

Are you waiting for offers on your home? Whether you have listed your home with a realtor or are selling privately on your own, one of the most stressful outcomes is to have plenty of browsers but no buyers.

First, if you have qualified browsers who are genuinely looking for a home, that's a good sign that the home is drawing interest. Perhaps you have a good location, the appropriate number of bedrooms or bathrooms for many buyers, offer an attractive home layout or large lot, or have selected a good price point: whatever the reason, buyers are interested enough to take to a look.

But if the offers aren't coming in, here are some ideas to positively present your home for purchase.

Mess equals Stress

Not everyone has time to vacuum every day or continually put away the laundry and dishes, but when selling your house and having people come to see it, clean is essential. When people see a mess, they won't see the good features of the home. So bring out the cleaning products, sponges and vacuum to help keep it sparkly and fresh - and if you don't have the time, hire help.

Remove your personal touches from the home

When people shop for a new home they look for something that they feel can be *their* home. Too much of your character in the home can make it difficult for a buyer to see the home as their own.

Even if you have earned a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records for your amazing butterfly - or any other collection - pack up your treasures and put them in storage. Leave the canvas of your home blank for the imagination of your potential buyer.

Conquer Clutter

Clutter makes rooms and homes seem smaller. That plate collection on the wall, the racks of books, the tiers of plants, the art collection, and too much furniture can all make rooms seem

smaller and the house seem tiny. Minimize clutter on and next to your walls. Blank walls and less furniture make rooms seem bigger.

Odour Control

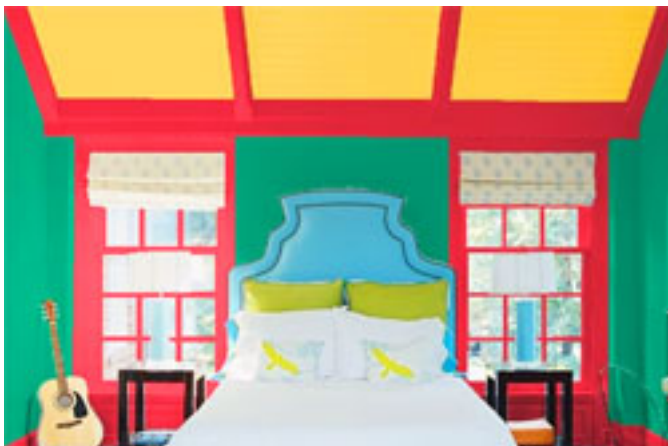
Strong smells can be overwhelming to a lot of people. Incense, air fresheners and other perfume scents can cause sneezing or headaches. Opening doors and windows to air out the house and reduce smells a day before showing it can be extremely beneficial.

If you have pets, clean out litter boxes and put them outside when showing your house. Consider sending pets on a short visit to a relative or kennel. Empty all ash trays and put them out of sight. If your house has a predominant smell, such as cigarette smoke, curry, strong spices, or pets, you can try to counteract it by baking cookies or a pie. If you're busy, pick up a roll of refrigerator cookies, slice and pop them in the oven before the showing - then set the cookies out as a treat for your potential buyers. Fresh cookies and pie are an appealing, homey scent and will often mask other odours.

Repair Damage

Make sure your home is in good repair, so that the buyer feels that the home is tip top shape. Make sure there are no holes in walls, no carpet stains, no missing or broken tiles, leaky faucets, broken windows or doors, damaged paint or wallpaper, or mildew around baths, showers and sinks. Take a walk around your house with a objective eye - or ask a good friend or objective relative to give you their honest assessment of your home's condition.

Neutralize colours



Imagine visiting a home where one of the bedrooms looked like the image at left. Could you imagine yourself living in that room? After you leave, will you remember all the good features of the home - or will you just remember the day-glo coloured room?

Strong colours - especially clashing colours - can overpower your home and create the wrong kind of lasting impression. When selling, try to neutralize the colors in your home.

You are creating a blank canvas for someone else's creativity, so keep your colours soft, neutral and unobtrusive.

Curb appeal

Walk along the street or drive by your home and take an objective look at your property. Does the home exterior look dirty? Is the lawn dead? Are the flowers drooping? Are there toys, cars, or other junk cluttering the yard? Does the house look healthy and strong and in good repair?

Like the inside, the outside of a home needs to be clean, in good repair, and have a pleasing, neutral appearance. You can brighten a lacklustre or single-colour exterior with landscaping and colourful flowers. Flower boxes or baskets are a quick and low-maintenance way to add welcoming warmth. Yellow flowers in particular evoke a feeling of happiness.

Other Optical Illusions and Touches

Browse the Internet, magazines, books or television shows for interior decorating ideas. Note the accessories which are used the most often: these are the touches which appeal to the widest range of people and add luxury at low cost.

Popular decorating accessories include:

- Throw rugs
- Couch pillows
- Arranged flowers
- Window curtains in soft fabric
- Fruit bowls
- Breakfast tables with nice clean table cloths
- Simple but elegant fireplace decorations
- Mirrors - which give the optical illusion of more space in a room

Many of these touches are available at a reasonable price and, when carefully chosen, can help make your space seem finished and luxurious. Work to keep neutral colors and to compliment your already existing furniture and room colours. Pick your accents carefully and remember that less is more.