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## Quick Sale Check List

- Reduce clutter. Sort through all of your closets, drawers, and storage areas. Toss what you can, organize the rest. If you have too much furniture in your home, put some pieces in storage to make a better first impression.
- Clean. Not only should your home be spotless, it must smell clean. Apply elbow grease and strong cleansers to surfaces inside and outside your home. Clean the windowsills. Consider painting if cleaning doesn't do the job.
- Sparkling windows are a signal to buyers that you care about your home. Clean your interior and exterior windows. Repair cracked panes, torn screens, broken sashes, and ropes or cords. Whenever your home is being shown, open your curtains to let the light in – especially if the view is nice.
- Make minor repairs. Tighten loose knobs, fix leaky facets and discolored sinks, lubricate squeaky hinges, clean out clogged drains, replace filters, secure loose shingles, fix holes in screens, tighten loose banisters, repair doors, door knobs and remove stains.
- Clean all curtains and draperies; shampoo rugs and wax floors.
- Arrange furniture to make each room appear larger.
- Make sure all lighting fixtures work. Add new bulbs with the *highest* wattage allowed for each fixture to make your rooms seem brighter.
- Appeal to the senses. Create an aroma during the open house. Burn candles or potpourri, boil a pot of cinnamon sticks, or put a dab of vanilla on cold light bulbs before turning them on. *If you have pets or if someone in your home smokes, the odors can linger and lessen your home's appeal. You might not notice these smells if you live with them every day, but an unchanged cat box or an ashtray filled with cigarette butts can mean your home will get no further attention.*
- Gussy up the front entrance. A coat of paint on the door; brass accents such as house numbers, a doorknob, and a kick plate. Pruned bushes and blooming plants can help your home make a good first impression.
- Make sure your doorbell works.
- Paint. Light, neutral colors such as beige, white, off-white, or gray have a broader appeal and can make small rooms seem larger and airier. If you have dated wallpaper, remove the paper and paint the walls. Choose premium quality paint. Caulk and fill nail holes before painting.
- Repair a leaky roof and then paint over any watermarks on the ceiling. Don't paint to hide a problem, always fix and then paint.

- Repair a wet basement. The problem can be as easy to fix as installing covers over window wells. If the moisture problem calls for more extensive repairs and you are not able to make them, be prepared to explain the problem to a buyer. Don't try to cover up the signs of a wet basement.
- Exterminate. One bug, dead or alive, can make a bad impression on a buyer. Call in a professional to rid your home of insects, and allow time for the smell of the pesticide to disappear before showing your home.
- Organize the kitchen. Clear off the counters. Add drawer organizer to suggest efficient use of space. Store seldom-used small appliances and large baking pans.
- Update the bath. If cleaning and painting can't make a dingy bath dynamite, consider replacing the vanity and sink, installing a new floor covering, or resurfacing a stained bathtub. Even a new shower curtain or toilet seat can work wonders.
- If you have a deck, patio, porch or other outdoor entertainment area such as a pool or hot tub, make the most of them. Keep these areas, as well as your backyard, clean and clutter-free; put debris in covered trashcans.
- Install outdoor lighting that properly illuminates your entrances, walkways, and drive. Turn on all those outdoor lights when your home is being shown.
- Put potted flowering plants by the front door. Give shutters a flesh coat of paint. A window box full of flowers is an inexpensive way to add an accent of color to your home's exterior.
- Buy a new doormat.
- Pick up tools and toys from the yard. Put garbage cans in the garage and shut the door. Make sure the garage is swept, and try to remove any stains from the floor.
- Paint your mailbox and lamppost.
- Clean gutters and down spouts. Straighten and paint if necessary.
- Depending on the season, hose down the house, walkway, and drive at least once a week.
- Repair cracks and pull weeds from walkways and the drive.
- Carpeting has a major impact on the look of your home. If yours is badly worn, outdated or stained, consider replacing it. Carpeting is expensive, but many real estate agents recommend the investment because of the feeling of newness it creates. Concentrate on the high visibility areas – the living room and dining room – first.

- Hardwood floors add to the beauty and value of a home and deserve special attention. If you live in an older home, check for hardwood floors under the carpeting. You may be able to pull up the carpeting and refinish or simply clean and wax the floors to create a classic fresh look.
- Ask a friend to care for your pets or take them to the kennel when your home is being shown. Park your camper, boat or extra car at another location.
- Buy or cut fresh flowers for a dramatic arrangement in any room.
- Take a picture – it will last longer. If your home is surrounded by flowering or fruit-bearing trees, low-maintenance landscapes, and herbal or flower gardens, be sure to take pictures when everything is in full bloom. Photographs are proof of the breathtaking view of your lawn and garden and tell prospective buyers the full story of your home – no matter the season.
- Edge between your lawn, drive and walkways.
- Remove dead leaves, limbs, and other debris from lawn.
- Trim trees and hedges. Prune evergreens and shrubs.
- Put fresh mulch around trees, shrubs, or hedges.
- Put away lawn equipment and gardening tools.
- Make sure the exterior paint and siding are in good condition, and that the roof, gutters, and spouts are in good repair.
- Weed and cultivate flower and vegetable beds.
- Repair fences and gates, and give them a fresh coat of paint if necessary.
- Mow your lawn. For more lushness, be sure to water, mow and fertilize it regularly. Remove dandelions and other weeds that are visible. A good rule of thumb for mowing is never cut off more than one-third of the blade at one time. For example, if the recommended height is 2 inches, mow when your grass is 3 inches.
- If you are an absentee seller, make arrangements for lawn care and snow removal.