



## Get More Spend Less

- Holiday displays, including Christmas cards, should be removed and stored by the first week in January.
- Use degreaser and a razor blade to make basement windows crystal-clear.
- Remember to put away valuables while showing your home. Expensive jewelry belongs in a safe deposit box.
- Have long-stemmed artificial flowers to pack? Ask your local florist for a couple of boxes wholesalers use to deliver fresh flowers to florists.
- Even if your entire house doesn't need to be painted, putting a fresh coat of paint in a new color on the door and trim may keep a couple thousand dollars on your sale price.
- Don't wait until the last minute to call professional painters because their schedules may be filled. Hire them as soon as you make the decision to sell.

# Getting Top Dollar!

## The NW Home Lifestyles Team Newsletter Tip #1 Making Your Bathroom Shine



When a house is on the market, it becomes less the owner's home and more of a display item. Nowhere is this more important to remember than in the bathroom. Buyers don't want to see the seller's personal hygiene items, moldy remnants of steamy showers or a soap scum-covered collection of empty shampoo bottles. They want to be confident that this most private of rooms are well maintained and sanitized. The trick to making the area seem less, well ... private.

Preparing a bathroom for touring potential buyers is a four-step process: clean, repair, sanitize, and spruce.

Every surface that can hold something – vanity, toilet tank, shower window, floor – should be divested of as many objects as possible. The same thing applies to anything that can be opened – a medicine cabinet, drawers, and linen closets.

Cleaning begins with throwing out any expired medication, make-up that hasn't been used in the last year, nearly empty containers, and any other useless objects found while emptying cabinets and drawers.

The process continues with wiping each shelf, drawer, and cabinet door. When everything is out from under the sink, take the time to check the faucets and pipes for leaks.

If faucets leak, washers probably need to be changed. In some cases,

the faucets may be corroded and need replacing. If this is the case, opt for an inexpensive and very plain model. Fill the sink with water. If it drains from the sink slowly, pour in some drain clog remover and see if this helps. If not, call a plumber. When everything is clean and in working condition, neatly return items to the cabinet under the sink, using containers for small objects like bath toys, sponges or cleaners.

While the top of the toilet tank is bare, lift the top and check the water level and condition of the inner mechanisms. Flush the toilet. Does the water refill to the correct level? Does the water shut off when it reaches this level? If not, then the inside mechanism with the seat and stopper at the bottom of the tank will need to be replaced.

These repairs are quite easy and inexpensive to do yourself. Parts are available at your local hardware or home improvement store.

Folks will notice a filthy shower. So, spend some time here. Remove personal items – cleanser, shampoo, and conditioner, shaving cream, razor, body sponges – from the shower/tub area.

(Continued on reverse)

## The Buyer's Bathroom (Cont.)

Discard items that are unnecessary and store the rest under the sink. Test the faucets and showerhead. Do the faucets turn off all the way? If not, change the washers. Is the water spraying freely from the showerhead? No? Then remove it and check to see if it's clogged. If it still doesn't work properly after cleaning, replace it.

Carefully examine tiles and the tub. Does the tub have chips and discoloration? It may need to be resurfaced or replaced.

How do the tiles look? Any loose pieces or chips? Are there cracks in the grout? Scrub the bathtub, tiles, and grout until they are mold and mildew free. RegROUT gaps between

tiles and scrape and replace discolored caulking.

Once the shower and bathtub is overhauled, top off your repairs with a new, crisp shower curtain or liner in a neutral color.

Take a good look at the ceiling and walls. Do you see any mold, mildew, fingerprints or grime? If so, scrub it with bleach. Cracking or curling paint should be scraped and repainted in a neutral color.

A rule of thumb: Place only three items on the vanity area. Many real estate experts suggest these include potpourri, a new or clean, filled soap dispenser, and a plant. It's a good idea to keep the toilet tank top cleared as prospective buyers and inspectors may want to peek inside it.

After the big clean-up and repair job in the bathroom, it's important to maintain the fresh smell and

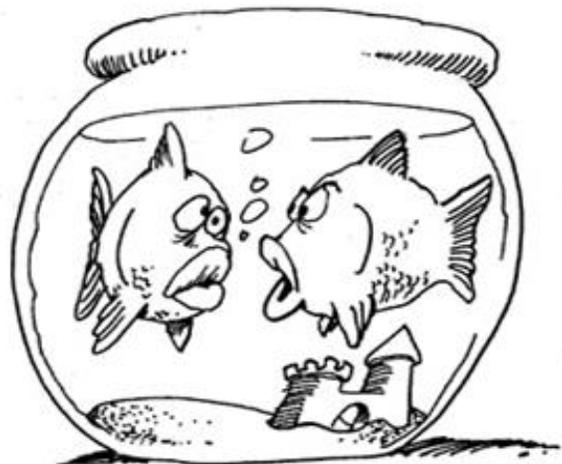
appearance each day the house is on the market. This space should be kept uncluttered, clean, and sanitized at all times. This clean and sanitary look and feel will reflect well on the rest of the house and offer favorable glimpses into the personalities of the present occupants.

Now you enter into the sprucing-up stage. After cleaning every nook and cranny in the bathroom, it's time to add the finishing touches. All dirty towels and wash cloths, bath mats and robes should be removed. A clean set of towels should be displayed before the house is shown to prospective buyers. Trash baskets should be emptied and floors wiped daily. All personal grooming items – tooth brushes, make-up, combs and brushes, hair dryers, perfume, etc. – should be tucked away, preferably in a container and stored in a drawer or cabinet.

## How To Avoid The Most Expensive Mistakes Smart People Make When They Sell A Home...

### Basing their asking price on needs or emotion rather than market value.

Many times, people make their pricing decisions based on how much they paid for or invested into their home. This can be an expensive mistake. Overpriced homes take longer to sell and eventually net the seller less money. Consult with a professional real estate agent. They can assist you in pricing your home correctly from the beginning.



"Do you ever feel stuck in this neighborhood?"

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