

SOUND OFF *Jean O'Neill*

# What are some affordable ways to increase a home's value?



**T**he best first step toward increasing your home's resale value is to look at your property from the eyes of your average buyer.

Most buyers are looking for good condition, neutral neat space and priced according to value. Basic rule of thumb is counters cleared off, shelves and closets half empty (that includes closet floors) and personal photos tucked away. All in all, less is more.

Once you've stored as much away as possible, placing extra furniture, tables, chairs, clothing, etc., out of the way — then

it's worthwhile to bring out the paint. A fresh coat will go a long way to brighten a home, include the trim. This also gives you a chance to take down pictures and photos and depersonalize (less is always more).

Cleaning windows, woodwork and corners makes a noticeable positive difference. Installing new shower curtains, a few fresh towels and scented soaps help in the bath. And, a few new accent pillows or throws in the living/family room can instantly add color and make a buyer feel like they too can live in a home as nice as yours.

Take a look outside too. First approach means a lot. Cover well heads with decoration, sweep, power wash and straighten crooked stones. Remember, look as a buyer would and do the small things that can be corrected; they will go a long way to offset objections outside of your control — like the slope of the property, slant of a driveway, a busy road, an eclectic neighbor, etc.

Add a pot of flowers in season or a front entry decoration — and pay attention to the front door. Give it a good cleaning or coat of paint as first impressions

are difficult to sway. Preparing your home to sell in its best light will get you the highest and best price and inspire you to get ready to make your next move.

As an agent, a walk-through is customary before listing and photographs are scheduled in order to discuss specifics with an owner as to what they can comfortably manage to best get their home ready to sell.

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