

10 Things That Make Buyers Bite

1. A Inviting Entryway – Impress buyers right off with a beautiful entrance. Putting a fresh coat of paint on the front door makes it look clean, fresh and well cared for. If you don't have a separate entrance hall, make one. This problem, more common in condos, is solved by cleverly placing furniture to create more of an entryway. A lot of buyers don't like to just go through the front door into the living room. A floor screen, console table or chest of drawers with artwork or mirror hanging above it creates a welcoming first impression.

2. Hardwood Floors – Most buyers today are looking for hardwood floors. Of all types of flooring, hardwood floors have the most longevity and never go out of style. A laminate wood floor is a good option for those who can't afford hardwood, but know that a laminate floor won't fool everyone – it has a hollow thud when you walk on it and it doesn't look quite the same.

3. Fab Fixtures – Fixtures are the jewelry of the house. Only the extremely detail-oriented among us will stop to inspect doorknobs, faucets and cabinet knobs, but we all prefer the look of a home with coordinating fixtures that reinforce the architecture style and quality of the property. Replacing knobs and drawer pulls is a quick, inexpensive way to make over a bathroom or kitchen. And remember that a stylish, new faucet in a kitchen or bath packs a lot of bang-for-the-buck.

4. Beautiful Baths – We all like marble counters, whirlpool tubs and steam showers, but if you don't have these luxury items, it may be more practical to address the unattractive aspects of your existing bath. Remove that dated sheet mirror and those globe lights that look like a theater dressing room and replace them with an elegantly framed mirror (look outside the bathroom section for more decorative styles) and add wall sconce on either side. This lighting scheme is more flattering to the face – making buyers feel pretty will pay off!

5. Counter Intelligence – You probably think that granite is the secret to an updated kitchen, but that's not necessarily what buyers are after. Most buyers want slab counter surfaces so they don't have grout lines that stain and require frequent cleaning. When it comes to slab countertops, granite is the top choice because it's hard, nonporous and easy to care for. Corian, as well as composite stone surfaces such as Silestone (and with the use of today's sophisticated sealants), concrete, limestone, soapstone and marble also work well. If you have existing granite, you might consider honing the stone. That gives the granite a matte finish, so it looks warmer and more inviting. Hard, shiny surfaces can look very cold.

6. Steel is the Deal – Why do buyers go crazy for stainless-steel appliances? Because a kitchen with stainless appliances looks like a commercial kitchen and that makes people think they're better cooks.

7. Closet Organizing Systems – Just as stainless appliances convince buyers that they're better cooks, closet organizing systems make buyers believe that they are better homemakers. Don't under estimate the importance of this easy addition. And while you don't have to use high-end organizer systems, make sure that the materials are up-to-date. Today's trends include melamine shelves with drawers and metal rods to maximize storage. This organization shouldn't stop in the closet – make sure your kitchen and bathroom cabinets are orderly too.

8. Light Up – If your home doesn't get a lot of natural light, consider installing recessed lighting, new sconces, or both, so that buyers perceive the rooms to be light and bright. Every room in your house needs three types of lighting - task, ambient and decorative – which allows you to control the ambience of the room. Today's recessed lighting fixtures are smaller and less intrusive. Six-inch apertures used to be the standard, but now four-inch openings with halogen lamps give a cleaner, more contemporary look.

9. Built-in Bonus – Many buyers view built-ins as free furniture. Well-crafted bookshelves, entertainment units and china cabinets give a home a perceived quality. But it can also deter some buyers because they would rather organize their own furniture. Sometimes it's best to use pieces that look built-in but aren't. That way you could give the buyer the option to purchase.

10. Grass is Greener – If the homebuyers in your area are primarily families with young children, they'll be drawn to homes with a flat, open lawn. A flat yard is a real plus so keep the grass green and neatly mowed.

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