



## DRESS YOUR HOUSE FOR SUCCESS (Martha Webb & Sarah Parsons Zackheim)

### STEP 1: UNCLUTTERING

#### EXTERIOR/CURB APPEAL

- Clear the street in front of your house of all litter so it looks impeccably clean.
- Pick up and organize tools and gardening equipment. Coil hoses neatly.
- Weed garden and shrub areas. Pick up all leaves and sticks.
- Mow the lawn so it looks healthy, cared for and well groomed. Re-sod any bare spots as needed.
- Trim plants and shrubs to look orderly and precise.
- Remove and replace any dead or dying shrubs.
- Clear driveway of all toys, bikes, extra automobiles, boats, etc.

#### ENTRYWAY

- Remove shoes, sports equipment, etc. from entrance.
- Clean closet by consolidating items and getting rid of what you don't need.
- Hang all jackets and coats on hangers – preferably all hangers to look the same.
- If you have a hall table, clear it off of all mail, papers, etc.

#### KITCHEN

##### COUNTERS

- Clear counter of all small appliances, gadgets, pots, pans and bowls.

##### CUPBOARDS, DRAWERS AND CABINETS

- Remove, consolidate, and clean/paint.
- Group items together (baking pants, serving pieces, etc.). Purchase organizers to make efficient use of tight space.
- Silverware – sort so all similar utensils are together.
- Cooking Utensil Drawers – This is not a junk drawer. Sort and store what you don't need. Use dividers and organizers.
- Junk Drawer – Everyone has one. Use drawer organizers or small food containers to create an organized look. Place all tape, pencils, and scissors together; screwdrivers and measuring tape together, etc.

##### REFRIGERATOR

- Remove and consolidate extra items.
- Take out the shelves and wash and shine with glass cleaner.
- Wipe off food containers and consolidate.
- Add a box of baking soda to remove odors and ensure a fresh, clean smell.

##### UNDER THE SINK

Remove, consolidate, clean or paint interior, clean and face all items.  
Use a door organizer to hold items and get them off the floor.  
Throw out dirty rags.  
Scrub the flooring. If stained, paint or add a linoleum remnant.  
Put cleaning products and containers into a pail or holder.

## PLANTS

Give away or discard any unhealthy plants.

## MEMO AREAS

Remove papers and notes, children's artwork, chipped or broken magnets, etc.  
Clean and organize!

## BATHROOMS

Clear all counters of personal care products so they are out of sight.  
Vanities, Medicine Cabinets and Linen Closets:  
Remove, consolidate clean or paint interior, clean and face all items.  
Put makeup into a basket or case.  
Group cleaning supplies in a bucket.  
Clean shelves, re-paint if necessary.

## BEDROOMS

Drawers, closets, built-ins: Remove, consolidate, clean or paint, clean and face articles and clothing.  
Remove extra furniture to create space.  
Sort through children's play areas. Box extra toys and recycle or sell old ones.

## LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, FAMILY ROOM

Remove all papers and magazines from the coffee and end tables.  
Rearrange furniture for openness. Remove and store, sell or give away excess items.  
Remove unhealthy and extra plants. Take down hanging plants – they block the light and get in the way of buyers seeing the room. Plants are more pleasing when you look down at them instead of up.  
Weed out excess books from bookcases.

## BASEMENT, GARAGE, ATTIC

Rule of Thumb "If it's in storage, you won't need it until you move. Box it up and move it off property or sell it if you no longer use it."

## GARAGE, TOOL AND STORAGE ROOMS

Sort, box and store tools, shop equipment and projects.  
Hang tools, sports equipment, and lawn and garden equipment on the wall with organizers.  
Store paint cans on shelves. Organize, organize, organize!

## LAUNDRY ROOM

Sort and straighten laundry area.  
Group and face soap, stain removers, fabric softeners, etc.  
Donate outgrown clothes and remove all worn out clothing.

## ATTIC

Box and store, sell, or give away everything in the attic.  
Neatly stack boxes, but be sure not to block a buyer's view of the storage space.

## BACKYARD, DECK, BALCONY

- Pick up all toys, gardening tools and equipment.
- Remove and store any building or repairing projects in progress.
- Remove excess railing decorations and pots from balconies.
- Remove all but a few furnishings from balconies to convey spaciousness.

## STEP 2: CLEANING

### WINDOWS

- Clean to a sparkle, inside and out.
- Hire a professional if you don't have time to do a thorough job.

### CURTAINS & DRAPES

- Dry-clean and launder.
- If curtains are old and faded, consider mini-blinds for a current and spacious look.

### FLOORING

- Wash and wax linoleum and wood floors. Polish to a shine.
- Clean and deodorize carpeting.

### WOODWORK AND DOORS

- Clean and polish.
- Touch up with paint or scratch cover.
- Repaint or refinish where needed.

## STEP 3: REPAIRING

### WINDOWS

- Replace any cracked or broken panes.
- Repair any wood rot.
- Re-caulk where needed.
- Make sure every window opens easily and that all shades, blinds, and shutters are in proper working condition.

### WALLS AND CEILING

- Patch all cracks and nail holes.

### FLOORING

- Replace missing or loose tiles.
- Glue any loose seams in linoleum. Replace if worn.
- Clean carpet or replace if necessary.
- Fill cracks and nail holes. Stain or paint to match.
- Tighten loose doorknobs and cabinet pulls.
- Lubricate squeaky hinges.

## STEP 4: NEUTRALIZING

Create a neutral environment that accommodates anyone's furnishings. A house with neutral paint colors, décor and carpeting will accommodate anyone's decorating style.

Distracting colors, accessories and odors prevent a buyer from visualizing their things in your house.

Remove any strong decorating elements.

Remove any political or religious statements.

Remove large groups of family photographs.

Clean and deodorize of all pet odors. "A buyer's nose knows."

"Buyer's don't want a home that is already occupied." Rid your home of any pests, (ants, roaches, rodents, etc.)

Have an exterminator do a thorough check before these unwanted pests show up at your Open House.

Buyers tend to think that what they see is what they get. Remember, eliminating personal tastes, strong colors, pictures, or other accessories that may distract or even be offensive makes it easier for buyers to imagine themselves living there.

Neutralizing your house increases the number of potential buyers for your house by appealing to as many different lifestyles as possible.

## STEP 5: DYNAMIZING

"Dynamize" – to create a memorable feeling that lasts beyond the tour and makes a buyer want to come back to your house. . . . to live!

Buyer's want to feel comfortable, to enjoy a place of beauty and harmony, a haven from the hustle and bustle of daily living, a space to be proud to show family and friends. To succeed at selling your house quickly and profitably, you need to evoke these feelings. Appeal to all the senses: vision, touch, smell, hearing and taste.

Remember, a buyer forms an attitude about your house within fifteen seconds. Curb appeal is the most important first impression.

### STAGE 1: IDENTIFY YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Take a tour of each room in your home to see what a buyer would see.

Take a photo of this "first impression".

Remember, the first fifteen seconds is when a buyer forms their opinion of your home.

### STAGE 2: EVALUATE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

View your photographs.

Look at each picture and ask yourself "What's wrong with this picture?"

Suggest ways to correct this impression.

### STAGE 3: STAGE FOR THE MESSAGE

Look at decorating magazines or home furnishing catalogs for ideas.

The rooms should send warm messages of family togetherness without any visible people.

Photographed homes look and feel like the perfect place to bake cookies, relax, and take life at a slower pace.

Stage each room to reflect the feeling of that room.

Accessorize to engage buyers in discovering the potential of your house.

Use props and arrange furniture to create a sense of spaciousness, warmth and comfort.