

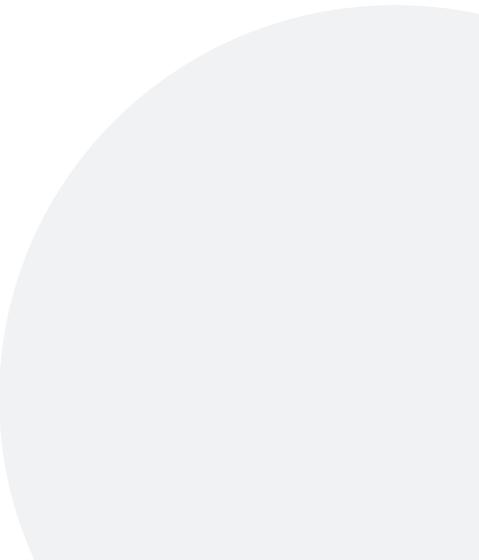


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## Sellers Guide

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## introduction

If you want your property to sell for the highest price, you need to spend some time and effort to get your property looking its best.

Adding value when selling needn't be expensive - simply cleaning and improving tired home areas can often make a big difference. If you're lucky, this small investment can make a huge difference to the resale value of your home.

Whatever the size and value of your property, following some basic rules will help you by adding value when selling.

This document has been prepared by [PROPERTY.COM.NA](https://www.property.com.na) to help you the seller do the best possible job.



## property valuations

Only a registered valuer can give an accurate valuation. The method of determining property value depends on the purpose of the valuation.

A valuation for insurance purposes is based on the replacement value of a property. In other words, what it would cost to rebuild it at today's building costs.

Lenders require a valuation to ensure that their loan will be secured against a property of equal or lesser value. They are interested in the **market value**.

An estate agent can merely give an informed opinion of the market value of a house. This is commonly known as a **comparative market analysis**.

While your mortgage lender will carry out a valuation of the property before agreeing to provide you with the capital required, it is advisable to ask the seller for the latest valuation of the property or in the absence of a recent valuation, to arrange for one to be carried out. The results of the valuation will naturally assist in assuring that you're negotiating fair terms from the outset.

You may ask your Bank to value the property for you, in which case; be sure to visit the mortgage zone section of the **PROPERTY.COM.NA**.

Alternatively, visit **PROPERTY.COM.NA** and view a list of valuers in your area.



## private sale? things to consider

If you are considering selling your home privately it is important to keep the following facts in mind before you make your decision.

### Advantages of using an Estate Agent

An estate agent works for you **FOR FREE** – Estate agents only get paid if successful in selling your home.

This sale would probably be your first poke at marketing a property yourself. There may be some important details that you are not aware of that may cause some trouble down the line. Estate agents do it every day - There are very few surprises.

### Buyers that want to buy privately

The kinds of buyers you will attract are somewhat different from the buyers that approach estate agents. Bargain hunters and property investors keep a close eye on properties that are privately marketed.

These private buyers target privately marketed properties for a reason: They want to save the agent's commission for themselves while at the same time, live in hope that they can negotiate a rate, which is below market value.

In many instances, the maxim "let the buyer beware", is turned on its head on this occasion.

### Financial and legal considerations

Private sellers usually have little or no knowledge of the financial or legal implications around the sale of a house.

Answer the following two questions to yourself:

*1. How will I ensure that my buyer's finance is approved?*

Accepting an offer which lapses weeks later when the buyer's bond is not approved could waste lots of your valuable time and money. In most cases, you will need to be upfront in your interviews with potential buyers and learn to spot time wasters.



Again, think about the value Estate agents bring in this generally uncomfortable environment. Also, the estate agents have many potential buyers on the books, so if one does fall through, you will not have wasted a few weeks in the process.

*2.How will I ensure that my interests are best protected in a sales agreement?*

Drawing up a contract of sale is easy! Drawing up a watertight contract that protects your interests and getting expert advice on the common law aspects of the sale will cost in legal fees, which are never insignificant

### **Access to qualified, buyer base**

Agents usually have access to an existing buyer base, private sellers don't. These existing buyers have been qualified by the agent and are serious about buying your home. This is the reason why an agent may sell your property within a few hours of listing it for sale.

The buyers that a private seller will encounter have not been qualified as far as finance, credit rating and motivation is concerned.



## using an estate agent - a recommendation

### Use one, because they can help you!

The majority of home sellers take on the task with an ally: an Estate Agent. They feel that it is better to entrust the sale of their biggest investment to a professional, rather than attempting to learn about selling a house in a trial and error method.

In addition, many people would rather use an Agent due to the complexities of modern Real Estate transactions since they usually incorporate legal and financial attributes, which takes them well beyond more simple transactions, such as the sale of a car.

Some of the other advantages of working with Agents that home sellers will list include access to the Multiple Listing Service so that large numbers of buyers will have access to the seller's property, the fact that the Agent absorbs all of the cost of advertising and marketing, and the screening that will be done of potential buyers by Agents.

In addition, the Agent handles the lion's share of the details relating to legislation, which in itself is a veritable minefield.

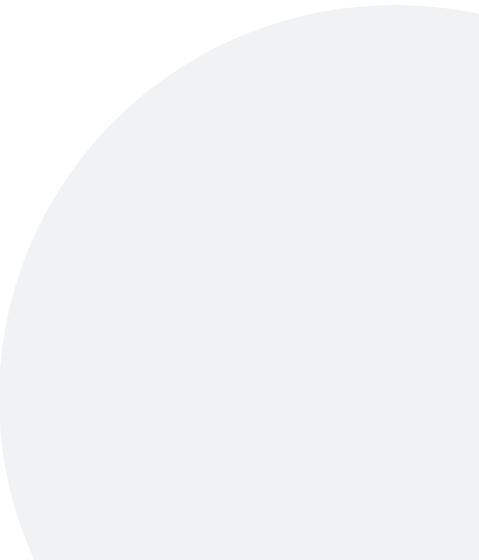
### Advantages of appointing an estate agent

For 95% of home sellers it makes perfect sense to use an estate agent. The advantages far outweigh any "savings" you may think that you will make by handling the process on your own.

Naturally anyone involved in the property market on a daily basis may "score" from handling the sale by themselves, but for those of us who are not "property players" it makes the most sense to leave the job in the hands of the professionals.

Remember, there is no short cut to experience, and selling a property has many pitfalls and a steep learning curve.

Amongst the many obvious advantages of using an estate agent, consider the following as logical, time and money saving reasons to engage in the services of an estate agent.

1. Professional estate agents bring experience, expertise and skill.
  2. An estate agent can deal with all aspects of selling your property from valuation, dealing with all enquiries from potential buyers, offer accompanied viewings to negotiating with your buyer on your selling price.
  3. Access to a database of home-seekers. At any one stage any estate agent will already have a host of potential buyers on their books. Their knowledge of the buyer and their requirements may be instantly matched to the home you have on offer.
  4. Estate agents know the market and also have significant advertising budgets, which are utilised to sell your property.
  5. When using an estate agent you can sit back and relax, safe in the knowledge that someone else has taken on the responsibility of managing your property sale.
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## choosing your estate agent

### What to look for:

1. A sense of professionalism
2. A full time Agent who is committed to the profession (and who will be committed to getting your house sold!)
3. A familiarity with the area in which your home is located.
4. A familiarity with the price range in which your house will be listed.
5. Evidence of advertising and marketing ability
6. References from previous sellers.

### Where to find an agent:

1. Ask family, friends and co-workers about Agents they have used--for selling a home, not buying--to get positive (and negative) input.
2. Check your local newspapers and homes magazines. An Agent with a number of advertisements most likely has a fairly extensive marketing budget and experience. Be certain, though, that the Agent does not have too many listings to service the sale of your home effectively.

### Questions to ask a perspective Agent

1. Are you a full time Agent?
2. How familiar are you with the area where our home is located?
3. Can you supply 3 names and addresses of recent clients for whom you sold a home that we can contact for reference purposes?
4. How did you arrive at the suggested listing price for our home?
5. What is your specific marketing plan for our house?
6. How do you plan on keeping us informed of the progress of the sale of our home?



# how to enhance the sale appeal of your home

## THE EXTERIOR

If you want to change the message your home is sending, you need to improve its “pavement appeal”. If you are preparing to sell your home there are some very simple ways of helping to ensure that you get a fast sale at the best possible price.

- Remember that the first impression of any potential buyer will be formed very quickly and their impression forming begins as they approach your front gate. Bearing this in mind, a good place to begin your preparations for sale is your front garden or property entrance.
- If you have a garden you should do everything you can to maximise its attractiveness, this doesn't mean you have call in the professionals, usually a good mow, some pruning and the addition of hanging baskets or outdoor pots will go a long way to enhancing the appeal of your garden.
- Make sure that grass is short, tidy and weed free. Edging your lawn will create an impression of tidiness.
- If you have flower beds - weed them!
- Make sure that all dead plants are removed and replaced by flowering plants. Remove any dead leaves, rubbish, toys etc. from your garden.
- If your gates or front walls are looking a bit shabby give them a coat of paint.
- If you have a garage or garden shed clear out the clutter. Space is always important to potential buyers. If you have a lot of stuff that you actually use in your garage or shed it's a good idea to box it up and store it - after all you're going to have to pack it for moving anyway.
- Give your windows a good clean.
- If the exterior of your property is in need of a paint job, invest in one - it will definitely prove to be money well spent!
- If you haven't painted or varnished your front door in the last year repaint it or even replace it.
- If you have brasses polish them.
- Make sure that your door way is cobweb free and that your front bell, knocker or buzzer is in good working order.



## THE INTERIOR

- The most important thing inside your home is to make sure that it is spotlessly clean and clutter free.
- A fresh coat of paint will instantly clean and renew its look. If you are painting, choose neutral colours whether or not you personally like them. You must remember to constantly look at your home through the eyes of the buyer, so, while you might like bright colours the chances are it is not to most peoples taste.
- Neutrals enhance space and the sense of brightness.
- Having rooms packed with furniture will make them look much smaller. Take out needless items and put them into storage until you move.
- Move the furniture around to highlight the spaciousness of each room.
- If you have bookshelves tidy them up placing books in order of height.
- Make sure everything is dust free.
- Clean curtains and dust down blinds.
- If carpets are looking grubby have them steam cleaned - you can hire a cleaner yourself or else call in the professionals.
- If your floors are wooden have them waxed or polished.
- Clean out all your wardrobes Much as it may pain you, throw out or give away clothes and other items you do not use. Lots of storage space is a good selling feature and packed untidy presses create the impression that there is a lack of space in a property.
- For most buyers the kitchen and the bathroom are the most significant rooms in any house, this is usually due to the fact that they are the most expensive rooms to refit so it is very important that you make the most of them.
- Clean everything thoroughly - inside cupboards, cookers, under sinks.
- Make sure that fittings are working properly - buyers are turned off by leaking taps and dripping showers.
- In the kitchen make sure that all work surfaces are spotless and remember not to cook strong smelling foods in advance of viewings.
- As with the kitchen the bathroom must be spotless.
- Clean down everything in your bathroom from ceiling to floor.
- You can renew the look of tiles by whitening the grout (whitener is available in DIY stores)
- You might want to consider swapping your plastic toilet seat for a wooden one.
- If you have an old shower curtain, replace it with a new one.



- Hide your cheap supermarket toiletries and display well packaged smart toiletries, add some candles and new towels.
- Other cheap ways of making a difference include replacing dusty old lampshades, adding new cushions, throws and tablecloths in luxury fabrics to furniture.
- Buy some nice leafy house plants and fresh flowers to add life.

### **Adding Value to your home before putting it on the market**

- Improve the kitchen. A well-groomed kitchen is usually one of the major selling points in a property. A complete replacement should be preceded by a look at the shape of the room and the position of the appliances to see if the design minimises the walk from one area to another when working. If a complete replacement is not required or is deemed too expensive, then consider changing the doors and the worktop to give a fresh new look. Replace the central pendant with a few halogen lights. These give an ideal light for a kitchen. Lights under the upper units are very useful when cooking and are inexpensive to install.
- Improve the bathroom. If you don't have a power shower consider installing one. For some reason people now have an aversion to some sanitary ware colours such as avocado and chocolate brown. Such an aversion is usually an indication that something is about to come back into fashion. For now, however, white seems to be the only acceptable colour. A basic white suite won't set you back too much, but unless you intend to replace the tiles make sure it will fit in exactly the same spot on the original. A touch of luxury can be added by merely changing the fittings to newer, better designed versions. Vinyl flooring will do at a pinch, but ceramic tiles on the floor are ideal.
- Tidy the garden. Keep it well maintained, the hedges and shrubs trimmed, the grass cut. It is worth getting your garden properly designed once. You may not do a complete landscaping job immediately but you will then have a plan towards which you can work. This may actually save you money on bad choices of plants, which later have to be pulled up. A well-designed patio or deck will give additional living space and greatly enhance the appearance of your garden.
- Be a legal eagle. If you have a large garden which is not in use you could try to get planning permission on part of it for either another house or for a flat. If you succeed you will then have a very valuable asset. You can then sell the plot or build on it yourself.



## Things You Should Never Do

- Build an extension that is poorly constructed or badly finished.
- Construct an extension without planning permission.
- Add an extension that occupies the entire garden.
- Concrete over the front garden, unless it's to provide necessary parking space.
- Reorganise your space so that you have a smaller number of bedrooms.



## staging a home for sale

Staging a home for sale involves changing negatives into positives and allowing potential buyers to fall in love with it.

If you have already attended to the first impression your home creates, staging your home won't be too much work.

This article has suggestions for every room when staging a home for sale.

### Living Rooms

Most buyers are looking for a cosy living room where they can relax at the end of a long day, watch television and entertain. Despite this multi-purpose use, it's essential that the space still retains its identity.

A living room requires a focal point, an area to which the eye is drawn. Traditionally, the television and its unit provide a welcoming focal point. This is still the case as the television forms a major part of the family's entertainment. Have a close look at how you have structured the living room around this focal point. Is the current layout, the best usage of space? Are the wires and leads from external areas laid out across the floor or they neatly enclosed? A major reason for the choice of location for the TV is its proximity to the external wires and to plugs. If close proximity was your reasoning for the choice of location, revisit this immediately. Spend a little on extension cords and encapsulated wiring if you think the focal point will look better in another location.

Keep the living room neat and simple. Select only a few of your favorite prints, paintings and photographs to display. A few choice items, such as a carved wooden bowl, a few pieces of colorful pottery and a print or painting will add colour and personality to a room without it looking too cluttered.

Don't pile up old newspapers. Instead, select a few glossy magazines, which can be neatly displayed on a coffee table or magazine rack.

Tidy the bookshelves and CD racks.

Arrange furniture carefully. Although a very sparse room can look cold, an over furnished room will make a room look much smaller. Make sure there's ample space to walk around the room.



## The Kitchen

A scrupulously clean kitchen is a must when selling a property. No one longs to cook or eat in a dirty kitchen.

Keep work surfaces free of clutter. A few glass storage jars filled with dried pasta, pots containing fresh herbs and a bowl of fruit will make a kitchen look appealing.

Keep cookbooks to a minimum or stack them neatly on shelves. Get rid of, or hide, books with greasy covers.

Clean cupboards, shelves, floor and work surfaces.

Floors in good condition simply need a good clean. However, if flooring is worn and irreparable, consider replacing it with laminate, linolium or tiles. It's usually safer to choose plain rather than patterned styles.

If your fitted kitchen units look tired, consider keeping the carcasses and replacing the doors. This will instantly improve the look of the room but will save thousands on buying a totally new kitchen. If the units are in fairly good condition and just look dated, then simply replace the doorknobs, handles and taps. It's often worth saving money by buying cheap units but paying more for the smaller details, such as designer handles.

Another good tip for making a cheap kitchen look expensive is to fit good solid worktops onto existing units.

## The Bathrooms

As with kitchens, clean bathrooms appeal to potential buyers. Bathrooms are private spaces and buyers are looking for a simple, uncluttered space in which to relax and unwind.

Clean, clean, clean! The bathroom should be sparkling by the time you've finished scrubbing every inch of the space.



Coloured bathroom suites are out and old-fashioned white is back in. At the end of the day, simple traditional bathroom styles such as roll-top baths and classic white bathroom suites will always retain their value whereas fashionable colours and bathroom styles will date quickly.

Be wary of splashing out hundreds of pounds for a designer bathroom suite - you can often get a similar look for much less. Like kitchens, you can often jazz up a cheap, white bathroom suite by investing in good quality bathroom accessories such as taps, towel rails, towels and a bath mat.

Avoid carpets and wooden floorboards in bathrooms as they inevitably get soggy and stained. Go for linolium or tiles, which make for a hardwearing bathroom that is easy to clean.

Keep bathroom cleaning products hidden away in cupboards. Hide away cheap toiletries but keep a couple of quality products on display. Replace half-used soaps with new bars.

Choose plain towels that co-ordinate with the rest of the bathroom. Consider buying some 'just for show'. Keep the lavatory seat and lid down and choose white toilet paper.

Avoid overflowing linen baskets. Revitalize a tired bathroom with a green leafy plant, new taps and shower curtain. All these items can be picked up cheaply from DIY warehouses.

En-suite bathrooms are now very popular. It may be worth converting a small room or walk-in wardrobe into an extra bathroom if you have sufficient space.

## **Bedrooms**

Bedrooms and bathrooms are the most private spaces in a home and owners consider them as places where they can relax and escape the pressures of the outside world. It's wise to keep bedrooms neat and simple, with little evidence of personal items when selling your property.

De-personalise the bedroom - remove personal items such as photographs and soft toys.

Paint bedroom walls a plain, pale, relaxing colour. Bright reds and yellows are not good for bedrooms as they are invigorating colours. Choose one or two prints or paintings to hang on the bedroom walls.



Keep the bedroom uncluttered - store clothes in bedroom cupboards and don't leave items lying around on chairs etc. Display only a few of your favourite trinket boxes on dressing tables - remember less is usually more.

Plain bed linen looks less fussy than highly patterned bedroom sets. For texture and detail choose a rug and a couple of cushions.

## **Children's Rooms**

It's very difficult to keep children's bedrooms immaculate with every toy in its right place. Try to work around your limitations by investing in good bedroom storage systems and making the room visually appealing.

Instead of using bold patterned wallpaper with a children's theme, paint the walls a plain colour. Brighten up the bedroom with fun furnishings, such as curtains, bed linen and rugs. As a child grows older, the bedroom can be updated with new accessories rather than having to redecorate the whole room.

Keep the majority of toys neatly stacked on shelves or in bedroom cupboards with only a few items on display.



## showing the house

Your house should always be available for show, even though it may occasionally be inconvenient for you. Let your agent put a lock box in a convenient place to make it easy for other agents to show your home to homebuyers. Otherwise, agents will have to schedule appointments, which is an inconvenience. Most will just skip your home to show the house of someone else who is more cooperative.

Most agents will call and give you at least a couple of hours notice before showing your property. If you refuse to let them show it at that time, they will just skip your house. Even if they come back another time, it will probably be with different buyers and you may have just lost a chance to sell your home.

### Try Not to be Home

Homebuyers will feel like intruders if you are home when they visit, and they might not be as receptive toward viewing your home. Visit the local coffee house, yogurt shop, or take the kids to the local park. If you absolutely cannot leave, try to remain in an out of the way area of the house and do not move from room to room. Do not volunteer any information, but answer any questions the agent may ask.

### Lighting

When you know someone is coming by to tour your home, turn on all the indoor and outdoor lights – even during the day. At night, a lit house gives a “homey” impression when viewed from the street. During the daytime, turning on the lights prevents harsh shadows from sunlight and it brightens up any dim areas. Your house looks more homey and cheerful with the lights on.

### Fragrances

Do not use scented sprays to prepare for visitors. It is too obvious and many people find the smells of those sprays offensive, not to mention that some may be allergic. If you want to have a pleasant aroma in your house, have a potpourri pot or something natural. Or turn on a stove burner (or the oven) for a moment and put a drop of vanilla extract on it. It will smell like you have been cooking.