



Presenting your home in the best light

It's a fact that a few small cosmetic improvements can have a big impact on the way buyers react to your home. First impressions really do count. According to research, potential buyers will form an opinion about your home in the first 15 seconds – so it's important to ensure that it's a favourable one. A little effort can make all the difference in terms of attracting buyers – particularly in a very competitive market, or if you need to sell quickly.

Of course, there's no substitute for regular maintenance. Trying to make up for years of neglect can be very expensive! By the same token, avoid anything too big and costly – otherwise you will almost certainly lose money. If your home needs a whole new roof, then your best bet is to adjust the asking price accordingly.

Little things can make a big difference in creating the right impression, for example:

- Your front garden is the first thing people will see – so make sure it's clean, tidy and clear of rubbish. The back garden too should also look neat and well cared-for.
- As for the outside of the house itself, a lick of fresh paint – particularly to the window frames and the front door – costs next to nothing but does more to create that all-important good impression than almost anything else.
- The inside basically needs to be clean, neat and tidy. Paintwork should be free of cracks or stains. Carpets, floor coverings, curtains and soft furnishings should be clean and in good condition, whilst windows should be cleaned inside and out.
- Pay special attention to kitchen and bathroom areas, to ensure that they are sparkling clean and fresh-smelling.

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- In the case of pets, take particular care to clean up their sleeping areas, and make sure you eliminate any strong smells.
- Just to be on the safe side, remove all small valuable items from view.

In addition, there are a number of simple sensory tools you can use to create a pleasant ambience.

Light

People react more positively to properties that are well lit. So, during the day, keep curtains wide open and windows clean. At night, switch on all the lights, replacing any blown bulbs.

Sound

Classical music playing softly in the background can help create a calm atmosphere. Otherwise, peace and quiet is generally best. Avoid loud or intrusive noises, like barking dogs, or the TV.

Smell

Smell can work either for you or against you. Strategically-placed vases of fresh flowers or pot pourri can help create a pleasant atmosphere, but don't overdo it. These days, people have pretty much cottoned on to gimmicks like fresh-brewed coffee and freshly-baked bread. The strong smell of air freshener is not pleasant, nor will it fool anyone. The smell that makes the best impression is the smell of cleanliness and freshness.

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