



## Highest Priority Checklist

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### **These Items Represent the Greatest Deterrent in Procuring An Acceptable Offer:**

ODOR is the number one deterrent in procuring the initial emotional connection necessary to engage your buyer's interest. The first, and lasting impression on your potential buyer is heavy scent. As they enter your home, pet odor, smoking, kitty litter, oily cooking, overbearing deodorizers trying to mask all the above, are potential deal breakers. Third party analysis, or anonymous feedback from buyers or realtors, is the only way you will know if that is what is killing your sale. Don't wait to find out.

CLUTTER is next on your to do list. Even the most experienced real estate investor is distracted as the eyes are drawn to personal effects instead of your property. Make certain counter tops are cleared, fridge magnets removed, bulletin boards taken down, toys stowed away, trophies off display, 'teenager' posters need to come down. Even family pictures and sentimental items have no place in the home staging process. Remember if you have your way, this is not your home anymore, let's make it look like their dream home!

WINDOWS AND SCREENS are vital to keep clean in the home staging process. If you study the most profitable builders, they are rigorous about the brightest cleanest windows possible. Corner to corner, inside and out, cleaning of all windows, screens, sills, and blinds, could represent your highest return on invested time. Lubricate all cranks, locks, and sliders as you clean. Caulk as necessary.

PAINT is cheap!!! Real estate investors know paint will go a long way in the home staging process. A neutral color is best. But please, no more grey! Remove all wall hangings and fill the holes, and cracks before painting. You can never go wrong with a fresh, crisp coat of paint. (If you can't make it look professional, get someone that can!)

CURB APPEAL is a broad term. It means the lawn is cut, and free of brown spots. Start watering the lawn now! Landscape is pruned, and the beds have fresh mulch or stone. There are no weeds growing through the sidewalk or steps. The sidewalk and porch should be swept, and free of mold and mildew, grease, or grime. The driveway should be clear, or the family car is the only thing in it. The doorway is clean with fresh paint, door handles shine, and there is no rust, cobwebs, or clutter in sight as you approach the entryway.

DARK, DAMP or DINGY areas. Empty them out completely, even if it is your entire garage. Open the windows, air it out, and only put back things that add value! Remove dust, cobwebs, ceiling stains, and stained, worn carpet.

CEILING FANS catch dust on their blades, high corners need a broom to sweep away cobwebs. All knick-knacks should be removed from high, built-in, plant shelves. These areas should not be neglected, dust and clean all shelving.

WOOD ROT is NOT a now or later thing. A support post, or fascia board which has water damage will be flagged on a termite report. Let alone what it does to the buyer's psyche. You will not do yourself any favors ignoring these important areas.

**Avoid red flags that may make mountains out of mole hills and take-away valuable returns on your investment. Tackle the problems now, not later when it will affect the bottom line!**



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## From The Curb

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Check...

Edge of grass meeting sidewalk, driveway, and street.

Lawn dark green color, weeds, grass cut to proper height. Start watering the lawn now!

Driveway stains, pits, holes, cracks, color, clean, clutter free.

Trash cans out of sight, toys away, tools stored, planters filled.

Front Porch is free of clutter, lighting is well maintained, floor covering is spotless.

Trees and bushes are trimmed, free of dead leaves, low hanging branches are gone, and foliage does not touch the home.

Beds are free from weeds. Lay some new mulch, or stones to make it look fresh.

Impatiens or other colorful ground cover make a huge splash of color to greet your buyers for a minimal investment.

Check the roof from the street. Are tiles broken, or shingles slipping, do your vents look secure?

Is there any wood rot as you walk up to the house.

Are the numbers on the mailbox straight and visible, how about the on the house? Remove your name if it is on the property.

Is the mailbox post clean, and well maintained, does it need paint, is it broken or rusty?

What does your welcome mat say about your home? Buy a new mat, make it noteworthy and offer it to the buyer as a gift.

Analyze the front door, locks, knobs, hinges, brass, kick plate and paint. I suggest new hardware and fresh paint.

How do the windows and screens look?

Check the eaves drip (the metal edge along the roof edge), and all overhangs for cobwebs, wasp nests, leaves.

Are the gutters functional, free of debris. Are they connected properly?

Experts agree: Remove rope swings, tire swings, old bird houses, worn signage, knick-knacks, toads, elves, ducks, lawn men statues, religious symbols, stickers, concrete stamps, wood carvings, personalized steppingstones etc.

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## Upon Entry

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Take a big whiff or better still have a stranger to the property tell you what they smell.

Would you say that the foyer is Bright, Dark, or in between. In staging brighter is always better

Walls should be cleared, patched, and painted.

Take everything you can off the table in the foyer, a single center piece is enough. For that matter, remove the table.

Turn on the lights, and have the blinds wide open, and clean the windows for optimal staging presence.

How is the flooring, carpet, tile, wood or vinyl. How about the baseboards, crown molding and ceiling?

What do you see when you stop and look toward the rest of the house?

Removing and storing a couple large pieces of furniture may be a smart move. Declutter as much as possible, leaving only nice pieces that are necessary. Dining room furniture is not necessary, for instance.

Is there a dog or a cat greeting strangers as they enter your home, would that be the case on model row?

How about children and children's toys. The buyer needs to feel their way through the property, imagining themselves living there, and trying out their own furniture for size. Get out of their way and let them make the proverbial emotional connection to the home.

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## Pool and Patio

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Your Florida home should highlight the patio and the great outdoors. Set a small, comfortable sitting area, but continuing the less is more philosophy of professional home staging. Remove large furniture, umbrellas, fountains and statues that are NOT part of the sale.

If there is a large window, or sliding doors which feature the outdoor areas, open the blinds, and clean the glass and tracks.

Check your welcome mat, ground cover, outdoor carpeting.

Remove or store pool toys, and cleaning supplies, chlorine bottles, and leaf catchers all out of sight.

Keep the pool sparkling and free of debris, on the surface and on the bottom.

Check your fence and hedges to ensure that they look their best. Remove dead pieces from foliage, and rotted fencing.

Check your ground cover, and flower beds, replace mulch, and plant fresh plants where necessary.



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## Kitchen Space

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Nothing can sell a home like a great kitchen and the most popular floor plans engage entertainment by overlooking or commingling with the living space. Cleanliness is a homebuyer's secret wish. Tilex, Windex and a full day of scrubbing is the detail work that will pay huge dividends.

Countertop clutter needs to be eliminated as step one in the home staging process. And keep it that way!  
Refrigerator magnets with last week's test scores are cute but play no part in the home presentation process.  
An extra kitchen appliance on the countertop might be convenient but should be stored away to sell your home.  
What is on top of your fridge, or your cabinets? Remove it and clean the surfaces.  
How are the hinges, handles, and drawer pulls. Make sure they shine. If they need updating, Do it!  
Chairs in a breakfast nook, or the island area great, but remember, less is more.  
A simple single centerpiece may be just the right touch to highlight your families primary eating area.  
Clean the stove inside and out, especially the viewing window, and light bulb, run a cleaning, and pay attention to knobs.  
Refrigerators should be wiped down inside and out. Replace the gasket if it leaks, it only costs \$100.  
Sinks should be empty, and dishes should be put away immediately after use.  
An organized pantry, and orderly cabinet space might not seem important to the process of home sale, but it speaks to a deeper culture of proper maintenance, and trustworthy attraction that a buyer must feel when making their decision.  
Dish towels, potholders, and utensils can make a kitchen homey and warm, but more times than not distract a buyer from the matters at hand. One towel if fine.  
Barstools reduced to the bare minimum, if it feels crowded in the least, pull a couple away and store them.  
A perfectly staged home would not even have a bar of soap, and definitely NOT a dish rack on the counter!  
Baking cookies or pie before an eventful showing or open house is the oldest trick in the book. If we had to decide, a professional would pick clean, tidy, clutter free, over baked goods any day of the week.  
If everything else is in order creating a homey scent is always a pleasant idea, however this could also be tricky.  
How many home sellers does it take to screw in a light bulb? High hats, light fixtures, ceiling fans and lamps should be functional, even appliance bulbs that do not work should be tended to during the home staging process.  
Make the most of the space you have with elbow grease and eliminating clutter. Even if you put it away every day, make the choice to achieve a fast and profitable sale, at the expense of your own convenience.

## Living Areas

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Family rooms, living rooms, and dens are personal... right up until you decide you want to sell. When staging your home for the highest possible price you need to transform your home to the buyer's needs.  
Brighter is better, blinds open, lights on, accent lamps and high hats dimmed to perfection.  
Floor covering free from spots, distractions, and clutter.  
Minimum wall décor, light bright and neutral, avoid personalized items and heirlooms or novelties.  
Make sure the paint is neutral (not grey) and make sure any scents are neutral and fresh, or un-noticeable.  
Furniture that is old and worn should be removed.  
Most rooms could use one or two less pieces of furniture, even removing a comfortable ottoman could make your room feel larger, and leave more to the imagine.  
Area rugs are nice, but we suggest removal to showcase wide open spaces, and the flooring underneath.  
End tables, coffee tables, and wall units should be emptied, dusted. However, in most cases 50% of the items should go into storage, until after the move. One or two neutral items go a long way to open possibilities and stimulate a buyer's interest.  
Ceiling fans, light fixtures, air vents, windows, sills, and baseboards should be cleaned, and functional.  
Wires to electronic devices need to be bundled and/or hidden as best as possible.  
Desks need to be free of clutter, and even daily items need to be in a drawer to properly stage a home.  
Desk chairs need to be pushed in whenever possible, as bar stools and other seating.  
If there is tile, clean the grout. If there is carpet, seriously consider replacing it.  
Ceiling stains are a deal killer in any room, water intrusion, or the fear of it is the #1 deal killer in real estate  
Moisture on walls, mold in the air vents, even dark dust on air intakes can be exploited as MOLD in the buyer's mind.



## Priorities and Budget Concerns

Things we need to do so far...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Feedback

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|---|------|
| Buyers that will give a seller honest feedback about their home.                    | 11 % |
| Buyers that will mention a strong odor in the presence of the property owner.       | 4 %  |
| Buyers that will not make an offer on a property that is too dark or too crowded.   | 64 % |
| Realtors or Builders that agree Staging will fetch higher price and/or faster sale. | 91 % |
| Realtors that are Certified Staging Professionals Nationally                        | 2 %  |

### High Priority Recommendations

1. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
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### Additional Recommendations

1. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
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### Ideal Recommendation

1. \_\_\_\_\_ est. cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_
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