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Styling to **Sell**

Create the best first impression,
because you won't get a second.

Selling Style Room Checklist
- to prepare your home for sale.



You never get a second chance to make a first impression



When you think about selling your home, one of the first things you should do is walk through the property with fresh eyes, imagining you are a potential buyer.

How does your home look – is it welcoming, light and spacious? Is it clean and well cared for or cluttered and dusty? Can people easily imagine themselves living there or is it full of your personal stuff?

Taking time to prepare your home for sale can make a significant difference to the time it takes to sell and the sale price you achieve.

Here are some simple ideas to help you make your property attractive to buyers.

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Welcome

Your property needs to look great from the street, so that as soon as prospective buyers arrive they're excited about coming in to take a closer look. Spending just a few hours on improving the entrance can create the right energy the moment buyers see your home for the first time.

Neat, clean and cared for.

The first thing to do is to make sure that everything looks clean and well cared for, so make sure roofing, gutters, windows, balustrades, driveways, footpaths, walls and garden areas are clean and in good repair and free of dirt and things like spider webs.

If you have a front gate it will be the first thing that people come into contact with so it needs to be clean, in good condition and quiet.

If possible keep the garbage bins out of sight and clear out your letter box each day and ensure no flyers or newspapers are left lying around.

Place a door mat outside your front door as this shows you care about keeping your property clean.

Pave the way to a successful sale.

You may want to guide buyers to your door with a paved pathway. Plain white pavers look terrific against a green lawn. If the steps to your front door look a little shabby a great trick is to tile the step rises, rather than ripping everything out and starting from scratch.

Spruce up the front door.

A freshly painted front door and surrounding structure will look fresh and inviting. Door and window handles should be clean or even new.

Make an entrance.

Potted plants on either side of the front door and neat landscaping can really help to make your home more welcoming and memorable.

Try and keep everything symmetrical. If you are using pots and plants to add interest. The trick is to keep it simple and not clutter the space.

Step inside and see the light.

If your hallway feels dark, try painting the walls white to lighten things up, or add a sky light. A broad runner will make a hallway seem wider. Fresh flowers in the hallway are a great way to greet visitors.



The room that sells

The kitchen is the one room that can make or break a sale. It's usually the most expensive room in any house, so prospective buyers don't want to see a kitchen that needs a total upgrade. This doesn't mean a total re-fit, but there are some small things you can do to make your kitchen more appealing.



Clear the clutter.

If you have more on your kitchen benches than in the cupboards you need to clear the clutter.

Add appliances.

Buyers know just how expensive a new oven or dishwasher can be, so they may shy away from your house if they think they will need to spend up big on replacements for these appliances. If your appliances are out of date, consider replacing them. It may be a worthwhile investment.

Wall worries.

A fresh coat of paint can work wonders in a drab kitchen, especially if cooking splatters have become a feature! Don't forget your worn tiles, a little primer and paint can make a huge difference.

Do up your doors.

Swapping cabinet doors can give your kitchen a whole new look. If entirely new doors are outside your budget you can make a huge difference by simply replacing the handles of your cupboards and drawers.



Lift the lighting.

The lighting in a kitchen is something buyers will take careful note of. Installing fluorescent or spot lights under the top cupboard can provide light for benchtop work areas.

Benchtops.

Many people think that replacing a scratched and stained benchtop is just too costly, but not all benchtop materials are that expensive. This small investment could save your sale!

Fix the floor.

If your kitchen floor is a little worse for wear, lift the lino and if you have them, polish the floorboards underneath - if they are in good enough condition - otherwise lay vinyl flooring, which is easy to clean. Alternatively you may like to use tiles for a contemporary cool feeling.

Life style

Buyers like large living areas, so be sure to reduce the clutter and maximise the space.



Colour your world (with care).

Barbie pink striped walls might be the latest trend, but most buyers will be put off by such a fashion statement. When selling, the best advice is to keep things neutral.

This doesn't mean living in a world of white. If your living area seems cold, try a colour scheme of rich neutrals like sand and bronze tones. For a cooler feel, look at whites with a blue tinge.

Size does matter.

Today's buyers like large living areas and open plan living is very popular. If your home doesn't have a large living space then you will need to make the most of the space you do have. Colour can help, colours like blues and greens can make a room appear bigger. How you finish a small room is also important. In a small room, especially one with low ceilings, keep furnishings below waist height and limit the number of pieces in the room. Clutter will make your small room look even smaller!

Find a feature.

One of the golden rules of interior design is that rooms need a focus. It could be a fireplace, or the view from your window or French doors. If your living space doesn't have a natural feature why not consider a feature wall? Even if buyers don't agree with your style, most will not have a problem with changing one wall.

Go with the flow.

Show buyers how easy it is to live in your living space. These rooms are places for people to communicate and relax so make sure you arrange your room to demonstrate this.

Consider traffic flow, conversation areas, access from seating to coffee or side tables and task lighting for work or reading areas.

Watch out below.

Floors are the most expensive part of any room to replace; buyers know this, so they will want to see quality flooring. It may not be economical to replace worn or inappropriate flooring before you sell, so make the most of what you have.

Have your carpets professionally cleaned. Marked or damaged timber floors should be re-sanded and polished.



Soak up a sale

Whatever condition your bathroom is in, it must be clean. Nothing puts buyers off like mildew and a dirty loo!



Clean, clean, clean.

Clean your tiles and grouting, make sure your windows, mirrors and shower screens are spotless and free of streaks. Hairs in the drains are a real put off, so check this before you open your home to buyers. Replace your soap bars with liquid soap, there will be less mess to take care of.

That smell won't sell.

It is a fact of life that bad smells can creep into your bathrooms. Nothing will put a buyer off faster than a bad smell, so make sure you air your bathrooms well, open the windows, use the extractor fan and add some potpourri or air freshener if needed...but don't go over the top as buyers might think you are trying to hide something.

Fix the fittings.

Cracked basin, toilets or tubs give the impression the room is unhygienic, so consider replacing these. It's not that expensive provided you don't change the plumbing.

Buyers will lap up luxury.

Today luxury spa bathrooms are very popular, but we don't all have this look. You can however add a little luxury to any bathroom.

Fresh plump towels, some handmade soaps, plant or fresh flowers and some boutique bath products set out in your bathroom will give that feeling of luxury.

Space savers.

If you have a small bathroom don't clutter the limited wall space with towel rails, put them on the back of the door. If you are renovating a small bathroom, consider wall mounted sinks and toilets. Use big mirrors to make the room appear twice the size, not only will they enhance the feeling of spaciousness, they are also very practical.

The bathroom will also seem less cluttered if you keep the colour scheme simple and light as well as ensuring you have good storage to hide all those bits and pieces.

A new coat.

Stained or chipped bathtubs and basins can be easily fixed by enamelling companies that can give your fitting a whole new look. They can even enamel old tiles, so if your bathroom's colour scheme is straight out of the 1970's this simple inexpensive process could save your sale. Add to this a fresh coat of paint on the walls and you have a whole new bathroom.



Sleeping beauty

Create a place where people feel like they can escape.



When it comes to bedrooms, size matters!

After the number of bedrooms, buyers are most interested in the size.

Use neutral colours to make your bedrooms seem larger and reduce the amount of furniture to maximise the feeling of space. Be clever with the space you have. If you have a small bedroom use a double bed instead of a queen, or bunks in a children's room.

Storage style.

You can never have enough storage in a bedroom! That's why you'll see people peeking in cupboards and wardrobes at an open house. To reduce the demands on limited space in small bedrooms, consider having built-in robes installed, but keep the interior simple because if you include all the bells and whistles you won't recoup the costs.

Light and airy.

Bedroom lighting is really important in creating atmosphere. To give a romantic feel, consider adding dimmer switches and bedside lamps. If you are having evening viewings, quality lighting is essential.

Give me sanctuary.

Buyers want a bedroom where they can escape the worries of life. You can make your bedroom a sanctuary by adding a little luxury with fresh linen, puffed up pillows and extra cushions, a comfy chair and a few special features, like candles and perfume bottles.

Less is more.

However large your bedrooms are, they will look small if they are cluttered with your personal knick-knacks. When it comes time to sell make sure you clear away the clutter and personal items, such as photos. That doesn't mean your rooms need to look totally impersonal, a few exotic perfume bottles, a vintage tea cup by the bed or a romantic candle display can make the room feel like home for potential buyers.

Step outside

Just like inside your house, your garden should be tidy and clear of clutter.



Neat and trim.

Weed your garden and keep the lawn trimmed when opening your home for inspection.

Consider your plants - remove dead plants and replace with new ones, but make sure they suit the conditions in your garden: you don't want them to die before you sell.

Colourful creations.

The garden is one place you can have fun with colour but rather than introduce lots of different colours into a small garden bed, try sticking to one shade, perhaps using varying tones.

You can add instant colour with pots of whatever is in flower from the nursery.

Styling your garden.

You can give your garden a simple makeover before you sell by adding defining borders to your flower beds and adding a focal point. Timber borders are popular, or you can outline your beds with small shrubs or grasses. Add a few larger plants as focal points but keep them in proportion to the size of your garden.

Creating a courtyard.

Many houses today, particularly in the inner city, don't have large gardens. Often there is only a small courtyard so it is important to maximise this space. The first step may be to create a focal point like a water feature, statue or urn.

This should be placed at the furthest point from the entrance so your buyers' vision is drawn to a distance, giving a sense of space. You can also give an illusion of space by paving the entire area with large pavers to make the ground look wider and less busy. Don't use any dark colours in your courtyard structures as these reduce the perception of space.

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Pavement Appeal

- Clean roofing, gutters, windows and balus-
- trades

Make an entrance - Front yard

- Add interest to your doorway with potted plants
- Pave a pathway to your front door
- Spruce up your front door with a coat of paint
- Consider improving privacy by adding a low wall at the front of your house
- If your hallway is narrow and dark paint it a light colour and add a broad floor runner to make it seem wider
- Invest in a new front door mat



Living style - Lounge room

- Use neutral colours in your living space
- Use receding colours like blues and greens to make the small space seem larger
- Find a focus in your room. If you don't have a natural focus, add a feature wall
- Ensure your carpets are cleaned and marked or damaged timber floors are re-sanded and polished

The room that sells - Kitchen

- Fix the floor by lifting old lino and replacing it with new lino, polished floorboards or tiles
- If your benchtops are scratched or stained, replace them with new laminate benchtops - it is not that expensive
- New cupboard and drawer handles will add life to an old kitchen
- A fresh coat of paint will cover cooking splatters and add life to a drab kitchen
- kitchen



Soak up a sale - Bathroom

- Your bathroom must be spotless and tiles clean
- Fix or replace cracked basins, toilets or tubs
- Air your bathroom before inspections - bad smells are a buyer turn off!
- Add a little luxury with plump towels, handmade soaps, a plant or flowers and some boutique bath products
- If your bathroom is small maximise space by putting the towel rail behind the door



Sleeping in style - Bedrooms

- Reduce the amount of furniture in small bedrooms to give the impression of space
- Storage is important - consider adding built-in wardrobes
- Add a little luxury with fresh linen, puffed pillows and extra cushions
- Dimmer switches create atmosphere in a bedroom
- De-personalise your bedroom but add little touches like candles and perfume bottles

Step outside - Backyard

- Trim your lawns and weed your garden beds
- Defining your garden bed borders
- Add a focal point
- Give the illusion of space in a courtyard by using large pavers
- Introduce colour with pots of whatever is in flower



Finishing touches

- Ensure all areas have been dusted, vacuumed and place new light globes in all rooms
- Add colour to neutral rooms through accessories
- Keep window treatments simple
- Disguise small windows by hanging curtains from the top of the wall rather than the top of the window
- Add elegance by extending your curtain drop so it pillows on the floor
- Don't go overboard with patterned accessories as they create a cluttered feeling

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