



Seller's Pre-Market & Staging Checklist

The pre-market phase of the home selling process will present the most work for sellers, but if done carefully with attention to detail, your hard work will really pay off.

To ease your anxiety, let's simplify the process with a careful checklist on what you need to do to successfully sell your home.

First, Start with a Strategy

Everyone's situation is unique, and if you want to cause as little disruption to your life as possible during your sale, it's best to create a solid (but flexible) plan.

First, decide whether you're ready to embark on the journey of selling your home and why. What are your needs? Timing means more than just getting the best market value for your home. Are you emotionally and financially prepared to sell your home?

Once you're sure you're ready, proceed to the following steps.

Take Note of What Repairs Your Home Needs

This period starts when you first purchased your home.

Maintain Your Home

Keeping up with routine care and maintenance as you live in your home will help to avoid having to take time to repair and replace items. If you managed to keep up with repairs, it's easier to get on with preparing your home for sale.



Assess Your Home Objectively

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Do I need to paint?
- Are there small repairs I can make that make a big difference?
- What clutter can I get rid of?
- Do I need a storage facility to remove objects or furniture we don't need?
- Will some changes make a significant difference in asking price?
- What are small things I can do to improve curb appeal?
- Do I need to hire a professional home stager?
- Can I bring in a friend to walk through my home and give me an objective opinion?
- Are there any projects I started that need to be finished?
- Is a landscaper needed to address yards and gardens?

If there are problematic areas in your home, it's a good idea to fix them. Some buyers may assume that ignoring such issues are indicative of other instances of neglect. If you're not sure, it's best to hire a professional to assess repairs.

Consider an Inspection

You may consider having an inspection to take care of any issues that may be detected.

Here are some good reasons getting an inspection may be a good idea.

- You'll have a better idea of the condition of your home
- Take away some of your stress of unknown problems or surprises
- Allow you to make the most important repairs
- Lets you price your home reasonably
- Improves the buyer's confidence in your home and pricing

After making sure the home is sound, in good condition and in working order, it is time to determine the asking price and what needs to be done to make your home show and "internet" ready.



Determine a Reasonable Price

Pricing matters. In general, the price is one of the important factors in selling your home quickly. According to our Top Agent Insights Survey, 51% of real estate agents selected "Pricing a Home for Sale" as the place where sellers can make an error. Note that generally sellers price too high.

Do a Real Estate Price Comp

Determine a price based on recent similar home sales; in general, appraisers won't use comparable homes sold in more than six months prior. Homes should be in close proximity.

Review the market condition reports on Terri's website and look out for these:

- Sold properties
- Properties under contract
- Active properties
- Time of year
- Interest rates
- The condition of your property

Also, the "What's Your House Worth" tool on the Sell Chicago Real Estate page of Terri's website is there to help you estimate the worth of your home.

Price Competitively

Your home should be priced competitively. Pricing too high will turn off buyers while going too low could leave money on the table. Be honest with yourself, and you won't be disappointed.

A good realtor will help you set a reasonable price. Especially in Chicago, a neighborhood a block away can mean significant changes to your home's worth. Terri will help you determine a reasonable selling price.



Prepare Your Home for Market

Preparing your home for market could be as simple as decluttering and staging your home yourself, hiring a professional staging service, or doing virtual staging. Terri can help you make the right decision for your situation and home.

Here's what you can do to get off on the right foot.

Clear the Clutter

It is said that "clutter eats equity," and you may need to get a storage locker to store items while your home is on the market. Buyers want to make sure they will have space and clutter hides the space while detracting from the room.

With the clutter gone, you will want to determine the right staging approach for you home.

Determine if Professional Staging Will be Needed

If you'd prefer to go with a professional stager, there are great benefits to that. A partial or full-service stager can truly help your home look impressive. That translates to real dollars when it comes to selling your home.

A stager will charge by the month. This fee usually includes rental furniture and decor.

If your home is empty, consider virtual staging as an alternative.

Stage Your Home Yourself

Staging a home means carefully arranging your home's furnishings to show your home at its best. This can mean simply rearranging decor and furniture or hiring a professional to stage your home for you. Whatever the case, staging homes leads to better sales. According to a study by the National Association of Realtors, staged homes make it easier for a buyer to visualize the property as a future home. Staged homes spend less time on the market versus homes that are not staged.



If you plan on staging your home yourself, here are some tips:

- Remove personal photos /memorabilia. People want to envision themselves in the home
- Try to remove pet belongings such as food bowls and toys
- Deep clean and keep your home clean for showings
- Add more lighting all over your home
- If you plan to paint, keep the colors neutral
- Curb appeal matters. Make sure the grass is mowed and the home looks desirable from afar
- Set your kitchen table to show buyers what it looks like to entertain
- Unusual floor plans need extra highlights for buyers to see benefits. Add a cute nook or storage area to help buyers see the potential
- Empty rooms should be staged to show how the room can be used
- Add some plants to give your home a welcoming look
- Remember to stage outdoor areas such as foyers, patios and balconies to make them inviting
- Make sure to remove strong odors and maintain fresh clean smells

Take Professional Photos

Once the property is cleared, cleaned and staged, professional pictures can be taken.

Because an online presence matters, and it will be the first introduction to your home by prospective buyers, great photos are necessary. For instance, Terri will hire a photographer to take high quality professional photography of the house and surrounding area and often times she will add 3-D virtual reality videos to showcase your house online and offline.

Long gone are the days of your typical photograph of the front of the house. Marketing has become far more sophisticated – and so have buyer expectations.

The virtual reality videos bring your listings to life and gets you a cutting-edge 3D experience, print-ready photography, floor plans, and so much more.

Most homebuyers believe information about a home they find online is an important part of their home search.



Establish a Plan to Show

Preparing a plan for showing prior to listing is a great idea. If you don't want the process of showing your home to be that impactful on your daily life, it's best to implement a routine. That means getting everyone in your home on board with waking up, making beds, washing dishes, etc. - everything that needs to be done to make the home show ready.

How much notice do you need to ensure your home is ready to show? Consider if you prefer text message, call or email. What makes the most sense for you. Terri will take care of the rest.

