



## Speed Up the Sale of Your Home in a Down Market

Trying to sell a house in a down market can be difficult, but there are several things you can do to improve its marketability. By expending a bit of effort before it goes on the market, you can ensure that your home presents well, stands out from the crowd and doesn't turn off potential buyers so that you can sell quickly...and at the best price.

### **Tone Down Personality**

Your bookshelves may be filled with Pulitzer-Prize winners and your collection of Americana figurines may reflect your personal interests, but to home buyers it looks busy and cluttered, and may distract them from truly seeing your home's unique architectural features and spacious rooms. Also consider whether family pictures help or hinder a sale; future home owners may not be able to look past your kids' smiling faces plastered all over the walls and see themselves building their own future in your home. Since you hope to move soon anyway, go ahead and box them up and put them in storage in advance of the open house or showing. While that red accent wall opposite the lime green fireplace perfectly ties in with your ultra modern furniture, a potential buyer at your open house may be turned off immediately and decide that the entire house doesn't reflect their style. Consider painting walls a neutral color such as beige or taupe.

### **Don't Burden the Buyer with Repairs**

If there are problem areas in your home, get them fixed before the showing. When prospective buyers tour the house and see leak stains on the ceiling or peeling paint, they will also see future work and assume that bigger maintenance and repair issues are lurking behind those small problems. This is particularly true in kitchens and bathrooms, which are often the two rooms that make or break a sale. The expenses you incur on the front end sprucing up your home will be cheaper than the profits you could lose by having to lower the price to meet buyer demand.

### **Maximize Exposure**

Lastly, take advantage of new technology to find unique ways to market your house. Use YouTube.com, a video sharing Web site, to introduce yourself and your house for free. Take home shoppers on a virtual tour and tell them about its uniqueness and strengths from a first-person point of view. Use Internet social networking sites such as FaceBook or MySpace to create a Web link with a profile of your home. Include pictures and a description of your home's features. E-mail the link to your friends and ask them to forward it on to their network of contacts. Be sure that you are using traditional marketing techniques to your best advantage. When photographing your home for promotional purposes, invest in a wide-angle lens for your camera so that rooms appear bigger and in proportion when they are displayed on Internet home listing sites or in marketing flyers. If you decide to create a virtual tour, look for professionals who will be able to film and upload your video using the best techniques and technology.

