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The Home Designer Staged For Success

By Brandon Neff



Beautiful decor, clean surfaces and flowers go a long way toward getting you top dollar for your home.

Photo courtesy Brandon Neff Design

bathrooms. Replace that moldy shower curtain, refresh the kitchen sponges and dust everything! And, yes, buyers will look through your drawers and closets, so put away whatever you don't want strangers to see. Lastly, create space in your closets by storing unused clothing elsewhere to give the illusion of abundant storage space. It may sound silly, but it works.

Don't Take It Personally. When I was a home stager the number one thing I needed to drive into my client's heads was the notion that once you decide to put your house on the market it ceases to be your home - it is now a commodity. And, as such, it becomes a place your buyers must see as their potential new home, and not the place you still live in. So, put away those ancestral photos lining the hallway leading to the bathroom, take down all the pet snapshots and daily affirmations littering the refrigerator door, and banish that black and white family portrait taken at the beach holding court above the fireplace. Buyers don't want to see reminders of another family living in their new home.

Your space should be a welcoming blank slate for buyers to imagine building their new memories, and not living in the shadows of someone else's. Enough said.

Carefully go through your house with a critical eye, and see what needs attention. Trust me, a fresh coat of paint, updated appliances and new bathroom tile go a long way toward getting you top dollar. Don't leave deferred maintenance to chance - fix the small things, so there's no room for your buyer to chip away at your asking price.

Oh, before I forget - skip that beige paint, also known as Swiss Coffee, and choose a pure white in flat finish for all walls and in high gloss for the trims. Beige puts people to sleep, and you want your buyers wide awake. Finally, please, whatever you do, just say no to those scented candles on the day of your open house - pumpkin spice and everything nice never got the job done.

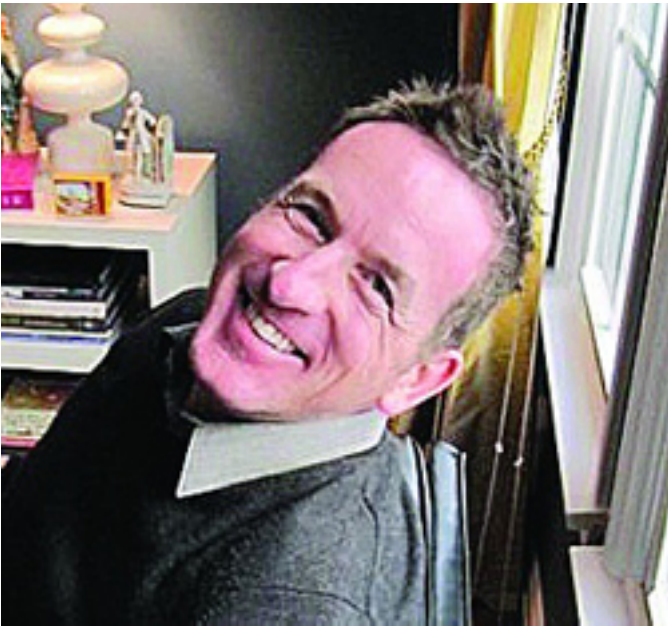
Once upon a time, there was a magical housing market that lived in a beautiful bubble when all homes sold quickly, and for over asking price. That bubble burst. Now homeowners have to sell the old fashioned way - with effort. Knowing a few "tricks of the trade" can help you stand out from the rest, and capture better offers. Think all you have to do is find a great realtor, check the comps and schedule the open house? Not by a long shot.

According to the Association of Realtors, most buyers decide whether, or not, they're going to put an offer on a listing within the first 30 seconds of seeing the home. Thirty seconds, people! Never has a first impression meant more to your bottom line. Have you done everything you can to ensure a successful sale? Do you know what sets your listing apart from your competition? Do you know enough not to paint all the walls beige? Pay attention.

Long before I became an interior designer, I built a clientele of homeowners who hired me to style their luxury listings for maximum profit. Coaxing buyers to observe the assets of a particular listing and to overlook its drawbacks was my job. Today, buyers are more discerning than ever, and have the advantage of previewing a larger pool of comparable listings before making a decision. So, before you schedule that open house, read on.

Clean Up Your Act. Nothing turns off a buyer more than a dirty home. When selling a house your job is to make your particular piece of the world stand out and demand attention - in a good way. To that end, starting with the home's curb appeal, take careful note. Sweep the walkway to the front door, replace that old tattered entrance mat, place flowers (real, never fake) in containers by the front entrance, wipe the cobwebs under the eaves, prune those low hanging branches, power wash the chimney brick and stucco, and be sure to wash all the windows - inside and out. Nothing's worse than directing potential buyers to regard the expensive view through dirty windows.

Inside, pay particular attention to the kitchen and



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