

Dusting Off the Cobwebs

Part III of a three-part series on you and your home

by Ann Jagger & Karen Jensen

Recap: Our previous segments gave you ideas on what to do to revitalize and refresh your home. If you completed changes in any or all of these areas, you should notice a transformation in your actual living space and the way you feel about your home.

This last segment deals primarily with setting up your house to sell. Even if selling is not on your mind right now, there is valuable information that can be used in a living space as well. Let's create that home scene that sells...

Staging

Creating a home scene that sells means transforming your home from a personalized living space into a staged selling space. This means changing your perspective about your home. It can no longer look like your special space. You must begin thinking about it simply as just a house that needs to be set up to attract the broadest number of buyers. This sounds simple. It's NOT. If you want to sell your house at the high end of your range and in the least amount of time, you will need to be open to the staging process.

Look at it this way:

You are looking for a used car. You see an ad for a mid-sized vehicle priced at \$15,000 (middle of the blue book range). You're excited and rush out to examine it. You approach the car and see that it has not been washed. As you get closer you notice there is trash inside and the carpets are dirty. There are personalized stickers in the windows and on the bumpers. The windows are filthy and knobs are missing on the radio. You open the door and you get a whiff of some sort of unpleasant odor.

You do one of three things. You politely tell the owner that the car doesn't quite fit your needs and quickly walk away. Or you may offer him half of the asking price because you will need to put in a lot of work to get it into shape before you can consider using the car. Or you tell the owner you are interested if he corrects all the items listed above. Chances are you will still offer him less than his asking price because now you wonder if there is something else that will need to be addressed that you didn't notice.

A buyer looking at your house will react the same way. Get someone impartial to come in and evaluate the condition of your home. Repair what needs to be repaired. De-clutter and clean the inside and outside of your house. Update, lighten and brighten. Getting all this done quickly in order to sell your house is stressful. Begin the process long before the For Sale sign goes up on your lawn.

Other areas that need to be addressed in creating a home scene that sells are traffic flow, focal point enhancement, furniture placement, pets, accessorizing and curb appeal. We'll touch on a few of these items now.

Furniture Arrangement

You will most likely have furniture issues to deal with when you prepare to sell. Your furniture may be too large and bulky for the space it occupies. Or the size is adequate; you simply have too much of it.

Here is the furniture DO NOT list:

DO NOT block doorways

DO NOT block windows

DO NOT overcrowd the room

DO NOT leave large beds in small rooms

DO NOT use a room in your house to store excess furniture

DO NOT store excess furniture on your porch, deck or in your yard

Selling a house and moving are the most stressful things you can do. If you are not comfortable with how to properly arrange your furniture, get help.

Accessorizing

When it comes to accessorizing the house for a selling environment, less is more. Remove all those precious collections and begin packing them for the move. No way, you say. Think about this. Do you want to risk having a buyer that is looking at your home accidentally break an item in your collection? If not, pack them away. Other items that need to be removed from display are religious, political and alma mater items. Your house must reflect a neutral ground (like Switzerland) or you risk limiting the number of interested buyers. Removing something from the wall or from a shelf doesn't remove it from your heart or your mind. How satisfying would it be to get top dollar for your house from a college rival?

Curb Appeal

There is usually a laundry list of things to do in this area. Here are some basics. Trim overgrown shrubs. If they are blocking views of the house and cannot be trimmed back, you should remove them and replace them with smaller shrubs. It is difficult to sell a house that cannot be seen. Add colorful seasonal flowers and be sure you take into consideration the type of light and soil that will be needed. Flowers that require shade will die quickly in full sunlight. Edge your beds and add new mulch or pine straw as needed. Each home is unique and may require more or less grooming. Get advice for your space.

We will now address your house's entryway. In a living environment, we recommend grass-type mats for the outdoor entrances. In a selling environment, decorative mats may be used.

Clear any debris from your front and back yards and be sure to keep the grass cut. If you have fencing or a deck, make sure it is in good order and paint or stain it if necessary. If you have young children, be sure to pick up the toys outside and place them in some sort of storage container.

Consider power-washing the outside of your house unless you have recently had it painted. This will help freshen the look and clean the outside of your windows. This is helpful especially when you have windows on the second or third floor.

If you are unsure about what to do, get a professional to help you. Get the return you deserve by doing the right things the first time.

Well that wraps up "Dusting Off the Cobwebs". We hope we have provided you with knowledge you can use now and later. Thank you for allowing us into your lives and best wishes for success in the future.

For more information, call Ann or Karen at 919-781-4887 or email us at info@homesinmotion.org