrigerator from your last vacation. But it also means removing items that clog up the space. Pretend for a second you're a buyer. You go into a house it looks nice enough, in the right area with the right schools. As you're walking around you open up one of the closet doors. You see clothes squished into every imaginable corner of that closet. Your first thought is likely to be, wow, there's not enough storage space here. Now imagine the same scenario except when you open the closet there are a few sparse articles of clothing hanging neatly on hangers like you see at an Armani or a Gucci store. It gives a whole different impression. Take that same philosophy with your furniture and decorations. If it feels like, hey, this isn't my home anymore. You're right. It's not. It's going to be your new buyer's home. Cost: \$0.00.

2

Cleaning.

This should be obvious but, in our experience, we've learned that it's not. Particularly cleaning before professional photography or showing a home, this is very important. You want your buyer to feel like it's something they can move into without any stigma. When we say cleaning, we mean include the refrigerator, the oven, the tub and shower. The windows are often overlooked. Don't overlook them. The transparency factor associated with clean windows allows your buyer to have an indoor/outdoor feel that's refreshing. \$0.00 for do it yourself; plus or minus \$600 for a cleaning service depending on the size of your home and the area.

3

Painting - Inside and/or Out.

You can't change a first impression. Curb appeal is still alive and well in real estate marketing. So put your best foot forward. A word of caution. Don't paint your house exterior the same color as your next door neighbor unless you have color restrictions. You will want your home to stand out as fresh and new. With respect to color, we recommend avoiding loud flamboyant colors because studies show those colors will likely appeal to only a limited number of potential buyers. The goal is to appeal to the largest number of potential buyers. Our experience shows, even if you hire a professional painter, you should at least double your money by doing quality painting.

4

Make Minor Repairs.

Does the faucet leak? Fix it. Little things can turn off a buyer. And it's usually the things that bothered you at one point but never got around to fixing. It seems normal now and you don't see it anymore. Have a professional walk through your home to help you see through your blind spots.

5

Flooring.

If the carpet is stained or worn we've had clients who have said, we'll just let the buyer pick out their next carpet, or, I'll give a credit for that. But here's the thing. The buyer may not have the imagination to shake off stains they see. If a buyer has a choice between a house with fresh new flooring or one that they have to replace, most buyers would prefer the no hassle option. Particularly in Silicon Valley where home prices are high and high wage earners who can afford these properties are working long hours, the easier you can make for them to buy your house the better.

LESSON FROM THE TRENCHES

Every home is unique and not all improvements make financial sense. Consult with a qualified real estate professional with extensive experience representing buyers and sellers to see what may be best for your particular home.