

### **Five Ways to Speed Up Your Sale**

1. Price it right. Set a price at the lower end of your property's realistic price range.
2. Get your house market ready for at least two weeks before you begin showing it.
3. Be flexible about showings. It's often disruptive to have a house ready to show on the spur of the moment, but the more often someone can see your home, the sooner you'll find a buyer.
4. Be ready for the offers. Decide in advance what price and terms you'll find acceptable.
5. Don't refuse to drop the price. If your home has been on the market for more than 30 days without an offer, be prepared to lower your asking price.

### **Ten Ways to Make Your House More Salable**

1. Get rid of clutter. Throw out or file stacks of newspapers and magazines. Pack away most of your small decorative items. Store out-of-season clothing to make closets seem roomier. Clean out the garage.
2. Wash your windows and screens to let more light into the interior.
3. Keep everything extra clean. Wash fingerprints from light switch plates. Mop and wax floors. Clean the stove and refrigerator. A clean house makes a better first impression and convinces buyers that the home has been well cared for.
4. Get rid of smells. Clean carpeting and drapes to eliminate cooking odors, smoke, and pet smells. Open the windows.
5. Put higher wattage bulbs in light sockets to make rooms seem brighter, especially basements and other dark rooms. Replace and burnt-out bulbs.
6. Make minor repairs that can create a bad impression. Small problems such as sticky doors, torn screens, cracked caulking, or a dripping faucet may seem trivial, but they'll give buyers the impression that the house isn't well maintained.
7. Tidy your yard. Cut the grass, rake the leaves, trim the bushes, and edge the walks. Put a pot or two of bright flowers near the entryway.
8. Patch holes in your driveway and reapply sealant, if applicable.
9. Clean your gutters.
10. Polish your front door knob and door numbers.

## Remodeling That Pays

Upgrading your home is always appealing, but which enhancements really get you a good return for your money when it's time to sell? A 2002 survey by *Remodeling Magazine* and *REALTOR® Magazine* has the answer. To see the complete article, visit:

<http://www.realtor.org/rmomag.nsf/pages/costvaluedec02>

<u>Project</u>	<u>Amount You Recoup at Sale</u>	<u>Average Cost</u>
Bathroom remodeling	91 percent	\$ 22,639
Basement remodeling	79 percent	\$ 33,911
Master suite addition	77 percent	\$131,471
Bathroom addition	81 percent	\$ 37,639
Family room addition	79 percent	\$ 41,514
Roof replacement	67 percent	\$ 7,644
Siding replacement	79 percent	\$ 5,622
Window replacement	77 percent	\$ 15,502

### Twelve Tips for Hiring a Remodeling Contractor

1. Get at least three written estimates.
2. Get references and call to check on the work. If possible, go by and visit earlier jobs.
3. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau for complaints.
4. Be sure that the contract state exactly what is to be done and how change orders will be handled.
5. Make as small a down payment as possible so you won't lose a lot if the contractor fails to complete the job.
6. Be sure that the contractor has the necessary permits, licenses, and insurance.
7. Be sure that the contract state when the work will be completed and what recourse you have if it isn't. Also, remember that in many instances you can cancel a contract within three business days of signing it.
8. Ask if the contractor's workers will do the entire job or whether subcontractors will do parts.
9. Get the contractor to indemnify you if work does not meet any local building codes or regulations.
10. Be sure that the contract specifies the contractor will clean up after the job and be responsible for any damage.
11. Guarantee that materials used meet your specifications.
12. Don't make the final payment until you're satisfied with the work.