

Getting Top Dollar!

The NW Home Lifestyles Team Newsletter
 Tip #8 Sensory Solutions

Get More Spend Less

- If basement stairs lack a handrail, then add one. It's safer and, in most states, required by law.
- Revitalize a tree or bush by trimming dead leaves and branches.
- Get rid of odors by cleaning drapes and carpets, scooping out the cat's litter box daily, and emptying ashtrays each day.
- Keep a log of all improvements made and appliances purchased so you can remember what to include in the real estate listing.
- Adding closet organizers, building shelves, and adding rooms are not cost effective and won't add to the sale price of the house.
- To save money, fix a leaking roof instead of replacing it.
- Professional window cleaners suggest donning rubber gloves then washing windows with a commercial window cleaner and newspaper. The newsprint creates extra sparkle.

VISION



HEARING



SMELL



TASTE



TOUCH



Sensory Solutions – Using Your Senses To Locate Problem Areas

When preparing your home for the real estate market, one needs a fresh and honest perspective about the total effect of the house – and not just your own. Prospective buyers notice everything because walking through your house is a totally new experience for them. They feel the air temperature, notice cleanliness and colors, hear noises and smell odors. As a seller, you need to create a similar experience for yourself in order to locate all problem areas that need to be corrected. So, you think your home is ready to show?

Give your house a sensory test by changing your perspective. Walk through and analyze your house twice – once during the day and once at night. You'll notice those dirty windows more during the day but may miss the debris clouding the overhead kitchen light that's more noticeable at night. Also, try crawling across a room on your hands and knees – you're more likely to come across those grimy baseboards or unsightly bare electrical outlets when you're closer to the ground. Lying on your back will provide a better look at ceiling fans, lighting, spots on the ceiling, cobwebs in corners or cracks at the top of walls. Fix what you find and then give the home one more test: Recruit a trusted friend to put it through the same scrutiny. Be sure that you and your friend each use your senses to analyze the house – sight, smell, hearing, and touch.

Sight is the most obvious sense to use when searching for problem

areas. Before analyzing each room, make sure light bulbs are the appropriate wattage and work properly. Then, look closely at the walls for scratches, marks, cobwebs, missing or broken light switch plates, and mold or mildew. Are wall clocks dusted and set properly? Check ceilings for brown spots, water stains, dirt, cob webs, and dusty fans.

Analyzing the floor may seem ridiculous since you walk on it all the time, but often defects are overlooked during the course of the day. Search for uneven floors, worn or soiled carpet, and water stains. Do area rugs need to be cleaned or replaced? Does the wood floor need refinishing? In the kitchen and bathrooms, test faucets for leaks and replace if necessary. Also check the walls, shower, tub and sink for mold. Scrub with a mixture of bleach and water to eliminate mold and mildew. Everything should look clean and sparkling.

Often odor is a more accurate indicator of a problem than sight. A carpet may look clean but after crawling across it you might detect odors from pets, smoke, and ground-in food. A peculiar smell is often caused by mold especially in bathrooms, though unnoticed water damage may cause this problem in other areas of the house, too. Like other odor sources, mold can usually be removed but will return if the cause is not addressed. Do you need better ventilation in the bathroom?

(Continued on reverse)

Sensory Solutions (Cont.)

Is there a leak in the bedroom ceiling or windows causing mold and mildew? Often banishing odors takes little more than identifying the cause – cigarette smoke and butts, old tennis shoes, pets, dead critters in the attic or basement, dirty litter boxes – then cleaning and freshening the area. Ban smoking in the house while it's on the market, send pets to live elsewhere, clean drapes and carpets, and empty ashes from the fireplace. Open windows and doors to allow fresh air to come in, and replace odors with lightly scented candles or potpourri.

Just as one gets used to looking at certain problems – such as the stain your son made on the carpet when he spilled his barbecue chicken last summer – it's natural to stop hearing minor sounds after awhile. Be certain, though, that the buyer will hear them. Most likely your trusted friend will point them out, too. Is there a chorus of squeaks throughout the house?

Perhaps it's time to have the air conditioner and heater checked for dirty filters or loose fan belts. Or is one of the squeaks coming from a loose door hinge? Squeaky doors and windows can be silenced with a good spray of WD-40 applied to their tracks. Does it sound like an intruder is trying to break a window? It could be the tree that scrapes the dining room window when the wind blows. A quick trim would alleviate the problem.

Bathrooms have their own set of noises – does the toilet keep running after it's been flushed? Does the tub faucet drip when not in use? These are often silenced inexpensively by replacing the float mechanism in the toilet tank and washers in the faucet. Often taking care of noises will also reduce the costs of electricity and water.

How does one experience the sense of touch – or feeling – in a house? Certainly, temperature plays a part. You don't want a buyer to shiver while walking through your house, nor do you want her sweating bullets, either.

If you prefer extreme temperatures in your home, look to your trusted friend for guidance in the temperature department. Buyers will also touch doorknobs and mini-blind levers, so make sure they all turn easily. The same goes for knobs and levers on any appliances and cabinets. Repair or replace those that require extra pressure to turn or open. And don't forget that fingers also find hidden dirt, so while the white glove test may seem a bit trite, this may be a good time to use it. Buyers don't want to feel dust and grime on their hands after using the banister, opening a cabinet or leaning across a window sill.

Now you know what you should experience during your sensory home tour. Take a few moments to prepare your mind for the experience: Go outside for a few minutes, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths – a home selling equivalent to cleansing your palate between dinner courses. Enter your home, close the door and tour your home the sensory way.

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

Trying to "hard sell" while showing.

Buying a house is always an emotional and difficult decision. As a result, you should try to allow prospective buyers to comfortably examine your property. Don't try haggling or forcefully selling. Instead, be friendly and hospitable. A good idea would be to point out any subtle amenities and be receptive to questions.



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