

### Successful showings help sell homes

By LORI DeVORE, Real estate update

Apr 19 2008

In the current buyer's market, a home's presentation while being shown is more important than ever.

A positive home showing can make the difference between a successful sale and a lost opportunity, so it's in every home seller's best interest to understand what's involved.

Preparing a home for a showing always starts with the three C's: Clean up, clear out and cosmetic improvements.

Whether you do the work yourself or hire someone to do it for you, make sure that your home is spotless for showings. Your stove, oven, refrigerator, microwave oven and other appliances must be very clean — inside and out. You should also scour walls, floors, bathtubs, showers and sinks until they sparkle. Buyers will notice strong smells as soon as they walk through your front door, so do your best to eliminate smoke, mildew and pet odors.

Eliminating clutter and excess furniture makes rooms appear larger, so it's a good idea to store, sell or give away surplus/bulky furniture. Closet space sells houses, so it's important to clean and organize closets, bookcases and drawers. It's also worth your time to make some cosmetic changes, such as giving your walls a fresh coat of paint. Neutral colors are your best choice because buyers can more easily imagine their own furnishings working within the room.

Curb appeal draws buyers into your house, but appealing interiors usually make the sale. When agents help their clients prepare for showings, they often advise them about "staging" their home. Staging finishes the process you started with the three C's and involves setting a mood within your home so that it's more inviting to buyers.

For example, fireplaces are extremely appealing and should be lit when buyers visit the home, especially in the winter months. They give off warmth and spotlight the room they're located in. Bright, well-lit houses appear more spacious and cheerful, so turn on lamps, even in the daytime. Use flowers to add color — vases of fresh flowers spotted throughout the home make a wonderful impression on prospective buyers.

In the bathroom, it's important to have a new shower curtain, fresh towels and soap — and it should be absolutely spotless. The same is true for the kitchen, so appliances and surfaces should be well maintained. It's wise to clear your refrigerator of all photos and other personal items; these items can be distracting and make the room appear messy.

When your home is on the market, there is the potential for it to be shown at any given time, so you need to keep on top of the cleaning and organization. Prospective buyers sometimes drive by to see how your house looks before scheduling a showing, so it's always important to have it in tip-top condition. Ultimately, a small amount of work upfront can add up to a lot of value for you in the long run.

Lori DeVore is a residential agent with John L. Scott Real Estate. To learn more visit [www.loridevore.com](http://www.loridevore.com).