

YOUR HOME



TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

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ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MAT

The last thing you want to do when selling your house is to clean it before — and *after* — an open house. Keeping your house in top shape is important when showing it to potential buyers, but seasonal rain, snow and mud can wreak havoc on your spit-spot floors and recently cleaned carpeting. Instead of letting potential buyers bring the outside in, keep it tidy and save cleaning time by following these simple tips:

- Plow your driveway as soon as possible after a snow-storm. Sprinkle salt, sand or birdseed on the ground to keep it clear and prevent guests from slipping.
- Keep muddy footprints at bay by offering a welcome mat at the front door. This will prompt potential buyers to wipe their feet before stepping on your newly cleaned carpet or floors.
- Offer potential buyers an umbrella stand near the front door for wet shoes, umbrellas and bulky coats.
- If all else fails, a friendly sign on the door reminding guests to wipe their feet may be just the ticket.



PLUG THE ENERGY LEAK

You may have noticed that energy bill creeping higher and higher lately. If you live in a larger or older home, your energy costs could be pushing your budget to its limits. Luckily, there are a few easy ways to reduce energy waste.

Warm air leaking into your house in the summer and out of your house in the winter can waste a lot of your energy dollars. New windows, while an investment, are the best way to cut your energy costs. Storm windows with double panes minimize airflow to and from your house. Also look into specific coatings on windows. A gas-filled window with low-emissive coatings reduces heat loss; spectrally selective coatings reduce heat gain.

Next, check on your home's insulation. Topping off your insulation can be a fast and cost-efficient trick to reduce expenses. Inspect the insulation in your attic, ceilings, exterior and interior walls, floors and crawl spaces. If you find an opening or crack to the outside, you can caulk, seal and weather-strip all of the gaps.

If you panic when the energy bill arrives in the mail, don't just take it — take action. Keep these tips in mind and successfully ensure your house gets the most out of the rising energy costs this year.

Sale by Design

For many buyers, visualizing a home beyond the owner's decorative style or furnishings can be challenging — especially if the owner has a unique sense of style. At the same time, an owner may realize his leopard-print sofa or life-size picture of Elvis Presley may be a little intimidating or off-putting for potential buyers who, shall we say, do not share his whimsicality.

If you suspect *your* taste in home décor may be an acquired one, do yourself a favor and try a couple of these design tips that can go a long way to helping potential buyers see your home as theirs.

- Consider staging a room. Your agent can recommend a professional stager or suggest some inexpensive rental pieces if your furniture is more avant-garde than advantageous.
- Pare it down. An overabundance of knick-

knacks, plants, books, pictures and furniture should be thinned out.

- Paint. The orange powder room that is bright and sunny in your eyes might appeal to more buyers if you give it a neutral coat of paint. Paint is an inexpensive way to neutralize any décor.

Remember, when selling your house, a neutral look is best. It may be boring, but a signed contract will be worth the extra effort.



The Choice Is Yours

Which agent is right for you?

Choosing a REALTOR® to help you sell your home may feel like an arduous task. With so many REALTORS® eager for your business, it can be difficult to know which one you can trust. One way to narrow down the field is to look for a REALTOR® with credentials that can help both you and the buyer feel at ease throughout the entire transaction.

An agent who is a Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) is a proven leader in residential real estate. CRS agents are in the top 4 percent of agents in the country. They offer years of experience, demonstrated success and advice to help you make smart decisions about selling your home.



CRS agents have both a high volume of sales and high number of transactions, as well as advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. As additional peace of mind, CRS agents must maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics.

The real estate market is tough, fast-paced and competitive, but with a CRS agent by your side, selling your home becomes an enjoyable experience.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

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If you are currently working with another real estate agent or broker, it is not a solicitation for business.