

THE KITCHEN - HOW IT CAN HELP SELL YOUR HOME

More than likely, the majority of people looking at your home will have to cook. Therefore, the one room they will look at with the most scrutiny is your kitchen.

Not only is the kitchen the one room that is the hub of activity in preparing meals, eating, and even sorting mail, the kitchen has long been a place for people to just "hangout." Some people say the kitchen is the heart of the home.

A recent study shows that as high as 85% of buyers consider the kitchen to be a huge deciding factor in their buying decision.

Even if you don't have the time or finances to do a complete kitchen overhaul with custom cabinets, ceramic tiles, and granite or marble countertops, there are some things you can do to spruce up the kitchen that won't cost you a bundle of money. These changes will greatly add value to your kitchen and to the sale of your home.

- Put on a fresh coat of paint. Stay with neutral colors and use a satin or semi-gloss finish for easy clean up.
- Consider new counter tops. You would be surprised at how many quality materials there are to choose from that are not expensive. If you have a harvest gold or avocado green countertop from the 1970's, this small investment will make a huge difference.
- Create a backsplash. Using tile or even Stone It (a product sold at most home improvement or retail chains. This is a spray stone-like material that comes in colors and can easily be sprayed on for a wonderful effect), you can change the entire appearance of the areas above the stove and sink.
- Sinks and faucets. Now is a great time to change out the chipped or stained sink with a new one, complete with new faucets, which come in a wide variety of materials and colors. Stainless steel sinks are highly recommended for two reasons. First, they look great, and second, they are the best choice for keeping bacteria down.
- Don't be afraid to accessorize. If you have a small wall area above the countertops, add some nice wallpaper. If the hardware on your cabinets is old and dingy, add new hardware. If your curtains are outdated, hang a fresh, fun pair of curtains to allow a lot of light into the room.
- Remove the clutter. Although empty counters aren't very attractive, neither are countertops that are so cluttered with all the latest technology that the buyer can't even envision their own things in the kitchen. Keep it neat and organized.
- Let as much light into the room as possible. This will provide a nice cheery atmosphere. If your kitchen goes out onto a patio or deck, make sure the outdoor area is also neat and that there is a nice view from the kitchen to the outside.
- Show off functionality. For example, if your kitchen has a nice desk for paying bills, show it off. If there are other special features such as a trash compactor, or chilled wine rack, make sure those are pointed out as well.

- Make sure all your appliances are clean and in good working order. Don't think someone will bypass looking in the oven, because they won't.
- If someone is getting ready to come through your house or if your agent is getting ready to host an open house, start baking. The fragrance of fresh baked bread or goodies will add a nice homey feel to your home the minute buyers walk into your home.

Before you put your home on the market, look around the kitchen and make sure it's what you would look for in a home. If not, make appropriate changes.

A hot item in kitchens today is stainless steel. The gourmet look of stainless steel stoves, refrigerators, and sinks is appealing to many homebuyers. Now you probably can't go out and buy all new appliances, but if you have other types of appliances, then consider changing out your hardware with stainless steel or even use stainless steel accessories. If you are in the market for new appliances, you can buy new stainless steel models but make sure the buyers know they are coming with you. This will at least show the potential buyer what the kitchen could look like if they wanted to add stainless steel themselves.

If you own an older home, you probably have one of three designs:

· The Galley · The L-Shaped · The U-Shaped

These designs were all created from the "work triangle" concept where all appliances are positioned within steps from each other. This idea was first conceived back in the 1950s based on information from stay-at-home moms.

By 1990, the designs of kitchens started to change based on lifestyle change. More and more couples starting sharing the cooking duties, families started eating more pre-packaged or frozen foods, and people needed better storage and space.

Because of these changes, multiple workstations are now being incorporated in kitchen layouts, getting away from the traditional triangle. This new design allows more people to work efficiently in the kitchen.

Keep in mind that there are still things you can do to make your kitchen more functional. You can add a center island for more counter space, have shelves built on the wall, install under-counter lighting, etc.

To bring life into your kitchen, you should avoid certain things such as:

- Dark corners in cabinets. To avoid this, add glide-out shelving or Lazy-Susans. · Obstructive doors. This would include cabinets, refrigerators, stoves, and dishwashers when the door is open, another area or cabinet is blocked.) P
- Poor lighting. One huge selling point in any kitchen is good lighting. If you have little to no natural lighting in your kitchen, you can add in good fluorescent or recessed lighting.

All rooms in your home are important when you decide to sell however, the kitchen is by far the most important room and should get some extra attention.