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Tips for Selling Your Home in the Fall

By Val Cook-Watkins

Summer is coming to an end which means the leaves will start changing, the weather will begin cooling and we'll all be spending more time inside our homes. It may also be the time of year when you begin wondering if you truly want to stay in your home. Many sellers think that fall is a bad time to put their home on the market but, as real estate experts will tell you, that's simply not the case.

Autumn is typically a popular time of year for corporations to relocate associates, which creates a pool of buyers who need to make quick decisions about housing. They'll be serious about purchasing and, with fewer houses on the market and less competition for sellers, your house may get more attention than it would any other time of year. So what can you do to make sure your home sells before all the leaves fall off the trees? Here are a few helpful tips.

- Highlight the location. Bring the benefits of your location front and center. Establish a list of perks that your property offers, such as proximity to public transportation, schools, shopping, recreation or entertainment.
- Use the season for curb appeal. Autumn is one of the most beautiful times of year and by using that to your advantage, your home can stand out from others in the neighborhood. Leaves turning shades of crimson and gold can add extra appeal to the total look of your home's exterior, but they can also get out of hand. Make sure trees and shrubs are properly groomed and that fallen leaves don't suffocate your front lawn. Add pumpkins, gourds or a fall display to your front porch to invite in potential buyers.
- Stage your home. Buyers need to be able to envision themselves living in your home before they will consider buying it. By de-cluttering, de-personalizing and thoroughly cleaning the entire house, prospective buyers will immediately imagine their furniture in the rooms and photos on the walls. Also, don't be afraid to liven up the home by bringing the outside indoors during this beautiful season. If your dining room is a sea of beige, set up a vase of twigs, leaves or acorns from your yard.
- Get everything in tip-top shape. Your buyer will most likely hire an inspector before closing, so talk to your Realtor about finding one who'll visit your home before you put it on the market to avoid any surprises. Pay close attention to elements around the home that are important in the fall. For example, make sure gutters are cleared of fallen leaves and that fireplaces are in working order.
- Know your home. Access to real estate information on the Internet means that buyers are walking into your home more educated than ever. Take the time to review homes similar to yours on real estate websites like www.californiamoves.com or www.realtor.com. Your agent will also be able to keep you aware of the conditions and price ranges of other homes for sale in your area. This will allow you to better negotiate with potential buyers.
- Hire a tech savvy Realtor. We're living in an age when nearly everyone owns a cell phone and 90 percent of home buyers use the internet during their home search. Instant information and communication have become the norm in our society, so Realtors are taking advantage of today's tech tools to reach prospective buyers quickly and effectively. A tech savvy agent will work with cell phone applications, Websites, digital cameras and much more to be able to connect you with the right buyer for your home.

Despite what you may have heard, this time of year offers plenty of opportunity to sell your home. By taking a few simple steps to make sure you and your house are ready to hit the market, you can better prepare yourself for what is to come. After all, the more welcoming your home is to possible buyers, the more welcoming it will be to offers.

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