

Kitchens, Bedrooms and Baths

Getting Your Home Ready to Sell

The kitchen — a key to selling your home

Your kitchen is one of the most influential rooms in the sale of your home. When prospective buyers look at your kitchen, they will pay particular attention to its cleanliness, layout and storage capacity. Without making a major remodeling investment, there are some easy, inexpensive things you can do to make your kitchen more appealing.

It's got to be clean and clutter-free

A bright kitchen with gleaming countertops, appliances and floors will be attractive to buyers. So now's the perfect time to clean cupboards and drawers and put in new shelf paper. And while you're at it, pare down the contents, tossing or donating unused and worn items. Doing so will make your kitchen storage areas seem more spacious — as well as make your move easier.

- Look at your appliances with a critical eye. Be sure they are clean, odor-free and in good working condition. If the appliance color seems somewhat dated, consider repainting.
- Clear countertops of extras such as your toaster and coffee maker. Store small appliances out of sight for a less-cluttered look. Rid countertops of stains, and polish them until they sparkle.
- Also be sure your sink is well-scrubbed and all dishes are clean and put away at all times.
- Wood cabinet fronts may appear dingy. Wash thoroughly with an all-purpose cleaner to remove dirt and grease residue. Then, coat them with a wood polish.

Buyers look for adequate storage

When clearing countertops, don't just stash things inside cupboards and drawers. After all, prospective buyers will want to check out storage in those areas! Buyers will want to envision their belongings fitting into the kitchen.

Maximize storage possibilities by customizing your storage areas. Use these suggestions or come up with your own ideas.

- Use cutlery trays in drawers to hold utensils or to organize your "junk" drawers.
- Add wire baskets or pull-out racks to deeper cupboards to organize cans or pots and pans.
- Install lid holders on the inside of cabinet doors to neatly store plastic lids and lightweight items.
- Store spices in wire racks attached to the interior of cabinet doors or in drawers equipped with stair-step spice racks.

Buyers like bright kitchens

Light and bright kitchens make a favorable impression on prospective home buyers. If your kitchen has lots of windows and natural light — great! If not, lighten up!

Paint the walls a light color. Neutrals such as off-white, beige or light gray appeal to the majority of buyers. Cabinets need a light look, too. Painting with a bright semi-gloss enamel gives dark cabinets a fresh look. You'd be surprised how much brighter your cabinets will look just by washing them with an all-purpose cleaner to get rid of dirt build-up.

Open up windows. If you have only a small window, don't hide it behind dark window treatments. Make sure bushes or trees outside the window aren't blocking the sun from entering. Simple, airy curtains will also allow natural light to enter the room.

Brighten up your lighting by using the highest wattage light bulbs your fixtures can safely handle and adding under-cabinet lighting to shed light on work areas. Installing mirrors on the backsplash adds light and makes your kitchen appear larger. As a final bright touch, add fragrance and color with a blooming plant, a floral arrangement or a bowl of fresh fruit.

Little extras count big with buyers

When potential buyers are comparing your home to others, you want them to remember your home as something special. And sometimes it's the little extra special, inexpensive touches that buyers notice. To add pizzazz to your kitchen, you might:

- Make cabinets look newer with new knobs and pulls.
- Install new light-switch covers.
- Update light fixtures.
- Freshen a sink in good condition by installing a new faucet.

And more ...

Since the kitchen is one of the major selling features of your home, you need to look at this area from a buyer's perspective — and determine the potential payback of any more major remodeling projects. Rather than a major remodeling, consider these options:

- Reface cabinets to add life without the expense of installing new cabinets.
- Flooring fixes can include painting vinyl to refurbish or refinishing wood floors. If you must go new, installing vinyl may be the most economical option.
- If your countertops have seen better days, consider replacing with a neutral laminate. It will make a huge difference in your facelift efforts without expending a huge amount of money.
- Have appliances repainted rather than replacing them if they are in good working condition.
- Give your kitchen sink a new lease on life by having it re-enameled or opt for an inexpensive replacement.
- Remember to keep all kitchen fixes neutral and basic to appeal to the broadest range of potential buyers.

Quick Fixes

- Remove magnets, pictures and other works of art from the refrigerator.
- Fix a leaky faucet.
- Put out a bowl of fresh fruit on the table or countertop.
- Hang your best kitchen towels.
- Mop floor and baseboards.
- Before a showing, steep cinnamon sticks in hot water or bake bread for a homey aroma.
- Wash windows and launder window coverings.
- Put away all food, wash dishes in the dishwasher and wipe out the sink before a showing.
- Clean your stove and oven.
- Tighten loose hardware on cabinets and drawers.
- Clear away all clutter from countertops, shelves and tables.
- Eliminate lingering food odors by grinding a piece of lemon in your garbage disposal unit.

Service You Deserve. People You Trust.®

gmacrealestate.com