

450 Ideas ... To Help Your Home Sell FASTER!

Compliments of **Isabel (Bela) Alves**, Associated Broker
ABR, GRI, CIPS, SRES



Isabel "Bela" Alves
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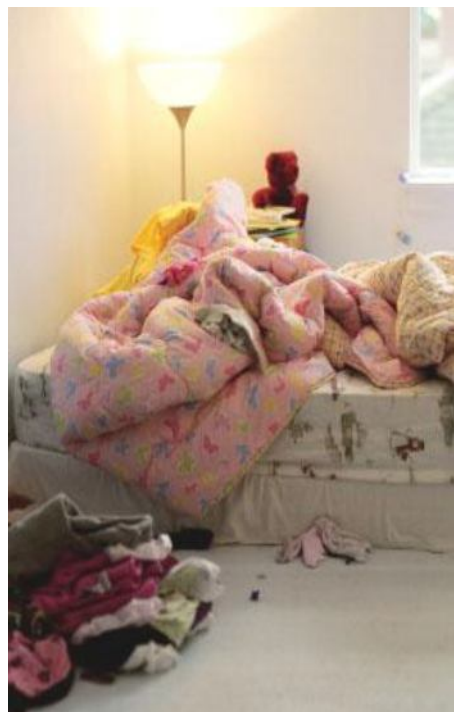


The Worst Case Scenario

When you put your home up for sale, it is hard to objectively look at your surroundings. Instead of the window that needs caulking, you see the view of the tree where your first swing hung. Instead of a refrigerator plastered with artwork, you see a visual progression of your child's school years. However, it is important to remember that prospective buyers do not share your memories. They will see what is directly in front of them, minus the nostalgia!

To emphasize this point, I have created "The Worst Case Scenario". Come and view the home of the Blank Family. Who think it is absolutely perfect.

22 Maple Avenue



#22 Maple Avenue has come on the market. The Blank Family, who currently own the home, have decided to move and today they are having their first Real Estate "showing". The Blanks are feeling pretty confident that their house will be sold by the end of the week.

The potential buyers, Mr. & Mrs. Hopeful, arrive on time and maneuver their car into the vacant spot on the driveway. Once out of his vehicle, the first thing Mr. Hopeful notices is a big oil stain on the pavement. He suspects that there could be more underneath the Blank's rusty family sedan parked beside him, as well as on the floor of their garage.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hopeful has stepped over a bike that is lying exactly where a young Blank hurled it, and she is now carefully making her way along the broken bits of flagstone leading up to the house. Is that dog debris in the grass?

Household Hints

(These are hints only. It is the responsibility of the User to make his/her own assessment regarding the suitability of the information)

Stale Carpet Odor

Put baking soda into a flour sifter and then sprinkle the carpet with the soda. Leave overnight and then vacuum.

Cleaning Mini-Blinds

Place a clean sock on each hand. Dip your one hand into warm, soapy water and then rub each blind slat until the whole surface is clean. Dry the blind slats with the dry sock on the other hand.

Curtains and Curtain Rods

Before putting curtains on a metal curtain rod, place the end of the rod inside a plastic freezer bag. This prevents the curtains from snagging on the metal when you begin slipping them onto the rod.

Refrigerator Odors

Pour a little pure vanilla on a cotton ball and sit it in a small saucer. Place the saucer in the refrigerator to remove odors.



Mr. Hopeful pauses for a moment to get an overall view of the front of the Blank's home. What does he notice? Let's see ... a couple of shingles missing, a rather sagging eaves trough, chipped paint here and there and Christmas lights (even though it is May).

He joins his wife on the porch and Mrs. Hopeful pushes the doorbell ... that hasn't worked properly for the past six years. She has plenty of time to notice the flowers in the pots, which look as though they expired the previous summer. Also, the outdoor light fixture is missing a light bulb.

After a moment, they are welcomed into a dark and depressing entry hall. What is that smell? Dogs? Mildew? Something rotting in the kitchen?

Mr. Hopeful opens the entry closet. Out tumbles two golf clubs, a basketball, a pile of old newspapers, several dog leashes, a single running shoe and a game of scrabble. Every outer garment owned by the Blank Family has been crammed onto hangers, and whatever didn't make it to a hanger has taken up residence on the floor.

Next, they enter the living room. Despite the possibilities, Mr. Hopeful is distracted by the light switch that doesn't turn on the ceiling light and the remnants of a late night snack on the coffee table (plates of crumbs and a couple of empty pop bottles).

Mrs. Hopeful is trying to figure out how to open the glass curtains to see the view. They seem to be permanently shut. After a struggle, she finally manages to pull them back and discovers dirty windows, a chipped sill, and a couple of interesting cobwebs.

There are numerous magazines stacked around the room. There is also a fireplace, but it looks less than appealing with a substantial build-up of ashes and one burnt log half-hanging off the grate. The carpet has a dark and unappealing stain.

Further down the dim hall is a small powder room. It seems quite clean and tidy. Perhaps the Blanks have forgotten that it's there.

Household Hints

Broken Light Bulbs In Sockets

Turn off power to a ceiling / wall fixture, or unplug the lamp. Insert a potato into the socket and turn counterclockwise to loosen the remnants of the broken light bulb.

Washing Knick-Knacks

Gather them onto a tray for safe transport. Wash in a dishpan with a little liquid detergent. Rinse, then blow-dry with a hair dryer.

Cleaning The Fireplace

Mist the ashes with water from a spray bottle. This will keep the ashes from scattering when you go to clean them from the grate.

Polishing Chrome

Dampen chrome with water. Polish with a small sheet of aluminum foil – shiny side out.

Polishing Furniture

Spraying polish directly onto furniture leaves smears. First, spray polish onto a cloth and then polish your furniture.

Squeaky Wooden Floors

Dust talcum powder into the cracks to stop the squeaking.



The dining room is interesting, however the Hopefuls are rather surprised to see that the table is covered with maps and little bits of scribbled papers, (perhaps the Blanks are planning a trip?). There is a buffet crammed with dishes, six chairs scattered about, an old stereo unit against one wall, a wonky high-chair, three unmatched serving tables, what looks like some lawn furniture, a dog bed, and ten potted plants all in various stages of disease.

Happily there is a sliding door onto a deck. But the lock is broken and it would appear that the dog has clawed his way straight through the screen.

Would the Hopefuls care to view the upstairs bedrooms? By now, they are not surprised at the worn stair carpeting or the fact that the railing is wobbly. The only things on the wall are fingerprints. Mr. and Mrs. Hopeful have pretty much given up trying to imagine themselves living in this house.

The master bedroom is small, but adequate. The exercise bike in the corner seems a bit out of place though. The closet reveals a jumble, but nothing like the entry hall closet downstairs. It is quite evident that Mrs. Blank has a passion for shoes ... which have been tossed and hurled everywhere.

There is quite a pleasant little ensuite bathroom with a vanity covered in pill containers and cosmetics. In fact, there are so many pills, Mrs. Hopeful begins to worry that there might be something seriously wrong with both the Blanks. Otherwise, only some recaulking and mildew to remove!

Next, they are shown the first of two smaller bedrooms. This one obviously belongs to the youngest Blank, who certainly does not lack for toys. Toy management, perhaps. But not toys! Stuffed animals, dolls, parts of a doll wardrobe, a disrupted tea set and bits of chalk pieces are strewn around. Someone has attempted to make the bed. The Hopefuls think it best not to look in this closet.

Household Hints

Furniture Scratches

Scratches can be filled on light wood by rubbing with the meat of a walnut or pecan.

Cleaning Windows

Use vertical strokes on the outside and horizontal strokes on the inside. This makes it easier to see which side has streaks.

Sticky Drawers

Rub a bar of hand soap across the runners. Drawers should then glide easily.

Wax Crayon on Painted Walls

Spray with WD40 and then wipe clean. Dish soap will remove any traces of WD40 left on the walls.

Avoid Painting Fixtures

Cover hinges and door handles with petroleum jelly. Paint will not stick to this.

Visualize Your Room Color

Before painting a room, purchase the smallest amount of the new color and paint a piece of posterboard. Place this in the room and see how the color reacts to the day and evening light.



They are warned that the other bedroom belongs to the older Blank child. The door is badly stuck but with some shoving, it opens to reveal a dark and cluttered interior. There are posters of strange people plastered across every inch of wall and straight across the ceiling. The bed hasn't been made for the past three years. The Hopefuls figure that the closet must be empty since all the clothing is heaped on the floor and protruding from under the bed. There are five empty drinking glasses, long forgotten on the windowsill, and the carpet looks as though it is made out of CD and DVD cases.

The upstairs bathroom is completely chaotic. First impressions? The shower curtain is pinned back to the wall with thumb tacks. Towels have been dropped at random. Globes of toothpaste are stuck to the sink. There doesn't appear to be any soap. And someone's dirty clothes missed the laundry basket by about two feet.

Finally, the kitchen. That smell the Hopefuls first noticed is definitely stronger. It seems to be coming from under the sink. Yes. The Blanks have failed to remove their garbage.

The stove is dirty and appears to have some parts missing. The refrigerator is okay, but plastered with photos and drawings. A rude remark is scrawled on a notice board. The counters are covered with appliances and gadgets and bowls ... and mail and school papers. The windowsill contains a baseball, an earring, and a broken pot with a wilted flower. The sink has definitely seen better days. And the dog must have still been munching on its food while drooling his way towards the back door.

Mrs. Hopeful can't imagine having her friends over. Mr. Hopeful just wants to leave. No, he isn't interested in the basement. They aren't interested in the house.

Setting The Stage

What Mr. & Mrs. Blank failed to realize is that potential buyers connect (or disconnect) emotionally with a house. The feelings that are generated when they first see your home from the curb, and then when they step across the threshold ... those “first impressions” are extremely powerful.

It is the seller's goal to create an atmosphere so inviting that buyers are already imagining where to place their furniture, before they have even completed the tour of the property. “The bathroom is so sweet – it doesn't matter that it is only the size of a closet!” “The kitchen is so warm and inviting – I'm sure we can survive without a dishwasher.” “I know we can squeeze our bedroom furniture under these sloping ceilings – after all, that's part of the home's history.”

Remember being captivated by professionally decorated model homes? Each room was intentionally laid out like a stage setting. Nothing seemed out of place. Everything was carefully chosen to pull you in and satisfy your senses. They succeeded to fire your imagination and make you dream about how pleasant it would be to actually live, entertain, and raise a family within those walls.

With this in mind ... let us take another look at #22 Maple Avenue.



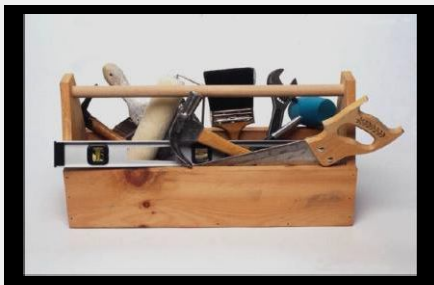
22 Maple Avenue Revisited

After months without a single offer, Mr. & Mrs. Blank decide to take action. They diligently repair, clean and create little “finishing touches” in each room.

Meanwhile, Mr. & Mrs. Hopeful still haven't found the perfect house. They drive once more past #22 Maple

Hardware Stores

www.acehardware.com
www.adirondackhardware.com
www.aubuchon.com
www.builderdepot.com
www.canadiantire.ca
www.cornerhardware.com
www.craftsman.com
www.designersplumbing.com
www.doitbest.com
www.ebuildingsource.com
www.hardwareonlinestore.com
www.historicalbricks.com
www.homecenter.com
www.homedepot.com
www.homehardware.com
www.lowes.com
www.mcguickin.com
www.paxtonhardware.com
www.restorationhardware.com
www.smarthome.com
www.thehardwarecity.com
www.toolsandmore.us
www.tools-plus.com
www.truevalue.com
www.vandykes.com



Avenue and think they are hallucinating on too many cups of coffee. Immediately they arrange to see the Blank's home again!!

The Hopefuls return and this time do not have any trouble parking in the driveway ... which is empty of all vehicles and looking very spacious. Once out of his car, Mr. Hopeful realizes that the oil blob is gone and there doesn't appear to be any additional drips anywhere.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hopeful is admiring the new paving stones in the walkway, the trimmed shrubs, and the charming little garden of white flowers under the maple tree. Wood chips have been added around the base of the other trees on the front lawn. The grass has been recently mowed, a garden hose is neatly coiled, the bike is out of sight ... and all dog debris has been collected and removed.

Mr. Hopeful pauses for a moment to get another overall view of the front of the Blank's home. The shingles are replaced, the eaves troughs repaired, and the Christmas lights are down. Bright blue shutters have been added, and there are new window boxes brimming with pastel flowers and green ivy. He joins his wife on the porch.

The pots of dead flowers have been replaced by a spotless white swing glider filled with yellow and white striped cushions. There is a shiny brass doorknocker, a bulb in the porch light, and the front door has been painted the same bright blue as the shutters. The Hopefuls **feel a sense of excitement** as they hear the doorbell chime.

After a moment, they are welcomed into a bright and cheery entry hall.

The Hopefuls notice several immediate changes. There is a polished mahogany table featuring an arrangement of white, silk hydrangeas – and a colorful little basket to hold the day's mail. The walls have been painted a cream colour to give the entry a feeling of light, and the Blanks have hung a tall mirror at the far end to give the illusion of depth to the small space.

Home Improvement

www.allabouthome.com
www.askthebuilder.com
www.bobvila.com
www.build.com
www.diynetwork.com
www.diyonline.com
www.doityourself.com
www.handymanwire.com
www.homedoctor.net
www.homeexpo.com
www.homefocus.com
www.todayshomeowner.com
www.hometime.com
www.hometips.com
www.improvenet.com
www.joneakes.com
www.misterfix-it.com
www.naturalhandyman.com
www.onthehouse.com
www.repairclinic.net
www.repair-home.com
www.startremodeling.com
www.homeimprovementweb.com
www.thisoldhouse.com



The closet contains only spring coats and jackets and there are actually empty hangers.

And what is that smell? Is it coffee brewing in the kitchen?

They are led into the living room. Classical music emanates quietly from a hidden CD player and seems to float around the room. The Hopeful's are simply enchanted. Mrs. Blank has obviously been busy. There are new pale green tie-back curtains revealing sparkling windows and the lovely old maple tree in the front yard. A comfy armchair, with woven cushions, has been placed next to the window, in the sunshine. Beside that is a small table with a reading lamp and a basket containing Mrs. Blank's colorful embroidery.

The coffee table is no longer covered with plates and pop. Instead there is a glass bowl filled with yellow and orange dried flowers and a sumptuous book on "Romantic Gardens". The sofa and chairs are pulled away from the walls and now form an intimate grouping in the center of the room. The fireplace has been cleaned out for the summer, and a pretty arrangement of birch logs lie on the grate.

Mr. & Mrs. Hopeful are beginning to mentally arrange where to place their furniture. They feel sure the piano will fit in somehow and can just imagine how lovely their collection of Victorian plates will look over the mantle.

Leaving the living room, the Hopefuls move eagerly down the hall, taking a moment to peek into the small powder room. It has been completely done over in white ... white walls, white accessories, white towels, a white dish with white soap, white curtains and a little white mat on the floor. The only color comes from a small arrangement of scarlet red geraniums on the counter. The Hopeful's can't believe it. And this was the good room!

Can the dining room actually be the same place? Mr. & Mrs. Blank have removed everything except the buffet

Decorating Tips

www.bozzle.com
www.countryliving.com
www.creatinghomedecor.com
www.decoratorsboutique.com
www.decoratorsecrets.com
www.designingonline.com
www.getdecorating.com
www.hgtv.com
www.homedecorators.com
www.homeportfolio.com
www.homesense.ca
www.houseandhome.com
www.housebeautiful.com
www.houzz.com
www.interiordec.about.com
www.ivillage.ca/living
www.marthastewart.com/home-decorating
www.myhomeideas.com
www.myinteriordecorator.com
www.oprah.com/home.html
www.paintideas.com
www.rentaldecorating.com
www.sarahrichardsondesign.com
www.seemydesign.com
www.styleathome.com



(which is now lit with an interior light), the table, four chairs, one serving table and three ferns in hanging copper pots. And ... the dining table is elegantly set for four people. Delicate white china, sparkling crystal, silverware, and another magnificent arrangement of silk flowers, this time picking up the cream and rose colors in the new curtain valance over the sliding doors. Mr. Hopeful checks and both the lock and screen have been repaired.

The Hopefuls actually notice the backyard this time. There is a large wooden deck ... complete with pots of flowers, inviting white wicker chairs, a colorful set of croquet mallets and balls tucked away in the corner, and a garden that's spilling over with well-tended flowers.

Mr. Hopeful notices a hammock at rest under the shady oak trees, and a brightly painted bird feeder that seems quite popular with a group of little birds. He envisions himself lying out there and watching the summer clouds. Perhaps the Blanks might sell the croquet set.

Next come the upper bedrooms. The worn carpet on the staircase has been taken up and now the natural wood of the steps and risers is polished and shining. The railing has been securely anchored and, instead of fingerprints on the wall, there is a collection of framed floral watercolors.

By now, Mr. & Mrs. Hopeful are positively mesmerized. They step into the master bedroom. The room appears to be much larger. Mrs. Blank has purchased coordinating bed linens, comforter, pillows and matching curtains for the window. The room is floating in a print of small violets and rosebuds. Instead of the exercise bike, there is an over-stuffed armchair with a cloud of lace pillows. A new hope chest has been added at the foot of the bed and an interesting collection of hatboxes decorates one corner. Not a shoe to be seen.

The ensuite bathroom has been wallpapered to blend in with the bedroom and is sparkling clean. There is a new shower curtain and matching towels. The vanity displays

Home Decor Online

www.ballarddesigns.com
www.bedbathandbeyond.ca
www.bellacor.com
www.brylanehome.com
www.buyhousedecor.com
www.charleskeath.com
www.countrydoor.com
www.cuddledown.com
www.frontgate.com
www.homedecorators.com
www.homevisions.com
www.horchow.com
www.jogarrard.com
www.lampsplus.com
www.lillianvernon.com
www.linen-source.com
www.modernkaribou.ca
www.plowhearth.com
www.purehomedecor.com
www.roomstogo.com
www.seventhavenue.com
www.sunlandhome.com
www.thecompanystore.com
www.thecountryhouse.com
www.touchofclasscatalog.com



only a dish of pretty soaps and a little collection of delicate seashells.

The younger Blank's room demonstrates a healthy dose of crowd control. There are red, yellow and blue net hammocks hanging from the ceiling, containing the vast array of stuffed animals. All the dolls are sitting quietly in a row on a steamer trunk, as though waiting for their picture to be taken, and the chalk is back by the blackboard.

One little table shows off the tea set, and there is a bear sitting in each of the two chairs, eagerly waiting to begin the formalities of drinking the tea. A magical wallpaper border of blue sky seems to float around the room and the bed is made. Mrs. Hopeful is thinking about her granddaughter visiting.

The older Blank's room ... well, there is now a sign on the door, which reads, "Condemned". The Hopefuls decline to look inside.

The second bathroom is greatly improved, although still a bit "rustic". It appears that Mrs. Blank's main objective is to just try and keep it clean. However, the laundry basket has been removed ... along with that peculiar shower curtain. Mr. Hopeful thinks the room seems brighter. But, perhaps there is simply less in it.

By the time the Hopefuls reach the kitchen, they have mentally bought the house. They can hardly take in any more, they are so excited – and worried that someone else might be placing an offer ahead of them. They can't help but marvel at the changes that have been meticulously carried out by Mr. & Mrs. Blank.

Even the kitchen has been cleaned, polished, and swept. All appliances are in one piece and working properly. The counter is empty except for an open cookbook, a beautiful cutting board and a white china bowl of oranges and bananas ... oh, and a coffee-maker brewing fresh coffee. Laid out on a tray are three mugs, cream, sugar, and a plate of fresh cookies for the guests. All the clutter has been removed from the refrigerator, the windowsill only

Gardening Online

www.backyardgardener.com
www.bloomingbulb.com
www.canadiangardening.com
www.container-gardening-for-food.com
www.discoveringannuals.com
www.englishgarden.lifetips.com
www.garden.org
www.gardensdesigner.com
www.gardenguides.com
www.gardenmaking.com
www.gardenplans.com
www.gardenshoponline.com
www.gardenweb.com
www.gardeningplaces.com
www.gardeningtips.org
www.growsonyou.com
www.haywardgardens.com
www.icangarden.com
www.landscaping.about.com
www.plantideas.com
www.rosegathering.com
www.upsidedownpatiogarden.com
www.windowbox.com
www.yardcare.com



displays a ceramic pot filled with tumbling ivy, and the kitchen table has bright red placemats. There are matching blinds in the windows. The dog is apparently eating somewhere else these days and posted to the notice board is a list typed up by the Blanks containing all the reasons why the Hopefuls will enjoy living in this house.

Mr. Hopeful takes a quick look down the basement, and reports back that it is sound, dry, clean and everything seems to be in working order. He also describes a cheery little laundry room.

The Hopefuls buy the house that day for more than they would have paid, if they had been desperate enough to purchase it originally. By making these changes, the Blanks were able to meet their moving deadline. They received a larger offer than what would have originally transpired, and any new furnishings, linens, towels, drapes and accessories will look fabulous in their new residence.

Getting To Work

Unfortunately, very few homes are already picture perfect when the owners make the decision to sell. Most require anywhere from minor repairs to major renovations. How little or how much work you wish to put into your house is entirely up to you. However, remember the more attractive your home, the more appealing it will be to prospective buyers. And the more appealing ... the faster the sale (and the higher the offer!!).

To assist you with this important element of house selling, I have made up individual charts for each of the areas normally found in and around a home. If you have additional areas, such as a library or home office, most of the ideas listed will also apply to these locations as well. At the end of each chart are blank charts for you to add in your own special requirements. You will also find a column for checking off work that still needs to be done and another column for noting which work has been completed.

Finally, there is a special “Don’t Panic ... Buyer’s Are Coming” chart. This is a helpful reminder list of things to do just prior to showing your home to prospects.



The Exterior . . .

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clear away any litter between the street curb and your front door		
~ Remove any oil stains from the driveway		
~ Repair any cracks or broken bits of driveway paving		
~ Clear bikes and toys from the driveway. (When showing the house, keep driveway free of cars)		
~ Repair any walkway cracks or broken bits		
~ Remove weeds and grass growing in walkway		
~ Trim back shrubs protruding into the walkway		
~ Trim the shrubs away from house windows (for security and to make interior rooms brighter)		
~ Weed the flower beds and add a layer of mulch		
~ Prune dead branches and pull back anything creeping across the house		
~ Cut the grass		
~ (Autumn) Rake the leaves		
~ (Winter) Shovel snow. Salt or sand icy patches		
~ Dispose of any pet debris		
~ Wash down vinyl siding, if necessary		
~ If house is wood, scrape and paint, if required		
~ Clean out the eaves trough		
~ Repair or replace eaves trough and downspouts		
~ Repair any parts of the roof which could be leaking		

The Exterior ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Replace any missing or loose roof shingles & flashing		
~ Repair any house foundation cracks		
~ Clean all windows, including those in the garage		
~ Replace any cracked or broken window glass		
~ Repair any wood rot		
~ Replace any bent or bulging window screens		
~ Repair and/or replace caulking and weather-stripping around windows and doors		
~ Clean storm windows – have them available		
~ Exterior doors lock properly. Easy to open and shut		
~ Oil any squeaky door hinges		
~ Doorbells are working properly		
~ Remove any seasonal house lights and ornaments		
~ There is a working light by the front door		
~ Tighten any wobbly porch or deck railings		
~ Secure any loose porch or deck floor boards		
~ Clean the lawn furniture		
~ Clean the barbeque		
~ All pool equipment is in perfect working condition		
~ Clean pool equipment		
~ Place gardening tools in the garage or basement		
~ Neatly coil any garden hoses		
~ Property is free of clutter, particularly scattered toys		
~ Oil gate hinges		
~ Gates open and close easily		
~ Repair and/or replace any loose gate or fence posts		

The Exterior ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ Shutters		
~ Shutters and front door painted in a spectacular color which complements the exterior of the house		
~ An all-season wreath on the front door		
~ A shiny brass door knocker		
~ An attractive door mat		
~ Flowers clustered around a lamppost or mailbox		
~ Window boxes under windows and/or along railings		
~ (Winter: drape pine boughs across the empty boxes)		
~ Hanging planters		
~ Groupings of tubs with flowers on porches and decks (Winter: plant small evergreen trees in tubs)		
~ Wood chips around trees and shrubs		
~ Brightly colored bird houses		
~ A porch swing with comfy cushions		
~ A hammock in the trees		
~ Filled bird feeders		
~ White wicker furniture		
~ An open umbrella above your deck furniture		
~ A croquet set		
~ Children's pool toys neatly arranged by the pool		
~ A tray with a pitcher and glass tumblers on the deck table – all ready to be filled with cold lemonade		
~ A bird book lying open on a chaise lounge (with a pair of binoculars on the table next to it)		
~ A chart outlining the location and names of all trees, shrubs, vines, perennials and bulbs on the property		

The Exterior ...

Personal List

[illegible]

The Garage ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Have a garage sale		
~ Clean the trashcans to eliminate any unpleasant smell		
~ Make sure the space is brightly lit		
~ Sweep the floor		
~ Clean any oil and rust stains from the floor		
~ Clean the windows		
~ Replace any cracked or broken window glass		
~ Get rid of cobwebs		
~ The garage door is easy to maneuver up and down		
~ Pile up cartons together in one corner		
~ Recycle old magazines and newspapers		
~ Hang bicycles on bicycle hooks		
~ Hang tools on peg board		
~ Hang rakes, shovels, brooms, hoes, etc. from hooks		
~ Clean off the work bench		
~ Put up shelving for paint cans, containers of nails and screws, bags of fertilizer, winter tires, etc.		
~ Place all balls in bins so they are not bouncing around		
~ Organize gardening equipment		
~ All children's toys, strollers, wagons, etc. are organized together		
~ Replace outside basketball hoop if net is torn		

The Garage ...

The Finishing Touches

- ~ Window boxes filled with flowers
- ~ Curtains in the windows
- ~ A weathervane on the roof
- ~ Ivy growing on outside wall
- ~ Flowering shrubs around the exterior
- ~ Colorful hooks to hang implements
- ~ A large wall clock
- ~ An intercom into the house
- ~ A hobby project on the work bench ...
possibly a piece of furniture being refinished

TO DO	DONE

All Through The House ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Repair any house foundation cracks		
~ Clean all windows, including those in the garage		
~ Replace any cracked or broken window glass		
~ Repair any wood rot		
~ Check window screens. Replace any that are bent or bulging		
~ Repair and/or replace caulking and weather-stripping around windows and doors		
~ Storm windows are available and clean		
~ Exterior doors lock properly. Easy to open and shut		
~ Oil any squeaky door hinges		
~ Doorbells are working properly		
~ Polish any brass door handles		
~ Interior doors lock properly		
~ All doors and walls are free of fingerprints		
~ Illuminate dark corners with brighter light bulbs		
~ Consider replacing standard lighting with some track lighting		
~ Repair any noisy pipes		
~ Repair any squeaky floorboards		
~ Repair any cracks in floorboards or floor tiles		
~ Replace loose floorboards or floor tiles		

All Through The House ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Repair any woodwork (door frames, baseboards, chair rails, etc.) if chipped or dented		
~ Give woodwork a fresh coat of paint, if necessary		
~ Smoke & heat detectors are operating		
~ Fire extinguishers are in proper locations		
~ All electrical outlets are functioning properly. Try not to have extension cords running all around a room		
~ All electrical switches are working		
~ All electrical wall switches have plate covers		
~ All electrical wall plates are free of fingerprints		
~ Electrical wiring is up to safety standards		
~ Central Vac is functioning properly and the collection bin is cleaned out		
~ There are no "dud" telephone jacks		
~ Home insulation is up to standards		
~ Fumigate house, if bothered by pests or rodents		
~ Eliminate unpleasant odors ... cooking, pets, cigarette smoke, damp, must		

All Through The House ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ A home security system		
~ A room intercom system		
~ House at a comfortable temperature		
~ Soft music playing		
~ The aroma of coffee brewing, or something baking in the oven		
~ All interior doors wide open to create a sense of spaciousness		
~ Curtains open (you don't want to look as though you have dirty windows)		
~ Interior lights on to create a warm ambiance		
~ No pets or children racing through the house		
~ An unobstructed "walking path" through the house.		
~ Buyers shouldn't have to maneuver around too many pieces of furniture		
~ A planned spot for the buyers and agent to sit and discuss the house – possibly the kitchen – with tea, coffee and a tray with cups and saucers, cream and sugar, and cookies ready on the counter.		
~ A printed sheet for buyers describing what you enjoy most about living in your home		

All Through The House ...

Personal List

[illegible]

The Entryway ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clean and polish hardwood flooring		
~ Professionally clean carpeting		
~ Thoroughly clean out the entryway closet. Leave only the coats you are currently wearing. To give the illusion of space, hang longer coats to each end and shorter jackets in the center		
~ Add new hangers or colorful hooks		
~ Entryway is unobstructed		
~ Entryway is brightly lit		
~ Add a tri-light lamp to change the mood		
~ If entryway is dark, consider painting walls a pale cream color to bounce some light		
~ Consider hanging a mirror along one wall to open up the space and give either a sense of depth or width.		
~ Be sure it is reflecting something interesting.		
~ Consider a small table		
~ If you have a table, make sure it is uncluttered		
~ Hang a favorite painting or framed print. Here, in the entryway, it will be easily viewed		
~ If you have a wall with a collection of interesting objects, consider setting it off with spot lighting		
~ Repair any loose carpeting or slippery areas on the staircase		

The Entryway ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Consider removing carpeting and painting the steps		
~ Handrail on staircase is secure		
~ Staircase is free of clutter		
~ Upstairs landing is well lit and free of clutter		
~ Clean and polish hardwood flooring on upstairs landing and hallway		
~ Professionally clean carpeting on upstairs landing and hallway, or remove if badly stained		
~ Paint woodwork and doors a semi-gloss white enamel. This will give a fresh clean look, and will pick up color tones in your wall paint		
~ Clean all dirt and scuff marks from walls and doors		
~ Repair any chipped plaster		
~ Consider wallpapering or adding a wallpaper border to entryway and upstairs landing		

The Entryway ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ A colorful mat at the front door		
~ Space in the closet to hang the Buyers' coats		
~ A polished table with a healthy plant		
~ A little wicker basket on the table to hold the mail		
~ The overhead light on a dimmer switch		
~ Mirrors giving the illusion of more space		
~ A hanging piece of stained glass in a sunny window		
~ A co-ordinated paint palette that will carry interesting colours throughout the space		
~ A tall vase of ornamental grasses		
~ If an old house, a framed piece of original wallpaper		
~ An unusual art object or collection of furniture (e.g.: a child's rocking horse, old maps, an interesting piece of sculpture, colorful bird house, walking sticks, or bright ceramic flower pots)		
~ A set of small, framed botanical or floral prints on the staircase wall		
~ A little round or oval rug on the floor of the upstairs landing		
~ On the upstairs landing ... a staged grouping consisting of a small table with a reading lamp and a selection of interesting books		

The Entryway ...

Personal List

[illegible]

The Living Room ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Refinish or polish hardwood floors		
~ Professionally clean the carpeting or area rugs		
~ Repair any worn spots on carpeting, or replace with area rugs		
~ Professionally clean window treatments		
~ Clean any window blinds		
~ Be consistent with window treatments on all the windows in the room		
~ Clean ceiling fans and make sure they are operational		
~ Remove any "extra" furniture that crowds the room		
~ Pull furniture away from the walls and group pieces together in more intimate settings (i.e.: around a coffee table, an area rug, or in front of a fireplace)		
~ Recover throw pillows to compliment the material in curtains, or the colors in the window shades and blinds		
~ Keep the television hidden behind closed doors of TV unit		
~ If television is open in the room, keep it dusted and secure any loose wires with Velcro strips		
~ Clear away into boxes any tapes, videos or CDs that cannot be stored out of sight		
~ Remove newspapers at the end of the day, and only keep the most current magazines		

The Living Room ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Keep magazines in a magazine rack		
~ Immediately clear away any food or beverages as soon as they have been consumed		
~ Remove any and all plants that are not in the optimum of good health		
~ Lower hanging planters so that buyers are looking into them and not up at the bottom of dirty pots		
~ Clean all the light fixtures		
~ Use tri-light bulbs in table lamps, to control the degree of lighting you wish to display		
~ Clean the fireplace. Remove any build-up of ashes or charred bits of wood from the grate		
~ Polish fireplace implements		
~ Dust the furniture, windows and lights		
~ Vacuum the carpet / rugs and sweep the floor		

The Living Room ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ In a sparse room, furniture that is all covered with one fabric for a really dynamic look		
~ Patterned curtains and clusters of pillows around the room in complementary & contrasting colors		
~ (Winter) A fire crackling in the hearth ... only if someone will be present in the house!		
~ (Summer) A fire laid with pretty logs, or a basket of dried flowers, or ferns, in front of the fire screen		
~ A grouping of small ornaments, or a large painting (with picture light) over the mantle		
~ A comfy chair by the window, with soft pillows.		
~ Next to it a little table with a bright reading lamp, a dish of mints, a mystery novel ... and a footstool.		
~ Two chairs grouped together around a small table with a jigsaw puzzle underway – and a colorful dish of pretzels		
~ A coffee table with a bouquet of flowers and a sumptuous “coffee-table book”		
~ Music sheets on a piano		
~ Potted palm trees and hanging ferns drawing your eye away from bare corners		
~ A sofa table behind the sofa, perhaps displaying a lamp, a cherished photograph in a lovely frame, or an unusual little clock		
~ Indoor shutters on windows that overlook a garden		
~ The use of chair rail molding and/or a dramatic paint palette		

The Living Room ...

Personal List

[illegible]

[illegible]

- ~ Refinish or polish hardwood floors
- ~ Professionally clean the carpeting or area rugs
- ~ Repair any worn spots on carpeting, or replace with area rugs
- ~ Professionally clean window treatments
- ~ Be consistent with window treatments on all the windows in the room
- ~ Clean ceiling fans and make sure they are operational
- ~ Remove any “extra” furniture that crowds the room
- ~ Remove and box any unnecessary dishes from your china cabinet
- ~ Clean the lighting fixtures
- ~ Repair and stain any nicks or scratches in the furniture
- ~ Vacuum the carpet / rugs and sweep the floor
- ~ Dust the furniture, windows and lights
- ~ Polish any wooden pieces
- ~ Polish and shine any brass hardware

The Dining Room ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ An elegantly set table for four – with china, crystal and silverware		
~ A low centerpiece of flowers or candles		
~ An eye-catching runner on a sideboard		
~ A side table arranged with a tea set, cups and saucers, and a couple of ceramic bowls of fruit		
~ The interior light on in the china buffet		
~ A grouping of pretty painted dishes on the wall		
~ The overhead chandelier on a dimmer switch		
~ A small decorator lamp for accent lighting		
~ A large, framed mirror across one wall to add a sense of depth		
~ A dramatic curtain arrangement across the tops of windows (and sliding door)		
~ Potted palm trees and hanging ferns drawing your eye away from bare corners		
~ A large accent rug on the floor in the center of the room		
~ The use of chair rail or crown molding, a co-ordinated paint palette within the room.		

The Kitchen ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clear off counter tops of practically everything.		
~ Buyers don't want to see a clutter of small appliances, gadgets, mixing bowls, etc.		
~ Clean refrigerator, stove and microwave		
~ Clean vents and exhaust hoods		
~ Check lights and timers on appliances		
~ Wipe down surface of cupboards and drawers		
~ If cupboards are old, consider giving them a fresh coat of paint, new handles and perhaps some interesting molding on the outside of the doors		
~ Cupboard doors close tightly		
~ Replace any broken handles		
~ Drawers open and shut without sticking		
~ Silverware and cooking utensil drawers are organized		
~ Wash the inside of the refrigerator (including shelves and food crispers)		
~ Add a box of baking soda in the refrigerator to absorb odors		
~ Throw out any expired food or old left-overs		
~ Kitchen sink is spotless		
~ Use grout cleaner around sink and recaulk if necessary		
~ Repair / replace chips in countertops		

The Kitchen ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clean any stains on countertop		
~ Scrub the cupboard under the kitchen sink		
~ Organize cleaning items into either a pail or on a special cleaning rack		
~ Repair any leaky faucets or under-the-sink pipes		
~ Wash and wax floor. Remove old wax build-up		
~ If linoleum is worn, replace or cover with an area rug		
~ Clean curtains and window blinds		
~ Clean ceiling fan		
~ Clean light fixtures		
~ Copper pot display is shining		
~ Organize Pantry with boxes, cans and jars placed neatly on the shelves		
~ Get rid of any unhealthy plants		
~ Clean pet eating area		
~ Kitchen is well lit		
~ Dust the furniture		
~ Vacuum rugs and sweep the floor		

The Kitchen ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ Colored glass bottles in the window		
~ A countertop arrangement of an open cookbook, a cheery bowl of fruit and a vase of garden flowers		
~ New dish towels and matching pot holders (bring them out if buyers are coming)		
~ Something aromatic simmering on the stovetop		
~ A new area rug at the sink (bring it out if buyers are coming)		
~ Brightly coloured blinds in the windows – could pick up a colour in a rug or kitchen accessories		
~ The overhead light on a dimmer switch		
~ The table set with bright place mats and napkins		
~ Use of a co-ordinated paint palette		
~ Strip lighting under the cupboards		
~ Window ledge with tiny terra-cotta pots of herbs		
~ Decorative tiles in splash area behind sink		
~ One cupboard with clear door to display glassware		
~ A drying rack to display dishes and add colour		
~ A mug rack with unusual mugs		
~ Recipe books – that aren't tattered and stained with food		
~ Cooking utensils hanging from a rack near the stove, or in a pottery container beside the stove		

The Kitchen ...

Personal List

[illegible]

The Bathroom(s) ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Remove any personal items (shampoo, medicine, cosmetics, hair blowers, etc.)		
~ Clean all glass and mirrors		
~ Remove any mildew		
~ Recaulk if necessary		
~ Repair grouting if necessary		
~ Remove rust stains from toilet, sink, tub and shower		
~ Repair any chipped porcelain		
~ Scour the bathtub and shower		
~ Wash shower curtain		
~ Replace any discolored shower curtain or shower door		
~ Clean soap build-up from shower door		
~ Shower door is easy to open and shuts tightly		
~ Clean and wax the floor. Remove any wax build-up		
~ Replace any stained, cracked or loose tiles		
~ Tighten loose toilet		
~ Replace old toilet seat		
~ Toilet flushes properly		
~ Wash toilet seat cover and bath mats		
~ Toilet freshener in toilet		
~ Check water pressure		

The Bathroom(s) ...

Preliminary Work (continued)

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clean vanity, sink, and polish all faucets		
~ Soap and soap dish are clean		
~ Repair dripping faucets		
~ Area under sink is organized		
~ Pipes under the sink are clean and not leaking		
~ Linen closet is organized		
~ Use shelf paper as liners in drawers which are stained, or on linen closet shelves		
~ Clean the lighting fixtures		
~ Launder the curtains		
~ Arrange towels neatly on towel racks		
~ Laundry basket is out-of-sight		
~ Vacuum / sweep floor		

The Bathroom(s) ...

The Finishing Touches

	TO DO	DONE
~ Thick new towels in vibrant colors (bring out when buyers are coming)		
~ Toilet seat cover and bath mat co-ordinate with towels		
~ Colorful guest towels laid out on the vanity		
~ A full length mirror		
~ A lock on the door		
~ Dishes of tiny ivy plants		
~ A collection of scented (but unlit) candles		
~ A glass bowl of potpourri		
~ A mirrored tray with a collection of fancy perfume bottles		
~ An antique water pitcher filled with dried, silk, or fresh flowers		
~ Window ledge with tiny terra-cotta pots of herbs		
~ A pretty plate of little guest soaps		
~ Towel racks, which match bathroom fixtures		
~ A grouping of framed prints on the wall		
~ A rod of hanging lace in a high window, instead of blinds		
~ A room done in one color with one bright accent color (all white with a wallpaper border of sky and clouds, and sky blue towels)		
~ For an ensuite bathroom, paint and towels to co-ordinate with the bed linen and curtains in the master bedroom		
~ A hand painted sink		

[illegible]

The Bedroom(s) ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Professionally clean carpeting		
~ Polish hardwood flooring		
~ Clean the curtains		
~ Remove excess furniture to create a feeling of space		
~ Clear personal items from the dresser		
~ Valuables are hidden from view		
~ Sliding closet doors open easily and are not obstructed		
~ Closet doors open and close tightly		
~ Organize closets and keep only what is totally necessary. Box and label the rest for moving		
~ Keep shoes on a shoe rack in closet		
~ Use closet organizers		
~ Make the beds		
~ Hang-up and put away clothes		
~ Dry clean comforters and bedspreads		
~ Clean light fixtures		
~ Use tri-light bulbs in table lamps		
~ Clean ceiling fan		
~ Dust furniture		
~ Vacuum the carpet / rugs and sweep the floor		
~ Use boxes under the bed for hidden storage		

The Bedroom(s) ...

Personal List

[illegible]

The Basement / Laundry ...

Preliminary Work

	TO DO	DONE
~ Ventilate ... no smell of damp or must		
~ Make sure all of the basement is brightly lit		
~ Clean the furnace, humidifier, hot water heater and circuit breaker box		
~ Change any filters		
~ Cover water heater with insulated jacket		
~ All light switches work		
~ Pull chain lights have chains, and are easy to reach		
~ Arrange basement contents so it is easy to walk around		
~ Handrail on basement stairs is secure		
~ Arrange for an exterminator, if necessary		
~ Clean and deodorize any pet areas		
~ Fix any water leakage and repair damage		
~ Electrical system is up-to-date and fuse box is not overloaded		
~ Clean laundry appliances		
~ Appliances are in working order		
~ Keep dirty clothes out of sight		
~ Floor and walls around washer and dryer are clean		
~ Laundry area is brightly lit		
~ All pipes and connections are in working order		
~ Vacuum, sweep and dust basement		

The Basement / Laundry ...

The Finishing Touches

- ~ Unfinished basement has freshly painted walls
- ~ Colorful area rugs in basement and in laundry area
- ~ Artificial greenery in laundry area
- ~ Laundry has a “drying rack”
- ~ Owner’s manuals conveniently placed so buyer can check them
- ~ An “interrupted” board game laid out on a table in a Recreation Room
- ~ A sofa, two comfy chairs and a coffee table arranged in front of a television. A warm afghan folded in the corner of the sofa. A bowl of popcorn and a movie DVD placed on the table

TO DO	DONE

The Basement / Laundry ...

Personal List

[illegible]

“Don’t Panic ... Buyers Are Coming”

The Last Minute

	TO DO	DONE
~ Clear away any litter from in front of your house		
~ Make sure all outside bikes, toys and gardening implements are in their proper places		
~ Remove any pet debris		
~ Garage is empty of vehicles and garage door is shut		
~ (Winter) Snow and ice removed from sidewalks		
~ Trashcans are not causing the garage to smell		
~ Garage floor is swept		
~ Lights are on in each room (and in the basement)		
~ Start a fire in the fireplace (if someone is home)		
~ No lingering odors in the house		
~ Start coffee brewing in the kitchen		
~ Turn on soft music in the living room		
~ There is an unobstructed path through the house		
~ Open all interior doors		
~ Open the curtains and roll-up any blinds		
~ The house is at a comfortable temperature		
~ Vacuum and dust (if there is time)		
~ Close TV cabinet doors in the Living Room		
~ Remove any glasses and plates of food from rooms		
~ Put away any clutter in hallways, or on staircases		
~ Make sure there is space in entry closet to hang coats		

“Don’t Panic ...Buyers Are Coming”

The Last Minute

	TO DO	DONE
~ Remove any dead flowers from floral arrangements		
~ If china buffet has interior lights, turn them on		
~ Make sure kitchen appliances are spotless		
~ Take out any kitchen garbage		
~ Check that the pet “eating area” is clean		
~ Clear the countertops		
~ Put out new dish towels and tea towels (and placemats on the kitchen table)		
~ Clear all dirty dishes into the dishwasher		
~ Personal items are hidden from view in the bathrooms		
~ Put out new bathroom towels		
~ Tubs and sinks are clean		
~ Shower curtains are pulled back		
~ Toilet seats are down		
~ Beds are made		
~ Clothing is put away		
~ Personal items are put away off the bedroom dressers		
~ Toys are picked up in children’s bedrooms		
~ Turn off any televisions		
~ Turn off any radios		
~ Turn off dishwasher		
~ Turn off washing machine and / or dryer		
~ All “Finishing Touches” Are In Place		
~ Don’t forget the pets		
~ Don’t forget the children		
~ Relax. Go somewhere and have fun!!		

“Don’t Panic ... Buyers Are Coming”

Personal List

[illegible]