



20 SECRET SELLERS' TIPS

Here are 20 simple tips to help you sell your home faster and for more.

Tip #1

Before you set your price, check out the competition!

The first step towards selling your home is to price it right. Price it too high and it won't sell. Price it too low and although you may get a quick sale, you'll always wonder whether you could have got more. The secret to pricing your home correctly lies in checking out the competition. See what similar houses in your area are selling for. Look in the local

papers and estate agent's windows. And with more and more estate agents now online, you can even do it discreetly from the comfort of your home.

"Most properties on the market that sit unsold are simply over priced."

Healy Hynes, Hynes Real Estate Alliance, Athlone

Tip #2

Know your buyer and tailor your home accordingly

Knowing your buyer isn't about being psychic. It's about stepping back and looking at your home, the area it's in and the types of people who live around you and then making an educated decision about the type of buyer your home will appeal to.

So, if you're selling a two bedroom flat in the town centre then it's less likely to appeal to a family and more likely to appeal to young professionals. Once you've worked it out you can tailor your home accordingly. Accentuate its family feel with neat toy storage bins or hire trendy furniture for a modern younger look.



Tip #3

Don't be precious! You're selling a house not your idea of a home.

It can be hard when selling to keep emotions out of the equation. Invariably your home will be full of treasured memories you won't want to let go. But remember this means nothing to your buyer. They'll be looking forward to creating memories of their own.

It's important to make it as easy as possible for them to imagine life in your home. This means taking down the gallery of family photos, replacing your teenage boy's poster-covered walls with neutral colours, sending the cat on holidays and doing all you can to create a blank canvass for potential buyers.

Tip #4

Before spending any money on your house, be sure you'll earn it back.

Remember you're selling your home, so when it comes to improvements keep it simple! There's no point planning massive extensions, landscaping the garden or totally redecorating. Instead decide which areas of your home are in most need and then which of these will have the most impact on a potential buyer. Simple improvements like a fresh coat of paint and tidying up the garden can make a difference. But when it comes to

major improvements like a new kitchen for example, it's often enough to get a plan (for free) from a local supplier and have that available for buyers to see. It'll show what can be done and will open the buyers mind to how your home could look.

"Some simple improvements can increase the selling price of your home by thousands."

Thomas Potterton, TE Potterton Real Estate Alliance, Trim

Tip #5

First impressions count, so make a good one.

As with everything in life, first impressions are very important. So start at the front gate. Mow the lawn and tidy your garden. Clean the front porch and if your front door needs it, give it a fresh coat of paint. Break-out the Brasso and give the letterbox and doorknob a good polish. And if there are lights in your porch or garden make sure they work. You don't want to intimidate buyers with a dark and unwelcoming approach.

However small, these things won't cost an arm and a leg and all help to create a good first impression.



Tip #6

If it looks out of place, get it out of the place.

Once inside it's important to create a feeling of space, so clear away the clutter. Make sure your home is clean and tidy and clear of obstacles like discarded toys, bicycles and overflowing laundry baskets. Clear out your bookshelves to create a minimal look and make sure the coat rack isn't weighed down. Give all your windows a good clean, so light can flow in. And if you have furniture that gets in the way or has become tired and dated, consider putting it into storage. It'll all help to give your place, a lot more space!

Tip #7

When it comes to colour, stay neutral.

If you do decide some rooms do need to be painted then this isn't the time to experiment. Stay neutral with a palette of creams and off whites! Good old magnolia is as cheap as it gets and yet creates a great feeling of space. Neutral colours help to brighten a home and give it a fresh look. They're also really passive and so allow the buyer to imagine your home in their chosen palette. Dark colours always demand a response and potential buyers will either love them or hate them, so why take the risk?

“Remember, a buyer wants to see how great your property looks, not how it could look after a lick of paint.”

John Kerr, Kerr Real Estate Alliance, Clonakilty

Tip #8

Every room should have a reason, not two or three or...

While it might make sense for you to push over the bed in the spare room and use the space as your office, to a potential buyer it looks like the room has a split personality. Make it easy for the buyer and give each room its own identity. Take the exercise bike out of the dining room and put the kids toys into their bedrooms or playroom. If you can't move the office then swap the bed for a sofa bed. It'll make the room feel like a study but still creates an option for guests.

Tip #9

Your kitchen is the heart of your home, so make sure it has a pulse!

Kitchen fashions are always changing but selling isn't the time to fork out for a refit. Getting a new kitchen plan can be



a good idea. But there are lots of other ways to give your kitchen a facelift that won't cost the earth. Try painting tired and worn units or replacing just the doors. Even fitting new handles can give an old-fashioned unit a new lease of life. Hide the rubbish bin, clean the work surfaces and then dress them with a few well-chosen items - a bowl of fresh fruit, a bottle of extra virgin olive oil and a nice bottle of vino to finish it off.

Tip #10

Every place needs a dining space

We all like to entertain from time to time (even if your idea of a perfect meal is a pizza in front of the telly) which is why every home needs a proper dining area. In smaller homes a table in the corner of the kitchen will do just fine. You can add a folding screen to section it off and then give it a relaxing feel with soft lighting. In larger homes the dining table tends to become a dumping ground for children's homework, the computer and unpaid bills. Keep it clear and if you must put something on it, make it a vase of beautiful fresh flowers.

Tip #11

Make your lounge a place to really lounge in.

The sitting room is where the buyer of your home will spend most of their time so it should shout comfort and relaxation. Clear away any old furniture that gets in the way and keep the mantelpiece looking minimal. If your chairs and sofa are looking

a bit tatty, try some throws or cushions to brighten them up. You could even consider hiring furniture to give the room a more modern look.

If your sitting room is small make sure it isn't being taken over by a TV that's too big for it. And finally introduce soft light with a dimmer switch, a table lamp or a simple candle.

“Giving your home a makeover with hired furniture can make it much more inviting to potential buyers.”

Paul Grimes, Grimes Real Estate Alliance, Ashbourne & Skerries

Tip #12

Before a bathroom is seen, make it bright and clean.

If there is one room in the house that needs to be spotless it's your bathroom. No potential buyer wants to wonder what that nasty whiff was or about the staining on the bathroom carpet. So give everything a good scrub, polish the mirror and clean the routing between the tiles. If the flooring is worn, replace it cheaply with vinyl. Brighten up a well-used shower simply with a new curtain. Make sure the shelves aren't coming down with lotions and potions. And finish the room with a fragrant pot-pourri and some bright white fluffy towels.



Tip #13

Your bed is comfortable but make sure your bedroom is too.

A home's main bedroom will be the new owners' private retreat. Here's how to make yours into a place anyone would enjoy retreating to. Firstly clear out your cupboards leaving only your finest, neatly hung and folded. That'll take care of any nosy buyers and create a feeling of space within them. Go for a sophisticated look with clean white bed linen. Add bedside tables and reading lamps. Then scatter a few coloured cushions in different fabrics at the head of your bed.

Tip #14

Make your children's bedrooms attractive to all children.

Your teenage daughter may love her shocking pink walls and her collection of boy band posters that cover the room. But will the buyers' ten-year-old football mad son? Not likely! Children's bedrooms should be made as neutral as possible so that they appeal to kids of all ages. Start with a good clear out and then put what's left into neat storage boxes. Take down the posters and swap the 'Bob the Builder' bedspread for something plain. If needed give the walls a fresh coat of paint and lastly the carpets a good shampoo. Hey presto, you're done!

"Investing a little time and energy can really pay off when getting your property ready for sale."

Willie Coonan, Coonan Real Estate Alliance, Celbridge & Maynooth

Tip #15

Make your study a place anyone could study in.

Invariably as we try and 'file' away our valuable documents the contents of our studies grow to bursting point. So first things first, be ruthless! Tackle the bookshelves and cull your books and magazines and then display what's left neatly. Arrange your furniture so that it looks comfortable and inviting. If you have a computer turn it on, it'll help to make the room feel used. Finally finish the room with a few well chosen accessories – a CD display unit, some filing trays and a pot for your pens will turn a busy room into a place for the whole family to organise their thoughts.

Tip #16

Give the garden a going over

Your garden can make or break a sale, so give it a good going over. A tidy front garden is vital and if the back garden has become a bit of a jungle then it needs to be tamed. You don't



need to spend much money, you just need to spend a bit of time. Mow the lawns, cut back trees and prune bushes to create more space. Sweep up the leaves and arrange any garden furniture so it looks like it is used. Add a few potted plants to any paved areas. And if you're lucky enough to have a well-kept garden, then sell your home when it's in full bloom.

Tip #17

Put away your pets.

No one wants to say goodbye to the family pet, but you also don't want a potential buyer put off because they are allergic to cats or because your home reeks of 'Pooch Perfume'. So while selling consider putting them in kennels, sending them on holidays with friends or at least restricting them to an area of the house or garden. Then clean the carpets and furniture carefully to remove any animal hair. And if someone is coming to view the house, then it's a good time to send the dog for a walk and the cat for a play outside.

Tip #18

When all is done, give it another once over.

You've cleaned the house from top to bottom, the hallway has been painted, the lights are on and the dog is on his holidays. But, even after you've done all this and you think your house is ready for sale, stop! Grab your agent and walk through your home from top to bottom and see if anything stands out. It might be a dirty window, a room in need of air or a piece of furniture your heart hasn't let go. Often a fresh eye is all it takes!

"It's simple! Properties that are well presented, sell more quickly!"

Eddie Barrett, North's Real Estate Alliance, Tralee

Tip #19

You've been good to your home, now be good to yourself

Making the decision to put your home on the market is a big one and once made, you want things to happen right away. You want to see it in the paper, you want queues of people out the door and you want multiple offers on the table. But it's important to be realistic and to remember that it only takes one buyer to make you the offer you're waiting for. So be good to yourself by keeping your expectations real and trusting your agent. You'll stand a better chance of enjoying a stress free sale.

Tip #20

It's your estate agents job to sell your home, so let them!

You know your home inside and out but estate agents know buyers. And Real Estate Alliance members know them better than most. With decades of experience in both buying and selling homes you can count on them to know what to say and when to say it. You're paying for their expertise, so when a potential buyer wants to talk price or terms, defer to experience and let your agent deal with it. Your job is to get your home ready for sale, it's your agents job to sell it.