

1. Organize or donate

Get rid of any items that the homeowners aren't sure about. Otherwise, you'll have to find a place to store "clutter."

2. Clean reflective surfaces

When reflective areas are not clean, the light no longer bounces off. Instead, they attract the eye to the dust and grime. Clean windows inside and out plus any other surfaces that reflect light—glass tables, refrigerators, counter tops, and art.

3. Depersonalize the space

Pare down on things like family photos, the kids' artwork—even personal hygiene items on display in the bathroom or bedroom, such as hair products or medications.

4. Be aware of items which could cause offense

Some buyers don't want to see the seller's nude art, religious icons, or even religious holiday decor.

5. Complete minor repairs

Missing trim, damaged drywall, chipped paint—these are small repairs that can distract the buyer's eyes from the positives of your client's home.

6. Keep it neutral

There are some beautiful colors available with which to decorate, but neutral shades will appeal to the largest number of buyers.

7. Be aware of traffic flow

Furniture needs to welcome buyers into the space. Place it so buyers can easily navigate through the room and get to any doors or stairways.

8. Create strong focal points in each room

Place something on a wall opposite the entrance to draw buyers into the room. A simple one to create is a shelf or cabinet with a piece of striking artwork placed directly over it.

It's important to draw the buyer's eye to the main feature of the room, like a fireplace. If there isn't a focal point, use striking artwork placed directly over a cabinet or shelf.

9. Be aware of sight lines

Be careful that your furniture arrangement doesn't stop the eye or make the room appear smaller. For example, a folding screen or tall piece of furniture in the middle of the room will block the buyers from the rest of the room.

10. Use proper lighting

Good lighting can make a room. Turn on all lights in the house; this will highlight the lighting. Use "daylight" bulbs to throw the best light.

11. Be sure the room shows its intended use

If there is a room in the house being used as an office, suggest it be moved elsewhere so you can show the room as it should be used; perhaps as another bedroom.

12. Remember to enhance the critical areas

Be sure you attend to the critical areas—such as curb appeal, the kitchen, and bathrooms.