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13 Tips for Selling Your Home in Winter From Boston.com

Selling in winter gives owners the advantage of less competition and serious buyers. Here's a list of 13 ways you can make your home stand out throughout winter. Call Andy Kemp for more ideas on how to sell your home this winter at the highest price in the least amount of time.

1. Shovel and salt often

Keeping the sidewalk, driveways, and front steps free of snow and ice helps make your house look well-maintained, much like mowing the lawn in the summer. If you're not living in the home, or not home enough to keep on top of the snow, hire a service to salt and shovel the driveway.

2. Keep it warm

Part of making a home inviting to an interested buyer involves making it feel warm and cozy. You don't want those looking at your home shivering as they walk around inside. Set the thermostat higher if you know people are coming to look at the home, and if you'll be there during the showing, set a fire in the fireplace.

3. Maximize light

Light is important, especially during the time of the year when daylight hours are shorter. Open the shades wide and let in as much sunlight as you can, and avoid nighttime showings if you can. Also make sure all the light fixtures are clean, and use bulbs with the highest wattage they can safely handle. Turn on lights whenever you show the home to make it shine.

4. Have clean windows

Unkempt and dirty windows can turn off buyers before they even enter a house, and a strong southern light in the winter can reveal grime that otherwise wouldn't be as noticeable. Make the windows squeaky clean and improve a potential buyer's first impression.

5. Set the mood with music

Another way to make your house feel like a home is to play some soothing music during a showing. Choose something soft and inviting on the radio, and turn it down just enough so that you can hear it in the background.

6. Make it look comfortable

Keeping with the theme of making your house feel like a home, small touches – like a throw blanket or afghan on a sofa and a large folded-over comforter on a bed – can add to the sense of warmth inside a home. Make the buyers see themselves comfortably living in the home.

7. Emphasize conveniences

Is your home on a street that gets plowed often or next door to a school so that kids don't have to wait in the cold for a school bus? Make sure to point out ways that your home makes it convenient to deal with inconvenient weather.

8. Use timers on lights

In the spirit of keeping your home well illuminated, setting up timers on inside and outdoor lights ensures your home looks good at night. Pay attention to the light around the front door, and make sure it's bright enough to seem inviting.

9. Make it feel festive

When showing a home, you want to make possible buyers feel like they're invited guests. Set the dinner table with your good china, if you can leave small snacks and drinks like cookies and cider, do that too. You don't want the home to look stale – reflect the possibilities the home has for entertaining guests when showing your house.

10. Keep an inviting aroma

The one sense of the human body that sellers may neglect the most is the sense of smell. Make your home pleasing to the nose. Some scents to try are cinnamon rolls, chocolate chip cookies, apple pie, and vanilla. But don't overdo it with scented candles and incense everywhere – you don't want buyers to think you're trying to mask something. If your home suffers from musty odors and pet smells, clean those areas thoroughly and replace or clean rugs and fabrics that may hold those bad smells.

11. Appear meticulous

It may seem inconvenient to potential buyers to be asked to remove their shoes or slip on rubber shoe-covers before walking around the home. But some buyers will see that you're very picky about maintaining a certain quality and cleanliness – and it will reflect well on the state of the house in general.

12. Decorate to the season

Don't keep the Christmas tree or lights up after the holidays are over, but other seasonally appropriate decorations can help make a home more inviting, such as decorative wreaths and dried arrangements around the door.

13. Use winter to your advantage

Some homes can use winter can be a selling point. Is your house near a popular ski area? Do you have winter views of water or mountains that are obscured during the summer? Is there a great sledding hill down the street? People want to hear about the winter perks they will enjoy living in your home.