

5 Tips To Sell Your Home In Winter

If you find yourself with a 'For Sale' sign on your lawn this winter take these simple steps to enhance the process for potential buyers and watch this translate into higher offers.

1) Shovel the snow (or deal with rain): Sounds simple, doesn't it? But hectic schedules coupled with less-than-ideal weather conditions, means that many home sellers forget the basics. When selling a home in winter clearing a path to the front door is not only critical (if people can't get in they won't go in!) but it's also vital for the curb appeal of your home. That means you need to be consistently shovelling snow off your walkways, not just once a day. It also means sprinkling a layer of sand or salt on pathways (to prevent ice forming) and remembering to open up all the pathways to your home—such as a removing snow banks that block a potential buyers access to your path, or removing snow from patios or decks.

Also consider designating space inside the front door where potential buyers can remove wet shoes and store wet umbrellas or big winter coats. Not only will this go a long way to keeping your own home neat and tidy, it will appeal to buyers who are acutely aware of storage needs and the benefit of transition spaces in a home.

2) Turn on the heat: Selling your home in the winter is not the time for penny pinching on heating bills. Instead, set the thermostat for a degree or two above normal and leave it.

There are practical reasons for doing this. A warm house is a welcome invite that prompts buyers to linger, and this works in your favour when it comes to selling. If your house is too cold, buyers will rush through your home and leave with a less-than-warm feeling.

Another reason for keeping your heat up is that some furnaces can be loud when they kick on. By keeping the heat up, you minimize the number of times your furnace will kick in while a potential buyer is in the home.

3) Set the mood: If you have a fireplace, consider lighting a small fire (just make sure it's safe). In the bathroom, hang plush robes and towels and make sure all personal care items are put away. Consider putting fresh flowers around your home—a nice touch when nothing is growing outside. Turn music on in key rooms (such as the living room or bedroom) just make sure it's not too loud. Also, highlight entertaining rooms. For instance, dress a dining room table for a meal, or leave out a few key items on your kitchen counter (such as a cutting board with a fresh loaf of bread and a knife, or a bottle of wine and two glasses).

While the rule of thumb is to de-personalize your home's decor, when selling near the holidays consider adding some appropriate decorations. A wreath on the door, some twinkling lights, and some winter-greenery in urns or vases goes a long way to creating a friendly, festive atmosphere.

The aim is to create a welcoming mood in the house that helps potential buyers visualize living and entertaining in the space.

4) Let there be light: Regardless of where you live in the country or the type of home you are selling you will need to concentrate on how to bring more light into each room. And not just any light but warm light. Warm light bathes a room in a glow that makes it inviting—and if a potential buyer gets that impression, you are one step closer to getting an offer.

So pull up the blinds, tie back the curtains, and turn on the lights. If you use energy efficient bulbs, consider changing them to incandescents for the duration of the home-showings. If you have a window with a less than pleasant view, consider using privacy film on rather than drawing the drapes. The peel-and-stick film is relatively cheap, easy to apply, and provides privacy but lets in light.

5) Highlight other seasons: If you've got photos of your home's attributes in other seasons, consider putting them on display. It's hard to highlight the pleasure of the backyard cabana and pool when they're covered in snow, but with pictures, potential buyers will get a better sense of what hidden gems your home offers.

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