

Get More Spend Less

- Opt for neutral paint and carpets but add splashes of color with area rugs, napkins, flowers, pillows, curtains, drapes and towels.
- Make the fireplace a focal point – polish your fireplace tools and arrange logs in the fireplace. On cold days, light a welcoming fire.
- Selling a vacant house? Consider renting a few pieces of furniture to create a cozy atmosphere.
- Just before showing your house, turn on all the lights – including closet and oven lights, and those over the stove and kitchen counters. This makes the house look bigger and brighter.
- Place a small rug in front of doors leading outside so visitors can wipe their feet, particularly if it is raining or snowing.
- To give your house an inviting aroma, pour a small amount of vanilla extract on a cookie sheet and place in a warm, NOT HOT, oven.



Love those toy trains from your childhood? Totally attached to your collection of moose stuff? Dedicated to your college fraternity memorabilia? Take a deep breath and a long gaze – then box ‘em up and ship them out to a storage facility or at least to a hidden spot under your bed. For no matter how much sentiment these personal items hold for you, these little treasures are nothing but CLUTTER to prospective buyers.

Clearing clutter from your home accomplishes two things; it makes areas of the house easier to clean and it neutralizes the space so prospective buyers can picture their own treasured items there. So, if you begin cringing as you read the following suggestions, repeat this mantra after me: Space sells.

Many folks find it easier to begin with clearing out the garage, an area where unwanted items often land. Throw away worthless items you can do without and store important items in a warehouse or friend’s garage. As you collect “disposable” items from your house decluttering, organize them neatly in your garage in preparation for a garage sale.

Many home sales experts recommend removing half your furniture from the house. This is a good time to repeat, “Space sells.”

Accent tables, extra chairs, and cabinets that hold huge collections are good choices for removal. For

example, a dining room table with chairs should be kept in the room while a corner china cabinet or curio shelf would be removed. Bedrooms should contain just one double or queen-size bed or two twin beds. Extra beds should be stored. Take an inventory of those items you can do without for awhile. Make a note of where you plan to put each item when it’s removed. Store it, sell it or give it away.

Depersonalize space. Remove your teenage daughter’s poster of Orlando Bloom from her bedroom, your husband’s stuffed deer head from the study, and any partisan items like bumper stickers, books or magazines from the family room. All spaces should be neutral zones so potential buyers can picture their own belongings in each room. Remind your family members that they can have these items back as soon as the house sells!

Just as it’s good to remember that space sells, it’s also important to remember The Rule of Three. Step one of the rule: Take everything off the kitchen counter, bathroom vanity, table tops and mantles and wipe them clean.

Step two: Return only THREE items to each space. Yes, ONLY three. As for the leftover items – store them, sell them or give them away.

(Continued on reverse)

Casting Out Clutter (Cont.)

Keep in mind that nothing is sacred when a house is on the market. Anything that can be opened in any room – closets, drawers, cabinets, shower curtains, pantry doors – will be explored by potential buyers. Clean out and organize closets, drawers and the pantry. Keep the shower spotless and remove shampoo and conditioner bottles or any other personal care items.

In the bedroom, remove half the clothes from each closet, put shoes on a rack and hang purses and belts on pegs or organizers. Don't forget to recycle all those newspapers you have stashed in the hall closet. Leave no cabinet door unopened or unclean.

In her book, *Simple Steps You Can Take to Sell Your Home Faster And for More Money in Any Market*, Ilyce R.

Glink suggests creating a "clutter collector" in areas where papers and writing utensils seem to collect.

Glink's clutter collector is a large, flat storage box that's kept where mail and schoolwork seem to end up each day. Keep all receipts, old phone messages, pens and pencils, children's artwork, permission slips and other miscellaneous papers in the box. Just before a potential buyer is scheduled to arrive for a showing, store the clutter collector underneath a bed.

Whew! Now that you've decluttered your house, what do you do with the items that you no longer need but are still usable? You have several options. If you donate them to a charity, you may be able to receive an income tax deduction for the value amount. An added bonus: Often these organizations will pick up donations so you can spend your time elsewhere.

You can always sell unwanted items through consignment shops, classified ads, garage sales, tag sales or an auction. It might be nice to have a little extra cash to help pay moving expenses. But if you can't bear to part with these unnecessary treasures, self-storage may be the right answer for you. Rented storage units are particularly convenient places to keep furniture, seasonal sports gear, holiday decorations, and patio furniture.

If clearing clutter seems like an overwhelming task, just remember two things. First, reducing clutter makes each room easier to clean. There are fewer objects to move when dusting and vacuuming. And don't forget what's down the road: The move. The more you clean out or box up, the easier it will be to prepare to move after your house sells. Since you'll have more important things to do at that time, doesn't it make sense to get it done before your buyer looks at the house?

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

Trying to SELL their house when buyers come to see it.

One of the biggest mistakes enthusiastic home sellers make is to follow buyers around and try to SELL them on the property. This can be a negative for the buyers. The best thing is to stay out of the way, and let people look at their own pace; they'll get a better feel for the property and whether the house is for them.



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