

Top 10 Ways to Increase Your Home's Value

To attract the maximum number of buyers and increase your home's value, you want to offer a home that's move-in ready and won't require updating or maintenance. You also want to make sure your home delivers a knock-out first impression. To accomplish both, grab your tool belt and work your way down this list.

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1. Siding and exterior paint

The fastest way to make a great first impression with buyers is to paint the exterior of your home or replace the siding. A fresh exterior will look cleaner and more modern. Be sure to use colors that will appeal to the largest number of buyers (for example, orange is probably not a good choice).

2. Windows and doors

If your home is a little more "mature" than others on the market, consider replacing old windows and doors with stylish and efficient alternatives. This may attract buyers who might otherwise pass on your home without even seeing it.

3. Landscaping and lighting

Turn a tired looking front yard into an inviting space literally overnight by installing new landscaping. It's a wonder what sod, mulch, plants and trees can do.

In addition, turn your attention to the way your home looks after dark, when many buyers are still cruising the streets. Installing new lighting fixtures can both enhance the home's ambiance at night and modernize the exterior during the daylight hours.

4. Flooring

Your home's floors need to be clean, modern, and stylish. They should tie the home together and flow seamlessly from one room to the next. Be sure to steam-clean carpets,

wash or wax laminate, hardwood or linoleum floors, and clean the grout on tile floors. If you have a hole or permanent stain in the carpet, consider removing it and recarpeting that room – ask your local flooring vendor about large remnants (leftover materials from large jobs that may fit single rooms).

5. The kitchen

If your kitchen needs a facelift, consider updating the cabinets and countertops as well as the plumbing fixtures. However keep in mind that your home only has to be comparable to your neighbors' homes -- it doesn't necessarily have to surpass them. For instance, new granite counters may not impress value shoppers – and may actually turn them off if they believe the higher-priced materials will cause them to have to pay more for the home.



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6. Bathrooms

Let's face it, we all spend a lot of time in the bathroom. So it's no wonder buyers want the bathrooms in their new home to be user-friendly. It might not be necessary to invest in new toilets, tubs, and cabinetry – you can make old bathrooms sparkle by taking on smaller projects like cleaning or replacing tile grout, re-caulking, cleaning exhaust fans, and repainting. Pay special attention to details like chipped sinks and tubs, and dated light fixtures – these might be worth repairing or replacing.

7. Lighting

If swag lamps are still hanging in your living room, it may be time to update your home's lighting scheme. A well-lit home can accent the best features of each room and provide buyers with a classic case of the warm and fuzzies. For instance, under-cabinet lighting in the kitchen can show off the counters, while recessed lighting in the living room can highlight décor and design elements that might be missed otherwise.

8. Interior Painting

Look inside almost any model home and you will quickly find that white is out and color is in. Of course, that doesn't mean you should grab the nearest color wheel and paint brush and go to town.

Colors still need to match each other and blend in with the décor of the home. Consider creating accent walls to punch up the impact of your colors, and visit local design centers for more ideas.

9. Roof and foundation systems

To ensure that you receive top dollar for your home and avoid a deal-breaking inspection report, now may be the best time to get these areas of your home in order. Lenders often want to know that a roof will last at least another 3 to 5 years and that the foundation is keeping the entire home off the ground without any apparent failures.

10. Deep cleaning

The least expensive thing any seller can do before marketing their home is perform a deep cleaning of every surface in the home. A bucket, some soap and water, and a few rags can transform nearly any home into a show-ready model home. But don't skimp. You need to dig in and get dirty – and yes, that means you have to clean under the stove and refrigerator.

Feeling overwhelmed? Don't be. Pick one or two items on this list that fit your budget, and jump in. Work your way down the list, and you will know that you have made every attempt to put your home in the best position possible to impress a buyer.