

# \$\$\$ MARKETING TIPS FOR HOME SELLERS \$\$\$

To give your home a competitive edge when it's time to sell, make sure it is in good physical condition. This not only makes your home more attractive and desirable, it could simplify the negotiation process when the time comes for the buyer's pre-purchase inspection.

According to home inspection experts, approximately half the resale homes on the market today have at least one significant defect. Routine maintenance, is the best way to prevent costly problems from developing in the first place, so if you've been putting off repairs, now is the time to make them.

As an added plus, you may receive a tax benefit for fixing up your home before you sell. According to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, money spent on repairs made during the 90-day period to contract may reduce your taxable capital gain.

The **HOUSEPROFESSOR** has inspected property since 1981. From this experience, we have identified a list of problems that typically appear on home inspection reports. Early correction of these problems can increase a home's appeal and its selling price. It also sets the stage for a favorable home inspection report for your buyer and thereby helps you expedite the sale.

## CHECK THE MAJOR SYSTEMS

After size, style and location, a home buyer's primary concern is the condition of the home's basic structure and major electrical & mechanical systems. Most buyers do not want to invest a great deal of money correcting problems in such areas. The checking of these major systems is best left to a professional and thus you may want to consider a pre-sale professional home inspection performed for you, the seller. This inspection can reveal problems and include recommendations for repairs, if needed, on the following major items:

- ✓ Roof structure and covering
- ✓ Foundation, basement, and/or crawlspace
- ✓ Plumbing system
- ✓ Electrical system
- ✓ Central heating & air conditioning

## PERFORM MAINTENANCE

A number of maintenance improvements are relatively easy and inexpensive to make, yet they can substantially improve a home's appearance, efficiency and comfort. A professional home inspector may make maintenance suggestions, such as:

- ✓ Trim trees and shrubs which touch or overhang the house
- ✓ Apply new caulking and weather stripping as needed around windows and doors
- ✓ Clean gutters of debris, repair or replace damaged gutters, downspouts and extensions to ensure proper drainage
- ✓ Replace bathroom caulk or grouting where necessary to prevent seepage and improve appearance
- ✓ Ventilate closed basements and crawlspaces, or run a dehumidifier to prevent excessive moisture build-up
- ✓ Re-grade soil around the foundation, as needed, to keep water away from the house
- ✓ Have the heating and air conditioning systems professionally serviced and replace dirty filters
- ✓ Have chimneys professionally cleaned and install chimney top screening & a metal cap umbrella

## PAY ATTENTION TO DETAILS

Cosmetics and fixing even minor items can go a long way toward improving that important first impression of your home. Here are some typical improvements/cosmetics which might be suggested by a home inspector:

- ✓ Repair leaking faucets and pipe joints
- ✓ Replace burnt out light bulbs
- ✓ Secure loose railings
- ✓ Tighten loose door knobs
- ✓ Patch cracks in walls & ceilings
- ✓ Repair peeling wallpaper
- ✓ Replace cracked or "clouded" panes of glass
- ✓ Repair and/or re-seal driveways
- ✓ Patch, reset or replace concrete to eliminate trip hazards
- ✓ Clean exterior and interior walls/siding/trim, repaint if necessary
- ✓ Keep lawn mowed, shrubs trimmed & drive/walk snow cleared
- ✓ Loose carpeting could be professionally stretched/replaced



Phone: **586-739-1909** - [www.houseprofessor.com](http://www.houseprofessor.com)

Licensed Builder #2101195118 - Certified Member of American Society of Home Inspectors

HERS Energy Rater - LEED AP - Mechanical Engineer - Physicist

## **TAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

A home inspector will also pay attention to items related to protecting the home and its occupants from danger.

- ✓ Install smoke detectors on each level and within 10 feet of all bedrooms.
- ✓ Install Ground Fault Interrupter (GFCI) outlets in “wet” areas; such as bathrooms, exterior, garage and kitchen counter tops.
- ✓ Amateur/hazardous electrical wiring should be repaired or replaced.
- ✓ Hazardous fireplace conditions like; heavy creosote buildup inside the chimney liner & firebox throat, damaged/missing chimney liner condition, missing firebox mortar or too short of a hearth, can be corrected by a quality chimney sweep company. In the case of wood burners and furnace/hot water tank exhaust flues, improper clearances from combustible materials should be corrected. Be sure that the exhaust flue pipes are secure, have no rust holes and have proper upward inclines.

There could be environmental health hazards present in your home that your buyer’s inspector might discover or test for:

- ✓ Radon (After cigarette smoke, it’s the largest lung cancer causing problem in America today!)
- ✓ Urea formaldehyde Insulation (However, this is becoming less of an issue since the de-gasing process time lapse is over)
- ✓ Asbestos (Many homes have varying amounts of asbestos in different locations of the house)
- ✓ Quality of your drinking water
- ✓ Lead in paint or in your drinking water

## **PREPARE FOR THE BUYER’S INSPECTION**

The buyer will generally accompany their inspector. This is the buyer’s and inspector’s opportunity to spend 2-3 hours scrutinizing all the nooks and crannies of your home! This can feel like a personal violation to you but remember your house will soon be their home and they do not want any major repair surprises. You will appreciate this scrutinizing opportunity when you and your inspector look at your new house purchase. The thing to remember is that after a successful buyer’s inspection you will not have to show your house again!

It’s a good idea to assemble in advance various house records that can be used to answer questions from buyers and the home inspector. Specifically, you should have on hand:

- ✓ Your “Seller’s Disclosure Statement”, filled out and available for viewing
- ✓ Appliance receipts, service records and warranties
- ✓ Information on the age of major components such as, furnace/boiler, air conditioner and roofing
- ✓ Major component warranties such as, carpeting, siding, roof shingles, furnace/boiler
- ✓ Heating, water and electric bills from the previous year

Creating the right setting is important so I recommend the following:

- ✓ Review the Check List under “Perform Maintenance” & “Pay Attention To Details” for last minute touch ups.
- ✓ Keep basement, attic and garage areas clear and uncluttered to give buyers and the home inspector access to the heating system, electrical equipment, sump pump and visible structure. Clear the access into the attic(s) and crawlspace.
- ✓ Turn on all interior lights. Open window shades and curtains. This will create a bright and inviting atmosphere.
- ✓ If you have animals, keep them contained to one area. This will help to create a tranquil setting.
- ✓ Just before the scheduled inspection time, I recommend you bake homemade cookies, simmer some potpourri or just bake some cinnamon in your oven. You want the best possible setting and capturing their sense of smell is included.
- ✓ When the buyer and inspector arrive, they will need a table to do writing, so have one available for them.
- ✓ Offer coffee or a soft drink, a coffee cake or similar is also appropriate.
- ✓ After answering any initial questions, excuse yourself to another part of the house, the back yard or leave the house altogether for 3 hours. The important thing is to not crowd the inspection process. This will put the buyer and inspector more at ease, but even more important, it will put you more at ease. Believe me, most sellers don’t need or want to hear the minor repairs and maintenance discussions that will go on. Your house is your castle and any perceived criticism can hurt! Only major concerns, that the buyer feels is important enough, will be properly brought to your attention. Okay, if you feel you should attend the inspection because...you will help point things out, you will answer important questions, you feel it will be a good learning experience, or the curiosity is just killing you, and then PLEASE keep an open mind. GOOD LUCK!

Your Helpful Home Inspection Company  
The **HOUSEPROFESSOR**

**Phone: 586-739-1909 - [www.houseprofessor.com](http://www.houseprofessor.com)**