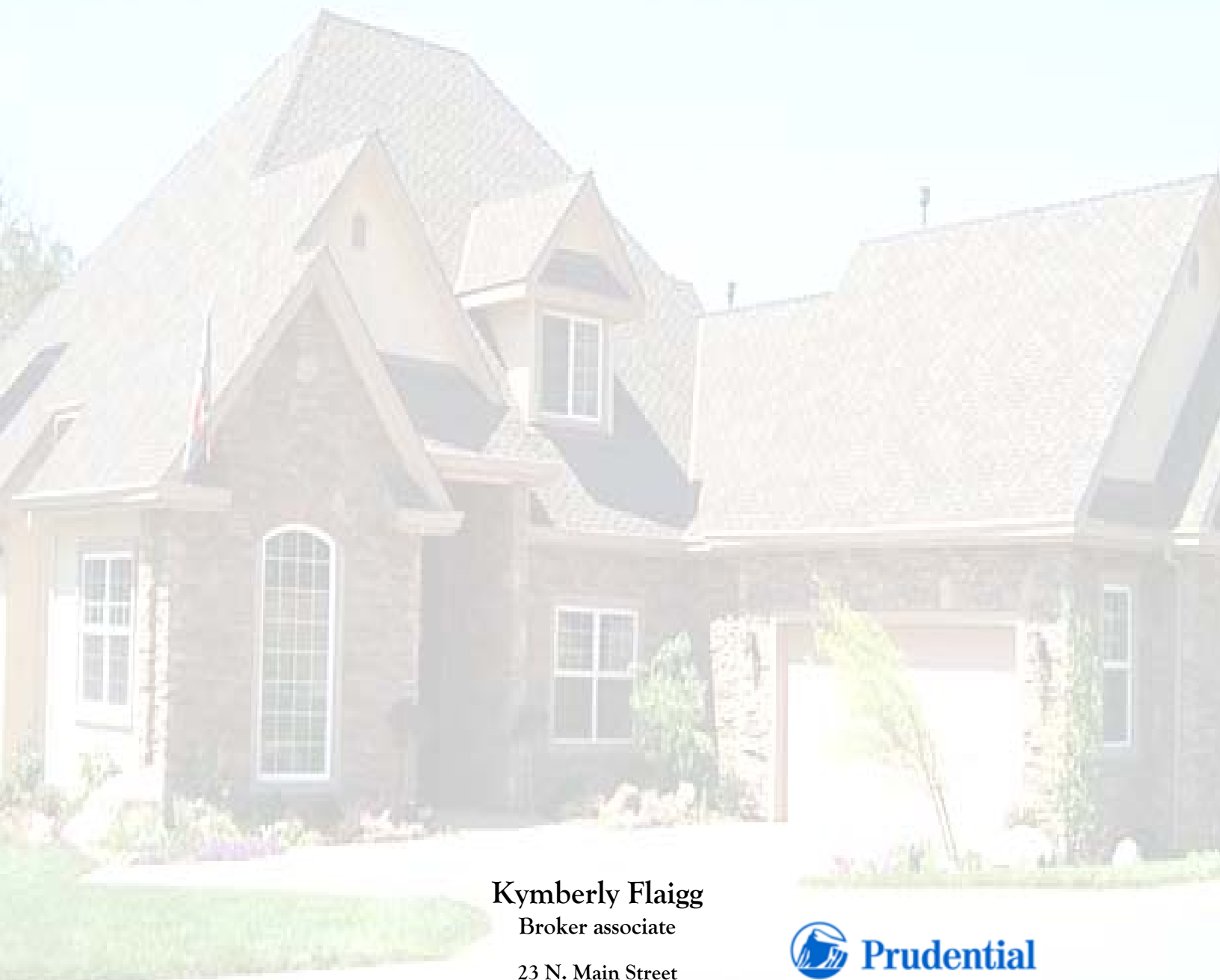


# Getting Your Home Ready

## A Seller's Guide



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# Getting your Home Ready

A guide to preparing your home for sale in any market.

Preparing your home for sale can seem like a major undertaking. But it doesn't need to be. Some simple tips as well as prioritizing your plan to your personal home can not only relieve the stress but also make a huge difference in the amount of time and money spent on preparing your home. Some questions you will need to ask yourself include:

- What is a realistic budget
- Where is my money best
- How can I best create curb appeal
- Is the interior "Show" ready

## Determining a Realistic Budget

When putting together a budget for your sale preparedness project, you should consider three major factors: costs for repairs, costs for cleaning – updating, costs for staging. As you break this down consider too what you will most likely have to do anyway a preventative maintenance whether you sell your home or not, what a buyer would typically desire to have fixed, ie most buyers don't want to buy a home with a leaky roof, but a new roof may not be necessary, and finally, with staging what will be spent on items will you take with you and what is staying with the home.

## Where is the best place to spend your money?

The kitchen is the hub of the home and master suite is the buyer's future retreat. These will be the first areas of focus once the buyer's get in the door. The kitchen is also the best place to recapture money invested. Before that, getting them in the door has got to be first priority. To what extent you go to depends on the amount of your budget, and are you shooting for a reasonable presentation or do you want the WOW factor.



## Creating Curb Appeal

Getting your buyer to stop and want to come in depends on how much "Curb Appeal" your home creates. Below are some ideas on items to check out before putting your home on the market:

- Lawn and landscaping need to be healthy and lovely
- Do a spring cleaning to your yard, bushes and trees. Trim and prune as needed.
- Be sure entry walkways, driveways and eaves are clean and free of major spots, spider webs and that decks are clean and recently stained.
- Be sure the front door is perfect. This is the buyer's first impression.
- Check all other doors for fit and condition.
- Check the roof and gutters for maintenance issues.

- Check the siding or stucco for condition and paint or repair if needed.
- Strategically place flowers in yard and near front door in pots.
- Remove all clutter from the yard and store boats or RV's.

## Getting the interior “Show” ready

Once your buyer is in the door, you will want to put your home's best foot forward. Consider the following items as you walk through your home:



- Do the rooms appear crowded or spacious? Be sure to de-clutter by removing personal mementos, too many personal photos or items that are too large for the room.
- Clean, clean, clean. Then once your home is spotless, hiring a professional for a weekly or biweekly service may be of benefit.
- Clear the kitchen counters. That mug set could go in a drawer, larger rarely used appliances should be stored and all dishes and racks should be put away.
- Keep painted rooms neutral – but not white! Use earth tones and accent with a warm color on one wall for interest if anything. Consulting with a designer may be necessary if you are afraid of color or don't have a good eye for these things.
- Repair broken items such as door knobs, holes in the walls, cracked windows, fogged windows, broken trim pieces and door openings, loose cabinet doors and hand railings.
- Correct all leaks and spruce up the bathrooms with new towels and soaps.

## Preparing for the showing:

- Make the beds
- Turn on the lights
- Open the curtains and blinds
- Turn on some soft soothing music
- Put up the new towels in the bathrooms
- Clear off the desk – have baskets available to store items
- Light a candle with a fresh scent not too sweet
- Make a fire in the winter time
- Bake cookies and leave a few for the buyer
- Offer iced tea or lemonade
- Leave your home just before the buyers arrive to give them space to enjoy and picture this as their home, not yours.

Try to picture yourself as a buyer. It can be hard to detach your personal interest in your home but a buyer wants to see it as theirs.. and ultimately you want them to also!



## Your home on “Show”

From the curb to the backyard, your home is a stage to a buyer’s imagination and hopes for the future. Set the stage for them and let the show begin! Below are a few thoughts on Staging from a different perspective.

1. **Creating the imaginative environment:** Most people want to wander and imagine their furniture, their Christmas tree, or their family gatherings as they wander through your home. Create an environment that they can do that in! Remove the clutter of personal items. Take out and store large unnecessary furniture items. Less really is more. Allow for something small to stand out! A plant alone on a table or a couple of candles will make more of a statement and invite imagination than a table full of magazines, papers and small nick–nacks. Allow the light to come in – not blazing but enough to show any views as well as illuminate the room – then turn on the lights... even in the daytime.
2. **Have a neutral pallet:** You may love blue or orange.. but it is likely your buyer may not. Create a soft pallet in your home of neutral warm colors. If your home is light and bright, you may be able to afford darker colors, but keep it simple. Use muted tones and allow the trim and doors to be the accent. Painting a home not only gives it a fresh clean look, but also can help with creating a mood. Paint in coordination with accents such as fresh bedding, towels, slip covers or blankets really ties it all together.
3. **Play on the senses:** Music, candles, fireplaces, cookies, juice and temperature all play a part in inviting the imagination to wonder! Invest in a few fresh smelling candles or bake cookies just before the showing and leave a few on the table. A handwritten note inviting buyers to partake in cookies and juice not only feeds the senses but makes them feel welcome to linger and enjoy. Play some music that is comforting; soft jazz, classical, soft country or holiday music at the appropriate time will help a buyer enjoy the experience.

4. **Educate your realtor as to the features of your home:**

Be sure you share the special features of your home with your realtor. Have a brochure available at the street or in your home that the buyer can refer to as they look around the home. This will answer the technical questions they may have and feed both sides of the brain as your buyer considers your home.

5. **Letting the buyer enjoy:** When you know your home will be shown, leave. Be sure you know who is coming and properly protect your valuables so that you are comfortable in leaving, but leave. It is very difficult for a buyer to express their feelings or questions – especially negative ones- to their realtor while you are there. If they have a negative reaction to something and they share it while there are at your home with the realtor, it may be able to be answered or overcome on site – or later with your help. However, most buyers will not share those concerns in front of you. So let them look around and don't rush them.

## The Best Home Improvement Value For Your Dollar

If you are considering remodeling your home to help obtain a better value when you sell read the following. Certain up upgrades and improvements add more value to a property than others do. The following upgrades tend to decrease the effective age and add more value.

**1. Increase the square footage** – Add a master bedroom, a bathroom or a garage. The master bedroom should be on the main level of a multi level property. Adding a bathroom to a 1 or 1 ½ bath home is a great way to fight the decrease in value from a functional standpoint. A shop or room conversion may not add as much value as a full 2 car garage added to a home without a garage.

**2. Upgrade the Kitchen** – By upgrading or changing the cabinets, you create a newer feeling to your home almost instantly. Some cabinetry needs only the doors replaced. This is a very cost effective way to get that new feeling without much cost. Or, maybe they just need a fresh coat of paint and new hardware. Counter tops is another first site item that needs to be kept up to date. Out dated colors can be the biggest turn off to a buyer. New appliances are always a valued selling point to potential buyers. If yours are not outdated or extremely worn, keep them sparkling clean and make them match. Some appliances have fronts that can be turned around to another color or you can order your color from the manufacturer at a minimal cost.



**3. Access or Driveway** - Pave or Asphalt a gravel driveway. This added value will help prevent carpet/flooring replacement in the future as well as defer added maintenance costs.

**4. New Flooring** – New carpet and flooring can be beneficial, but only if your is so outdated (orange or green shag usually should go) that it may keep the buyer from enjoying the rest of the home. If it is dirty and stained beyond cleaning, new carpet is a must. However keep it neutral and keep the color the same throughout the home. Light colors are not always best so choose a midrange hue. Torn or color faded linoleum should be changed. Upgrading is not necessary, but a clean surface with neutral colors will really help provide a new home feel.