

**“I Want My HGTV”
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Perhaps some of you remember back in 1985, when the group Dire Straits released a song called “Money For Nothing”. This song included the repeated phrase “*I want my MTV*” (this part was actually sung by Sting for those who care). Well, I was 25 years old then. If you do the math, you can figure that I’m now well beyond *MTV* age. In fact, I’ve almost “matured” beyond the *HGTV* age (who has the time and energy for all those projects?).

Most of us have watched our share of television programs where a designer and crew show up and within *30 to 60 minutes*, they’ve done a complete make-over of someone’s home, often with pricing advice, all to help them get their property sold. Well, if you’ve got a home to sell and you don’t have an HGTV crew showing up anytime soon, maybe you’ll find the following tips helpful. You’ve likely heard or thought of many of these, but some, maybe not.

When you put your home on the market, you want to put your best foot forward and have everything looking as great as possible. Most buyers are working with Buyers Agents and these agents are typically keeping an eye on new listings when they show up. So it’s best to have everything at its best by the time you put the sign in the yard. This includes ***condition and pricing***.

Curb Appeal: First impressions are vital. If buyers don’t like what they see on the outside, they won’t be interested in seeing what’s on the inside. Obviously trim the shrubs and keep the lawn mowed. Fertilize and water the lawn and plants thoroughly 2-3 weeks before putting the house on the market. Also, you’d be amazed what fresh pine straw or mulch in the planting beds can do to “make-over” a yard – at least do the front. Clean up oil spots on the driveway. Swimming pools should be clean with sparkling clear water. Remove any junk or items lying around the yard. Now is a good time to have a yard sale to get rid of those items that you don’t plan to take with you. And “land mines” in the back yard are always a turn-off. So clean up after your pet.

The Exterior: If your house could use a paint job and you don’t have the time or money, some times hosing it off and repainting the trim will update the entire facade. At least paint the side facing the street. A clean, clutter-free front porch is always a great welcoming feature. Any broken windows should be fixed now, as this will most likely be required before closing.

The Interior: Inside, everything should be spotless. A fresh coat of paint on the walls is always a good idea. Go to the paint store and ask for recommendations on current popular *neutral* colors and use those. Painting only the trim and the doors can add a lot. Check to see that all doors open and close freely, including the garage door. Oil any squeaky doors. Replace any burned out light bulbs. Brighter lights enhance many rooms. Clean the carpets if new carpeting is not possible. This not only provides a new look, but it can help to eliminate pet odors. Thoroughly clean tile and vinyl floors. Repair or replace damaged or missing tiles. Bathrooms should sparkle. Remove soap scum and mildew (especially in shower door tracks). Replace old looking toilet seats. Kitchens should be clean and bright. Clean your oven and stove top. Exhaust fans should be free of grease and dust. Clear all unnecessary objects from the countertops. Start packing away anything that you don’t use everyday.

Any general items and clutter that you just can't part with should be stored under beds, not in closets. When it comes time for showings, keep curtains and blinds open and interior lights on.

Focus Rooms: Buyers react most strongly to kitchens, bathrooms and closets, so it pays to concentrate your efforts here. Sometimes just switching door handles, knobs, and light switch plates is a dramatic improvement. Replacing new shower curtains and sink faucets can also pay off.

The best tip I can give is to try to look at your house "through the buyer's eyes" as though you've never seen it before. We all have our own tastes. But remember, you're trying to appeal to a "typical" buyer. A potential buyer who is an avid Alabama fan may not appreciate your Auburn-themed room that you love so dearly. Preview the competition's open houses to see what you are up against in both condition and pricing. Potential buyers will be previewing these and more.

This leads me to another important component in the selling of your property.

Correct Pricing: Perhaps the greatest factor in getting your home sold is entering the market with it priced correctly. Over-priced homes won't get favorable attention; they lose out to the ones that are reasonably priced.

All sellers are looking for the highest price for their property. That's why some sellers want to start at the highest point, maybe even asking a higher price than what they really believe they can get. But the price reductions likely to follow can be a humbling ride down.

Still dropping the price sounds like an okay strategy, some sellers think. But in today's current market conditions where numerous sellers are competing for fewer buyers -- adjusting the price down may come too late, costing the seller more in holding costs over that marketing period than if the home were priced correctly from the start.

As a seller's over-priced property continues to sit on the market the listing loses its newness. Real estate agents pay a great deal of attention to what's new on the market. Homes that are priced correctly generate attention, showings and sales. Over-priced homes, on the other hand, sit for long periods, are passed over, and usually result in numerous price reductions.

Obviously, the longer an over-priced home sits on the market, often the more financial stress the seller begins to feel. If the seller has purchased a new home or must move to another location, suddenly the seller can become more desperate and lowball offers may have to be accepted due to financial circumstances. So price your home correctly from the start.

If you're a potential seller and find yourself wanting to say out of frustration "*I want my HGTV!*" give us a call at SeaHorse Realty. Our knowledgeable agents have experienced good markets and not-so-good markets. We would be happy to offer pricing strategies and make suggestions to help you best use your time and resources to get your property sold . . . in today's market.