

**A STEP BY STEP PLAN FOR
GETTING YOUR PROPERTY
READY FOR THE REAL ESTATE
MARKET**





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If you're planning to sell your property, you'll want the property to look its best. Good housekeeping, repairs and spaciousness bring top dollar and fast sales.

Over the next 4 weeks I will send you emails with videos and checklist that will contain step by step details to get your house in the best selling shape possible.

Just follow the weekly "to-do" list and what can seem like a large overwhelming project will be done before you know it.

The goals with staging and preparing are:

- ♦ To spend fifty cents to make you a dollar, not a dollar to make you fifty cents
- ♦ To make sure your house is a house that sells (not all houses listed for sale sell even in a sellers market)
- ♦ To net you as much money as possible from the sale of your home
- ♦ To give you stronger negotiating power during your transaction



The First Impression

You have probably heard how important first impressions can be. But did you know that studies show that within 15 seconds a buyer has developed an opinion of your property? This is why establishing the right first impression is critical to achieving a successful sale.

The Model Home Effect

The best way to make a buyer “feel at home” is to create an environment similar to that found in a model home. When walking into a model home you will notice several key points:

- The environment is neutral
- The colors and interior decorating accent the homes features
- The smell is new and clean
- The sound is either quiet or enhanced by subtle background music
- All details are looked after, from manicuring the lawn to a floral arrangement in the entry
- You are not asked to remove your shoes and walk around in socks



KEY STEPS — OVER THE NEXT 4 WEEKS THESE ARE THE ITEMS WE WILL FOCUS ON TO GET YOUR PROPERTY READY FOR THE MARKET!

1. Un-cluttering makes every room look larger and feel neater. If a house is cluttered, buyers have trouble imagining themselves in it. By removing or storing things you don't need, you create a roomy, comfortable feeling that will be inviting to prospective buyers. Remember, when in doubt, throw it out, sell it or give it away!
2. Repairing eliminates buyers' objections before they arise. If you think something is too much trouble to fix, chances are buyers will, too. Buyers tend to think repairs will cost more than they do.
3. Neutralizing helps buyers see their own things in your house and picture themselves living there. Neutral paint, décor and carpeting create a home for any lifestyle. Eliminating distracting colors and accessories lets buyers concentrate on positive impressions.
4. Cleaning makes your house easy for buyers to explore and gives the impression that it has been well cared for. Be sure every room smells as good as it looks, paying special attention to pet areas, nurseries and bathrooms. Some fresh paint and a professional cleaning service can make your house look like new!
5. Staging makes the exterior and every room of your house special. Since it is competing with other houses on the market, you need to make it stand out and be memorable. From the front door to the basement, from fresh flowers to fresh smells, this is the finishing touch!
6. Showtime! Is the final step before each time your property is shown. Identify jobs and assign them to make this step quick and easy. If you keep up daily, showings will be easier for you and your family. Plan a fun activity – away from the house – during showings.

WEEK ONE – UNCLUTTERING!

Un-cluttering makes every room look larger and feel neater. If a house is cluttered, buyers have trouble imagining themselves in it. By removing or storing things you don't need, you create a roomy, comfortable feeling that will be inviting to prospective buyers.

Remember, when in doubt, throw it out, sell it or give it away!

Many homeowners with crowded rooms rent storage garages and move half their furniture out, creating a sleeker, more spacious look.

Items not frequently used should be packed and stored.

This is our week one because once the “stuff” is cleared out it will be much easier to move on to all the other steps.

Exterior/Curb Appeal

- ◇ Yard—old swing sets, kids toys, old beat up grills or fire pits should be removed.
- ◇ Deck/Patio—how does the furniture look—is the umbrella torn—get rid of it or replace it, patio cushions faded, and ugly—throw them away.
- ◇ Any Yard art that is not in good condition or not serving a purpose should be removed.

Entry

- ◇ Remove coat racks, shoes, backpacks etc... from entry space—it should all fit in the coat closet
- ◇ Organize coat closet and store unneeded items

Kitchen

- ◇ Go thru your cabinets and drawers—remove and pack away extra dishes, cookware, glasses etc..
- ◇ Counter Tops—clear off as much as possible, any appliances that can go into storage and inside a cabinet should be removed from the counter top.
- ◇ Refrigerator—remove all exterior items stuck to the fridge

DON'T WORRY

The rooms will start to feel empty to you—usually this is because you are so use to seeing the “stuff” but to an outside person nothing is missing and the rooms look inviting and spacious.

WEEK ONE – UNCLUTTERING! CONTINUED

Living Spaces

- ◇ Coffee and End Tables—remove papers, knick-knacks and stuff
- ◇ Furniture—are there too many pieces for the room? Put them in storage and sell them. The rooms should feel open and several people should be able to walk around the room without having to squeeze thru.
- ◇ Plants—remove extra or unhealthy plants, clean or better yet, remove fake plants.
- ◇ Bookshelves/Office areas—straighten, pack, store
- ◇ If you have a lot of personal photos around pack them away—a few are ok

Bedrooms

- ◇ Closets—straighten, box and store un-needed items, place off season clothes in your suitcases
- ◇ Furniture—remove extra items on tops
- ◇ Children’s room’s—straighten, organize and store extra toys
- ◇ Make sure night stands, and dressers are free of personal items and clutter

BEDROOM TIP

Only bedroom furniture should be present in adult bedrooms. No workout or office equipment, no filing cabinets etc..

Bathrooms

- ◇ Counters—clean, remove un-needed items and pack away
- ◇ Vanities, Medicine Cabinets and Linen Closets—organize, pack items away and store

Laundry Area

- ◇ Are their old folding racks or never used laundry baskets? Get rid of them
- ◇ Box and store any un-needed items

Basement/Garage

- ◇ Tool Shop—straighten, box and store un-needed items

WEEK ONE — UNCLUTTERING! CONTINUED

- ◇ Hang as many objects as possible on the walls to minimize floor clutter
- ◇ Rec-Room straighten play areas or workout spaces, store toys, organize and unclutter bookshelves
- ◇ Garage—throw away old lumber or wood, donate unused tools and equipment
- ◇ Store RV's, boats and old cars elsewhere while the house is on the market

**Would you like help
uncluttering? We have several
great companies we can recommend
that do just that.**



WEEK TWO
REPAIR & NEUTRALIZE!

Repairing eliminates buyers' objections before they arise. If you think something is too much trouble to fix, chances are buyers will, too. Buyers tend to think repairs will cost more than they do.

Neutralizing helps buyers see their own things in your house and picture themselves living there. Neutral paint, décor and carpeting create a home for any lifestyle. Eliminating distracting colors and accessories lets buyers concentrate on positive impressions. You don't want a lot of personal or sentimental objects sitting around because you want buyers to begin to imagine living there.

This is our week two because some of the items may require professional assistance. If you get those calls made now you should be able to have the work scheduled and completed within the next few weeks.

Exterior/Curb Appeal

- ◇ Check foundation, steps, walkways, retaining walls and patios for cracks and deterioration and have any problem areas repaired
- ◇ Deck—replace any rotten boards, power wash and stain
- ◇ Front door—does your front door have a Welcome feeling or does it need a new coat of paint. Is the lock and handle secure and working properly? If not have them repaired. This is where the buyer will be entering your home and the site of their first impression.

DRIVEWAY

If your driveway is in average shape have it resealed. If it is in bad shape and needs replaced this is one item I do not recommend addressing because in most cases you will not see a resale return on this expensive repair.

WEEK TWO — REPAIR & NEUTRALIZE! CONTINUED

- ◇ Siding and Trim—does the siding need power washed? Is there any peeling paint on the exterior of your home or garage? If so you will want those areas scraped and painted prior to selling.
- ◇ Clean and align the gutters and make sure all the downspouts are working. If they are not have a professional drain company snake the gutter drains or consider running the drains above ground.
- ◇ Do you have a brick or stone chimney or siding? Make sure the mortar is in good condition—if you have holes or gaps have a mason tuck point where needed.
- ◇ How is the condition of the roof? If it looks bad to you it is really going to alarm a buyer so have a roofer out to evaluate and repair as needed
- ◇ Windows—replace any broken glass repair any damaged window seals, repair damaged screens and make sure windows open, close and lock properly.
- ◇ Fences—a freshly painted or stained fence gives a home a well kept look. Make sure all post, rails and gates are in good condition.
- ◇ Mailbox, House Numbers & Light Fixtures—are they old, dingy and rusty? Consider a fresh coat of spray paint or installing new ones
- ◇ Yard, Lawn, Garden—if you don't want to weed, edge, mulch, lay sod etc... yourself now is a good time to contact a landscaping company and get them on the schedule

Interior Walls & Ceilings

- ◇ Repair cracks, holes or damage.
- ◇ Do your ceilings have water stains or damage? Make sure all water leaks are repaired and have the ceilings repaired and painted ceiling white.
- ◇ Clean all walls & doors of smudges and scuff marks.
- ◇ Repaint dingy, soiled, or strongly colored walls with neutral shades of paint.
- ◇ Consider removing any wallpaper—wallpaper selections are very personal and almost all buyers prefer painted neutral walls over the thought of removing wallpaper.

LIGHT FIXTURES

Go through your rooms and check out your light fixtures. Do they look dated or damaged? Consider replacing them with new light fixtures. It can make a huge difference. Use bulbs that get bright quickly and have a soft color (GE Reveal bulbs work well).

WEEK TWO — REPAIR & NEUTRALIZE! CONTINUED

- ◇ Consider replacing all of your light switch and electrical outlet covers with new plastic ones—current ones are usually old and dingy and new ones are super cheap to buy at a home improvement store.

Flooring

- ◇ Consider replacing flooring that is dingy, damaged, stained or not neutral.
- ◇ If your tile grout is stained consider having it professional cleaned and sealed.
- ◇ Buyers prefer that the same carpet run throughout the property rather than different colors in different rooms. So if your hallway is one color and every bedroom is a themed color consider having a nice neutral carpet installed throughout the second floor.

Kitchen

- ◇ Faucets—repair any leaks or drips
- ◇ Appliances—check bulbs, replace parts—your appliances should all be in proper working order—don't forget the garbage disposal.
Don't know who to hire? We have a list of top notch contractors and handy people for any item on your to do list. We would be happy to provide you with recommendations.
- ◇ Counter Top caulking—is the caulking between your counter top and wall dirty or damaged—pull it out and re-caulk—will make a huge difference for not a lot of money
- ◇ How do the cabinets look? A bit dated? Consider installing new knobs, pulls and hinges, and perhaps painting them a nice bright clean white. Make sure the drawers open and close easily.
- ◇ How is the counter top? Scratched and chipped? A new one may go a long way to making your kitchen sparkle.

Living Spaces

- ◇ Drapes and Curtains should be clean and neutral and allow lots of natural light to shine into the room. If they are not consider replacing them or in most cases you can remove window coverings all together.

Bedrooms

- ◇ Bedspreads and Bedding should be neutral.
- ◇ Bed frames should have bed skirts, you should not be able to see the box springs or under bed—this is especially important for photographs of the bedroom that will be taken.

WEEK TWO — REPAIR & NEUTRALIZE! CONTINUED

- ◇ Blinds should be in good shape—open and closing properly. If they don't replace them.
- ◇ Do you have a ceiling fan that wobbles or makes a lot of noise? Have it rebalanced and serviced.

Bathrooms

- ◇ Toilets—they should not keep running or leak, do you need a new toilet seat?
- ◇ Plumbing—repair drippy faucets and shower heads. Repair plumbing leaks and If the drain is slow draining have it snaked
- ◇ Grout & Caulking—if it looks stained or moldy clean it or replace it. If you have sections of missing grout have the grout replaced. Caulk that is moldy usually will not clean so tear it out and install a fresh bead
- ◇ Is your porcelain tub stained and worn? For a few hundred dollars a porcelain refinisher can make it look brand new—worth every penny.
- ◇ How are the towel racks—if they are loose or rusted repair and replace them.
- ◇ If the vanity is in poor condition consider replacing it or at least put on a fresh coat of paint and new hardware.
- ◇ Do you have the old style “Hollywood” lights above the sink? Consider replacing that fixture with a new inexpensive more modern fixture.
- ◇ Does your shower have soap stained glass and dirty tracks that are impossible to get clean? If so consider replacing it with a new door or perhaps you can even replace it with an inexpensive shower curtain.

Attic/Basement/Garage

- ◇ Check for cracks, leaks and signs of dampness in the attic and basement and fix any problem areas
- ◇ Consider painting the basement floor oil-based grey
- ◇ Paint the stairway down to the basement and the steps up to the attic
- ◇ All mechanicals should be working properly if not have the repaired or replaced.
- ◇ Has it been more then a year since the HVAC was serviced? If so this would be a good time to have the system serviced.

IS IT WORTH THE EXPENSE?

Some of the items that may need repaired, replaced or neutralized could set you back a few thousand dollars. If you want to know if a certain repair is worth the money spent for your selling situation give us a call. We would be happy to provide a more personalized selling plan to make sure you are not spending a dollar to make fifty cents.

WEEK TWO — REPAIR & NEUTRALIZE! CONTINUED

- ◇ If you have any leaking pipes have them repaired
- ◇ How are the garage and basement windows? Make sure any broken glass gets replaced.
- ◇ If you are power washing the exterior or the deck consider having the garage floor done as well

**It is all in the details.
A buyer who sees a meticulously
clean & organized basement,
garage & attic will have much more
confidence in your property than if
it were in a state of disarray.**



WEEK THREE
CLEANING!

Cleaning makes your house easy for buyers to explore and gives the impression that it has been well cared for. Be sure every room smells as good as it looks, paying special attention to pet areas, nurseries and bathrooms. A one-time professional cleaning service can make your house look like new!

Even though this is week three cleaning will not be a one and done project. While your house is on the market it needs to be spotless at all times. Consider running the vacuum, wiping down counter tops and tables on a daily basis while you are showing your property.

If you have pets you will need to clean litter boxes daily, wipe up around food and water bowls, and pick up dog waste in the yard every day.

Exterior/Curb Appeal

- ◇ Wash the windows and storm doors—inside and outside
- ◇ Regularly sweep the front walk, steps, patio and deck, there should be no cobwebs or weeds
- ◇ Clean your patio furniture
- ◇ Make sure street in front of the house or the ally behind the house is free of garbage, litter and debris
- ◇ Weed all garden beds & put down fresh mulch
- ◇ Trim the bushes and trees
- ◇ If you have bare spots in the yard consider laying some sod
- ◇ If you didn't edge the garden beds last week add it to this weeks list

WEEK THREE — CLEANING! CONTINUED

Interior Walls

- ◇ Any walls and doors not getting a fresh coat of paint? Then clean all walls & doors of smudges and scuff marks.

Flooring

- ◇ If carpet is not being replaced have it professionally cleaned.
- ◇ Constantly run the vacuum while your house is for sale.

Entry

- ◇ A first impression spot. Make sure it is sparkling clean and has no unpleasant odor
- ◇ Make sure the inside and outside door mats are new and clean
- ◇ You may have to constantly sweep and wash this area due to foot traffic

Kitchen

- ◇ Cabinets and Drawers—wipe down inside and out—using a lemon scent or pine scent is best
- ◇ Counter tops should be wiped down constantly. There should be no crumbs—ever.
- ◇ Vents, exhaust hoods—clean and deodorize.
- ◇ Refrigerator—clean it out and wipe down all the shelves, install an open box of baking soda or jar of coffee beans to keep it smelling fresh
- ◇ Range/Oven—scrub them clean, replace stove top reflector plates
- ◇ Sink—polish and clean until it sparkles. Consider regularly running a lemon wedge in the garbage disposal to help with odors
- ◇ Floors - sweep, scrub clean and wax if appropriate
- ◇ Keep waste basket empty

ALLOWING SHOES

Should you ask buyers to take off their shoes? While this will help keep your house cleaner a buyer is never very comfortable walking around your house in stocking feet. Making a buyer remove their shoes is all about you and not about them—during a showing you want it to be all about them.

WEEK THREE — CLEANING! CONTINUED

Living Spaces

- ◇ Run the vacuum, if you have wood floors consider mopping them also
- ◇ Wipe down surfaces so there is no dust—don't forget light fixtures and art work
- ◇ Make sure furniture also gets vacuumed and is not covered in pet hair or crumbs
- ◇ Fireplaces should be swept clean and the screen should be in good condition—free of cobwebs

Bedrooms

- ◇ Clean bedding to keep is crisp and smelling good
- ◇ Run the vacuum, if you have wood floors consider mopping them also
- ◇ Wipe down surfaces so there is no dust—don't forget light fixtures & ceiling fans

Bathrooms

- ◇ Vanity—clean the inside of any cabinet space, scrub and polish outside
- ◇ Sinks/Tub/Shower—remove water stains, and mold—they should sparkle
- ◇ Mirrors and Hardware—polish to a sparkle
- ◇ Vacuum or sweep floors and wash or mop clean
- ◇ Keep waste basket empty
- ◇ Wipe down shower door or make sure shower curtain is clean

Basement/Garage

- ◇ Sweep floors
- ◇ Remove any cobwebs
- ◇ Let in some fresh air if possible
- ◇ Run a dehumidifier in the basement to help eliminate the smell of dampness

SMELLS

Smell has more impact than you might expect. Regular cleaning helps give a fresh odor to the house—lemon scented or pine products are best. Fresh flowers can also help. But do not use store fresheners like plug-ins—these are overwhelming, unpleasant and many buyers think you are trying to cover something up.

WEEK THREE — CLEANING! CONTINUED

- ◇ Clean up oil stains from your car

NEXT STEPS

The hard stuff is done! Week four is just the finishing touches. If you have not already met with a Realtor to sign listing paperwork, determine list price and set up a time line for photos and showings now would be the time. Of course we would love to assist you and we can easily be reached at 614-208-4562 or contactus@PanhuisHuberBelcher.com



WEEK FOUR
STAGING & SHOWTIME!

Staging makes the exterior and every room of your house special. Since it is competing with many other houses on the market, you need to make it stand out and be memorable. From the front door to the basement, from fresh flowers to fresh smells, this is the finishing touch! Showtime! Is the final step before each time your property is shown. Identify jobs and assign them to make this step quick and easy. If you keep up daily, showings will be easier for you and your family. Plan a fun activity – away from the house – during showings.

Exterior/Curb Appeal

- ◇ In Spring, Summer & Fall add a couple of pots of showy annuals near the front entrance
- ◇ Add potted or hanging flowers to decks, patio and porches
- ◇ If you don't already have patio furniture with a bright umbrella on the deck or patio borrow or buy some
- ◇ Put new door mats in front of all exterior doors
- ◇ Make sure all garden beds are staying weed free
- ◇ Plant annuals for color

Entry

- ◇ Put a new floor mat inside the door so buyers can wipe their feet
- ◇ Put out a vase of fresh flowers

People react more favorably to property shown in bright light

WEEK FOUR — STAGING - CONTINUED

Kitchen

- ◇ Add a new throw rug
- ◇ Place a bowl a large glass bowl of fresh lemons and limes on the counter of table
- ◇ Add a small vase of fresh flowers
- ◇ Make sure the counter tops are as uncluttered as possible—anything that can be put in a cabinet or pantry should not be out on the countertop.

Living Spaces

- ◇ Put logs in the fireplaces
- ◇ Put out new throw pillows
- ◇ Fresh flowers on the dining room table
- ◇ Hide TV remotes
- ◇ Keep only a few magazines and make sure they are tidy

Bedrooms

- ◇ Put a book on the nightstand
- ◇ Use an area rug on bare floors
- ◇ A bud vase with a fresh flower on the dresser is a nice touch
- ◇ Make sure personal stuff is removed from the dresser top and nightstands—put those items in drawers

**The smell of cleanliness
is important**

Bathrooms

- ◇ Buy new solid white towels and use them only for showings
- ◇ If you need a floor mat make sure it is new and stays clean or put it away for showings
- ◇ Add scented soap or a candle

WEEK FOUR — STAGING - CONTINUED

Laundry/Basement

- ◇ Arrange laundry supplies to look tidy
- ◇ Arrange games and books in rec room areas

**Smile...
you did it!
We can take it from here.**

SHOWTIME!

THE FINAL CHECK OF DETAILS

Inside

- ◇ Open all shades and drapes—let the sunshine in
- ◇ If weather appropriate open a few windows for fresh air
- ◇ Set the thermostat so buyers are comfortable when they walk thru the property
- ◇ Arrange fresh flowers throughout
- ◇ Turn on all the lights—basement as well
- ◇ Put out your new “showing towels” in the bathrooms
- ◇ Make sure kitchen counters are spotless—no crumbs
- ◇ Run the vacuum cleaner and sweep the floors
- ◇ Dust furniture, light fixtures, top of fridge, art work
- ◇ Empty wastebaskets
- ◇ Turn down answer machine
- ◇ Pick up clothes and put them away
- ◇ Clean liter box areas
- ◇ Play soft music and turn off television
- ◇ Final check of every room as you walk out the door

Outside

- ◇ Keep grass cut, lawn edged, weeds pulled
- ◇ Keep all walkways & driveway clear of snow and ice
- ◇ Pick up after pets
- ◇ Pick up lawn tools and toys
- ◇ Pick up any mail, fliers, papers by front door
- ◇ Turn on outside lights if it will be dark during showing time

CLEANING

The house must be kept clean for all showings. This is a great time to consider hiring professional cleaners on a weekly basis while you have your property on the market.