



Curb Appeal

Are you interested in putting your home on the market, but wonder what repairs and touch ups to do? And then there's bankrolling the work, not to mention sacrificing weekends to get it done.

Slow down. Get a grip. There are some no cost/low cost ways to get your home in showing shape and help you put your best foot, er... house, forward to prospective buyers.

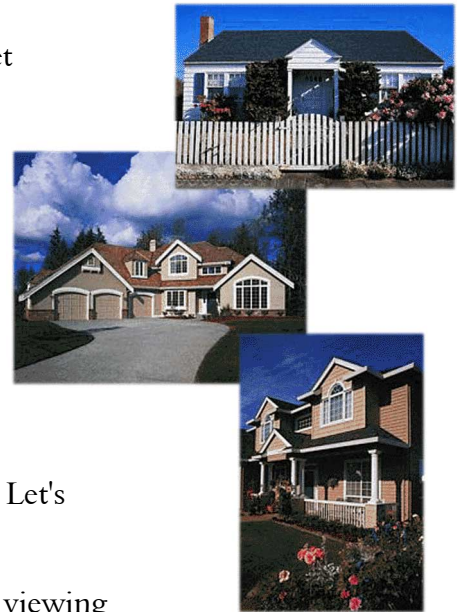
When real estate agents and buyers refer to curb appeal, it means the initial impact the home makes when the buyer first views it. Visualize a buyer driving up to your curb. What would he see? Landscaping in need of work? A fence in need of paint? If the outside of the house is in shambles, a buyer may not be motivated to get out of the car and come inside!

So what things are important to fix-up and replace before you sell? Let's cover them as the buyer sees them, from the outside, in.

Walk across the street from your home and pretend you're a buyer, viewing the home for the first time. From the parking area, glance around the front yard. Note hedges and trees that need to be trimmed. Are they cut back away from the front door, the windows, and the porch area? This is not only for aesthetics but for safety reasons as well (a big priority with buyers today.) A safe home is one that has a clear view of the parking area and walk ways, free of obstructions and overgrown foliage.

What about paint trim near the front door and on the eaves? Could it use a new coat? Make sure your front door is in good repair, too - including the screen door, if applicable. Buyers' impressions as they enter the home set the stage for the rest of the showing.

Let's go inside the house. The cardinal rule before putting your home on the market is making sure it's clean. In a competitive sales market, why would an eager buyer waste time viewing a house that needed elbow grease? And a less than spic and span house could also signal that other maintenance in the house hasn't been kept up - like plumbing that leaks and furnace systems in need of cleaning or repair. Don't forget that a house that doesn't show well will often take longer to sell, costing you money in the long run.



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