

PREPARING FOR AN OPEN HOUSE

First impressions count when selling your home – especially during an open house. Your REALTOR® will help you prepare for your open house by suggesting many ways you can present your home in its best light and increase its saleability.

An open house is just one aspect of an effective marketing plan your REALTOR® will develop to sell your home and one of the many services a REALTOR® provides.

Tips and advice on how to get your house ready for sale are also part of a REALTOR® expertise. He or she will advise you about things like de-cluttering and depersonalizing your home as well as minor improvements such as painting and rearranging furniture. Obviously you will want to ensure your home is squeaky clean for your open house, but there are also simple touches that can make your home even more appealing.

Fresh flowers are an easy way to give your home a cheery and well looked after feeling. Invest in enough flowers to place one large bouquet for impact either in the foyer or the living room and a few smaller ones throughout the house. The scent of fresh-brewed coffee, home-made bread or cookies, can also be very welcoming. See the list below for more open house preparation tips.

REALTOR® open house

Your REALTOR® may suggest you first hold an open house for REALTORS®. Other REALTORS® are already working with buyers who may be interested in your property and will inspect your home with their buyers in mind. An open house for REALTORS® is also more convenient for you, eliminating many of the single inspections that would otherwise be necessary.

Your REALTOR® will likely recommend you hold at least one or more open houses for the general public as well. This type of open house tends to attract many browsers. But if your home is clean, attractive, in good repair and well-priced, it may just turn a “browser” into a buyer. Also, many purchasers want to get the “feel” of several neighborhoods before they begin working with a REALTOR®. An open house will attract these buyers.

Chances are your open house for the public will be held on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon since that’s when most people are likely to have free time for cruising around the neighborhoods they are interested in.

Although you may be curious, it’s a good idea for you and your family to leave the home during an open house. Your presence could be distracting and potential buyers may rush their visit to avoid disturbing you. They may be hesitant to comment on your home while you are there, and generally feel more relaxed if the owner is not present.

Your REALTOR® may also suggest you temporarily remove any dog, cat or other family pets from the property since their presence could also be distracting.

Here are some tips from the Ontario Real Estate Association and your local REALTOR® for a successful open house:

- Remove or lock away valuables such as jewelry, cameras, compact discs, valuable coins and currency.
- Attend to any potential hazards — electrical wires crossing open areas, sharp table or counter top corners, slippery stairs and walkways, fragile items that can be easily damaged.
- In poor weather, provide a place for overshoes, boots, umbrellas and coats.

- Avoid cooking food with strong odors such as fish.
- A warm fire on a cold day can be a nice touch, but ask your REALTOR® first since he or she will have to tend to the fire in your absence.

Spruce it up!

Often the smallest defect can be a turn-off to some potential buyers. Use this handy check list to assess what needs cleaning, mending or changing before the big day:

Floor coverings

(Includes carpeting, tile, linoleum, hardwood, etc.)

- Dirty or stained?
- Worn or damaged?
- Is there hardwood under carpeting that can be restored?

Walls, ceilings, baseboards

- Any fingerprints or stains?
- Any holes, nails, tape residue?
- Are they all neutral or complimentary colors?

Doors

- Do they squeak?
- Are the handles secure and work properly?
- Any stains or other damage?

Windows

- Are they clean and crack free?
- Do they open easily?
- Are the coverings clean and also easy to open?

Lighting

- Is there sufficient light?
- Any broken switches; exposed wiring?

Pet areas

- Are these clean, organized and odor free?

Kitchen and bathrooms

- Are countertops organized?
- Are all sinks and faucets working properly?

Other rooms

- Have all areas been thoroughly vacuumed and dusted?
- Has all clutter, including excess furniture, been collected and removed?

- Are books, toys, clothes all neatly stored?
- Do mirrors look clean?
- Are window coverings open?

Outside the home

- Are all exterior surfaces, including decks, pools, walkways and driveways clean, clear of clutter and in good condition?
- Do fence and other gates open easily?
- Are the lawns mowed, walkways clear of snow, leaves removed, trees pruned, gardens weeded, hedges trimmed?

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