

# 40 TOP TIPS FOR SELLING YOUR TRIANGLE HOME

Sweat the small stuff now... for great results when you're ready to put your home on the market.



## What do TRIANGLE AREA HOME BUYERS look for when hunting for a new home?

These tips were compiled as a result of real conversations and insights with my own Triangle area home buyer clients. I have found, interestingly, that this list holds true for all price points. The Triangle area has a wide price range of homes for sale; varying from \$100,000 to over \$1,000,000. Having more of the buyers must-haves and avoiding their deal breakers, is the key to realizing the best financial results when you sell your home.

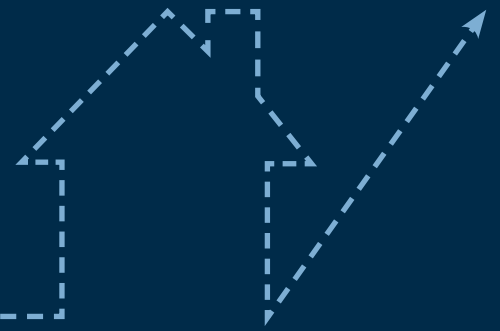




## Initial impression - aka curb appeal

No matter how good the interior looks, buyers have already judged your home even before stepping foot inside. There's no second chance to make a great first impression, so it's important to make people feel warm, welcome and safe as they approach your home.

- 1 Clean up your landscape and add mulch and colorful flowers.
- 2 Remove old overgrown bushes and trees.
- 3 Fix masonry/paver stones.
- 4 Seal coat or repave your driveway.
- 5 Paint your front door an inviting color and add a pretty welcome mat.
- 6 Paint the exterior - especially the trim work.
- 7 Get your roof cleaned to give it a brand new, fresh appearance!
- 8 Bright white trim looks fresh and clean.



## Darker stained floors are more popular today

- 9 If you have traditional honey oak floors or dated pickled floors from the 80s-90s, think about investing in refinishing. It is relatively inexpensive for the big impact that it will provide.
- 10 If you have carpeting with hardwood floors underneath, **uncover them!** This is a huge asset you want to show off. Hardwood floors are "sexy" to buyers today and can really help sell your home for more money.



## Wallpaper **must** come down

- 11 Most - if not all - home buyers in any price range cringe when they spot wallpaper in a prospective home. They anticipate a huge mess and an expensive inconvenience. Although sellers tell me that they are willing to offer a credit to compensate buyers for this dated feature, most buyers just can't see past it when viewing photos online and may just click "next." Even if the buyers can see past the wallpaper, be prepared for them to overestimate the cost of removing and repainting. Any many will add in some extra "hassle bucks!" For the most positive impact, you should take it down.



## Re-paint the house, inside & out

- 12 Painting can be one of the least expensive preparations that can make the most impact. Have colors work in your favor instead of against you.
- 13 Get advice from a color expert to help you choose. Neutrals, neutrals, neutrals. You want it to feel inviting and evoke the emotions of warmth and joy.
- 14 If you have a home with dark stained moldings and windows, **paint these moldings bright white!** Even though you may LOVE the look of dark wood trim, the buyers of today generally DON'T. The dark wood crown molding defines the ceiling height, which can make the room feel less open and spacious. Additionally, online photos with dark trim make most buyers feel the home is dated. This may cause them to skip right over your home, even though this is a minor issue.
- 15 For a fresh look, paint the spindles and risers on your staircase white.







## Renovated kitchens and baths sell homes

You don't want to do renovations... but neither do buyers. The idea of giving the buyer a credit to do it themselves just doesn't work. Even if buyers can get over the overwhelming negative connotation that the house feels old, they will want a discount for time and effort to do it. On the contrary, buyers will pay a premium for an updated, move-in ready home.

If you aren't up for a complete re-do of kitchen and baths, implement simple alternatives to major renovations. Small, poignant fixes can really make an impact.

### Kitchens

- 16 Change the drawer pulls and cabinet knobs to stainless steel or brushed nickel.
- 17 In 2014, brass is often viewed as outdated. Remove as many brass fixtures as possible.
- 18 Some cabinets may benefit from being painted or re-stained. Consider re-facing if the cabinet boxes are in great shape.
- 19 Add new stainless steel appliances.
- 20 Swap out your old countertops with granite and a new stainless steel sink. Regardless of your home's price range, buyers want and expect granite! I have some great resources I would be happy to share.
- 21 Consider installing a stainless steel sink and pull-out spray faucet.

### Bathrooms

- 22 Buy some pretty, fresh, white towels.
- 23 Change out a dated light fixture.
- 24 Add new, stylish drawer and cabinet pulls.
- 25 Remove the big, outdated mirror and replace with a picture frame mirror. Or, if you're crafty, paint or stain moldings and add them around the perimeter to simulate the look.
- 26 Add a new shower curtain to add to the updated decor.
- 27 Consider adding a seamless shower door.
- 28 Re-grout the tub and shower.
- 29 Clean the grout on your tile floors.



## De-clutter

- 30 While this is the least expensive suggestion, it's also the most impactful. But, it can also be a time-consuming and emotional portion of your preparation to sell. Plan ahead! If you are looking to sell during the height of a spring market, don't wait to start cleaning. 6-12 months ahead of time is **not** too early to start! Too much clutter can make a buyer feel stressed and negative while walking through your home. Simplified spaces evoke positive emotions and help buyers envision themselves living in your home.



## Maximize the light

After location, a home with good light is one of the most requested qualities. Buyers value great lighting.

- 31 Remove heavy draperies.
- 32 Trim back bushes and trees to maximize the light.
- 33 Clean your windows.
- 34 Replace light receptacles with higher wattage bulbs.
- 35 Remove window screens.





## Clean the *unfinished* spaces

The unfinished spaces can have as much of an impact as the staged living spaces. Basements, utility rooms, garages and storage closets are typically forgotten when prepping a home to sell. Buyers know to carefully examine basements and attics for the REAL story on how the home has been maintained and its current condition. Super clean these areas like you would your kitchen. Make it sparkle!

- 36 Is there a musty smell? Consider adding a dehumidifier to take out excess moisture. Avoid perfumed plug-ins and deodorizers. They appear as attempts to mask a water issue.
- 37 Painting the basement and/or garage concrete flooring will give the space a fresh, clean look! **Battleship grey is my preferred color choice!** Think about giving the concrete block foundation walls a fresh coat of waterproof paint. It will give the buyer a sense of security that the house is free of moisture.



## Buyers are doing most of their research online

- 38 One of the most important factors that bring buyers to a community is the school system! Even if buyers don't have school-age kids, most savvy buyers know that a great school system is crucial for a strong resale value down the road. Our schools have a fabulous reputation and that's why, in part, demand for our town continues to grow. It is always wise to check out how your home's elementary school fares, as well as the current reviews and ratings of the Triangle area Middle Schools and High Schools. See how our neighboring school districts compare. Whether or not these online websites and rankings truly draw an accurate picture of a school district, buyers are researching on these sites, finding information and making decisions based on it! So, you need to know what they know.

I find most buyers use the resources tab on the following site: [WelcomeToCarolina.com](http://WelcomeToCarolina.com)







## Know the market

39 It is valuable to be aware of the current inventory of homes for sale, as these homes may represent your competition (or a future comparable) when you are ready to sell. There is a finesse to pricing homes. Don't fall into the trap of pricing high to leave a lot of negotiating room. In a high demand town like ours, setting a fair, appealing asking price can show buyers your home is a great value and can actually lead to a competitive, multi-bid situation resulting in a higher selling price.

Try not to factor our own emotional feelings for your home when evaluating its market value. Try to be objective and realistic. This strategy will give you, the seller, more control in the deal. With attorney review and inspections still to come later in the process, fair pricing can be the key to keeping buyers from being overly demanding during the home inspection phase.



## Have a pre-home inspection

40 It would be wise to have a licensed home inspector inspect your home. This can save you time and money in the long run. It gives you the opportunity to fix those distracting small issues, as well as remediate any larger concerns that are uncovered. Buyers can get spooked, even with small issues, especially if they are not handy people. Being preemptive and fixing these issues in advance, can keep nervous buyers calm and keep your deal from falling apart. The inspector can also test your home for radon and check for pests. If you have a pest maintenance contract, be sure to keep it in effect until after closing, in case the buyer's inspector finds some critters or wood destroying insects.





## Invite me in! I would be happy to make some suggestions to get you started.

With a low inventory and high demand market environment currently in Triangle area, you - as a seller - can be in the driver's seat. Properly prep your home, price it correctly, add gorgeous professionally photographed interior, exterior and neighborhood shots, place on the proper web portals and social media channels and you've got a winning combination that should result in a very successful home selling experience. Even if you aren't ready to sell your home this year or even the next, try to do some improvement projects each year so **you** can enjoy these upgrades *yourself* instead of just doing them for the new buyer.

Ready to get started? Just say the word.



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