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MICHAEL COWLING

"Your Realtor For Life"



RE/MAX Michael Cowling & Associates Realty

Is Your Home **Fit To Sell?**

You play an important role in selling your home.

Preparing your home to be as presentable as possible is an important role you can play to ensure your home sells quickly and for the highest possible price. RE/MAX Michael Cowling And Associates Realty is pleased to provide you with this Fit To Sell package to help you best prepare your home for sale.

The Fit To Sell package includes a DVD with 10 videos featuring Carla Woolnough—a renowned designer and home staging expert—and this checklist book with helpful tips to prepare every room of your home to look its best. The following topics are covered in this DVD and checklist book:

1. [Air Quality / Odour / Pets / Holiday](#)
2. [Curb Appeal](#)
3. [Depersonalizing](#)
4. [Flooring](#)
5. [Furniture Placement and Lighting](#)
6. [Home Inspection](#)
7. [Main Selling Rooms](#)
8. [Paint](#)
9. [Pre-packaging / Cluttering / Editing](#)
10. [Updates and Repairs](#)

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1. Air Quality / Odour / Pets / Holidays

Air quality, odour, pets and holiday decorations can influence whether or not a buyer will make an offer on your home. Buyers want to envision themselves living in the house, and if the home is not presented in a manner that will allow them to do that easily, most buyers will move on.

Air Quality

- Check for mold, mildew or water damage and have it repaired.
- Depending on what year your house was built, have your house checked for asbestos and lead paint.
- Inspect your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace if needed.

Odour

- Avoiding cooking with strong seasonings and foods that have lingering smell.

Pets

- Remove your pets while the house is being shown.
- Remove any signs of the pets (e.g. food bowls, toys, litter box, leashes).
- If your pets must stay in the house, hide any sign of the pets during showings.
- Keep the litter box out of sight and clean it daily.

Holidays

- If your home is for sale during a holiday, decorate using items that are simple and non-denominational.
- Any holiday specific decorations need to be removed immediately after the celebrations.

2. Curb Appeal (Front, Back and Side Yard)

Your exterior says a lot about how your home is maintained both inside and out. When buyers see an attractive exterior they will be eager to stop and excited to view the interior as well.

- Make a list of major repairs that are needed such as roofing, siding and lighting. Make as many of these repairs as possible.
- Make a list of minor repairs needed such as painting or minor landscaping, and repair as many items as possible.
- Sweep or shovel walkways, driveways and patios/decks (salt in the winter).
- Maintain front, back and side yard. Ensure lawns are mowed, shrubs are pruned and flower beds are weeded.
- Place flowers or winter arrangements on your front porch and/or in front of the garage.
- Remove all festive lights and decorations.

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3. Depersonalizing

Depersonalizing is an important step when it comes to selling your home. Disconnecting yourself from your house will allow buyers to emotionally connect and envision themselves living there. You need to commit to removing your identity from the house and focus on turning your home into a “model home”.

- Put away all personal and family photos.
- Remove all memorabilia.
- Pre-pack books and music that do not appeal to a wide range of buyers.
- Pre-pack your collections.
- Remove and pre-pack any items that could be potentially offensive or disagreeable.
- Store away and organize children’s toys, games and books.

4. Flooring

Flooring is a very important part of preparing your home for sale. The flooring will reveal to buyers how well the home has been maintained. Up-to-date flooring is one of the top selling features buyers are looking for.

- If the carpets look worn out or dirty, have them professionally cleaned.
- If the carpets are old, damaged or significantly out of date, consider replacement flooring.
- Take into consideration the function of the rooms that may need new carpeting (e.g. bedroom vs. rec room). This will help determine what style you select.
- If you need to replace the carpet, select something that will work with the existing flooring in the house.
- If you have vinyl flooring, consider what condition it is in and if it needs to be replaced. Keep in mind that different looks can be created with vinyl, including ceramic, slate and stone without the added expense.
- If you have hardwood flooring, even if it is underneath carpet, consider what condition it is in. Refinish the flooring if possible.

5. Furniture Placement and Lighting

Proper furniture and lighting placement will display the room to its full potential. Keep in mind the traffic flow and how buyers will walk through each room. When furniture and lighting are properly placed, you will be able to show off the prime features and allow buyers to see the specific function of each room. Make sure to have all lights on for showings and taking photos of the home.

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- Consider how much furniture is in each room—too much furniture can make a room look small.
- Arrange furniture to ensure proper traffic flow from room to room.
- If furniture is oversized, remove some pieces to make the room look more spacious.
- If furniture is worn, old or outdated, consider buying new pieces or renting furniture for while your home is on the market.
- Ensure there is a lot of light in each room, including corners.
- Consider replacing light switches with dimmer switches.
- If permanent light fixtures are dated or in poor condition, replace them.

6. Home Inspection

Consider having your home inspected before it is listed. By having this done you will learn if there are any major repairs needed and can address them before the house goes on the market. This will also show buyers and their agents that you have been proactive. Once the inspection is completed you will be able to determine what the next steps are in preparing your home for sale.

Thing to think about:

Electrical

- Do your lights flicker, breakers, or fuses blow?
- Do you have a fuse box or electrical panel?
- Do you have aluminum wiring or knob and tub?

Plumbing

- What condition is your plumbing on?

Furnace / Hot Water Tank

- How old is your furnace?
- How often do you replace your furnace filters?
- Do you have a water softener?

Exterior

- Is your roof in good condition?
- What condition is your foundation in?
- What condition are your windows in?
- If you have a deck or patio; what condition are they in?

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7. Main Selling Rooms

The overall impression of your home is important, but most buyers will focus on the main selling rooms first. Make sure these rooms have an exceptional first impression.

Front Entrance

- Other rooms should look presentable when standing in the front entrance.
- Create a spacious feeling in the entrance.
- Put away all clutter, shoes, jackets and keys behind closet doors.

Kitchen

- The kitchen should look and feel clean and crisp when you walk in.
- Determine if your kitchen needs some updating.
- Paint cupboards or update hardware if necessary.

Living Room

- Ensure the room feels inviting to show buyers that they can comfortably entertain here.
- Be sure the room has a focal point.
- Position the furniture to highlight the focal point.

Dining Room

- Ensure the room shows its function.
- Ensure the furniture is positioned for dining and entertaining.

Main Floor Family Room / Great Room

- Ensure the room has a clear function.
- Ensure the furniture is positioned for proper traffic flow and comfort.

Master Bedroom

- Create a feeling of calm in the room.
- Position furniture to create space.
- Ensure bedding is well displayed.

Ensuite

- Clear clutter and personal grooming products from surfaces.
- Replace old linens.

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8. Paint

Buyers want to purchase a home that is move-in ready. If your house is painted in very bright or unusual colours, then potential buyers may be turned off or feel that they can negotiate on your asking price. Neutral colours are restful to the eye, and most buyers want to live in the home for awhile before deciding if they want to change the paint colour.

- Consider painting if it has been more than five years since the room was last painted.
- Determine whether your home has a warm tone or cool tone before selecting a paint colour.
- Paint in neutral tones that appeal to the widest range of buyers.
- Select colours that are restful on the eyes and create the right mood.
- Remove wallpaper.
- Freshen up doors and trim with a coat of paint.
- Repair any holes or cracks in the walls and ceilings.
- Paint the ceilings for a completely refreshed clean look.

9. Pre-packing / Clutter / Editing

Preparing your home for sale is not just about pre-packing, clutter and editing, but this is a big part of it. Your house needs to be neat, clean and orderly. Organizing and pre-packing items that are not regularly used will create a spacious feeling. Storage is one of the top items on a buyer's list.

- Create a spacious feeling in each room.
- Be sure your house sparkles from top to bottom.
- Avoid powerful smelling cleaning products.
- Pre-pack all items that you do not need while your house is for sale.
- Pre-pack off season clothing and items.
- Decide where you can store your boxes and extra items.
- Clear clutter out of the garage to show buyers their vehicle will fit.
- If your basement is used for storage, be sure it is organized and tidy.

10. Updates and Repairs

Take an objective look at your house to determine what updates and repairs are necessary. Based on your timeline and budget you will be able to determine what needs to be completed to improve the overall presentation of your home. Buyers today are looking to purchase a home that does not require work. They are also willing to pay more for a house that has been well looked after, so show them that your home is in turnkey condition.

- Create a list of repairs that are needed.
- Create a budget and timeline for these repairs.
- Think of updates that you have been putting off that need to be completed.
- Repair or replace even the smallest items.
- Consider the condition of your permanent light fixtures.
- Consider the condition of your doors, trim and baseboards.
- Repair any holes or cracks in the walls.
- Keep in mind that if significant updates are needed , kitchens and bathroom updates will provide the greatest return on investment.