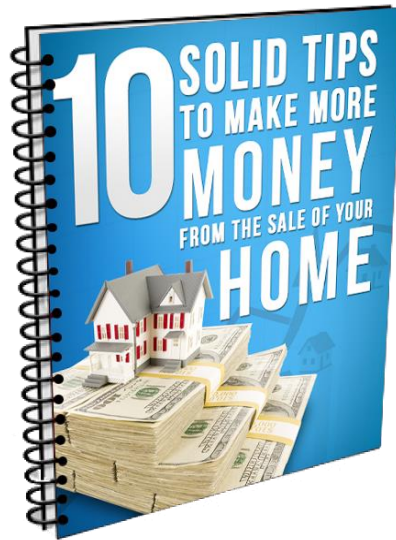


Thank You!

10 Solid Tips to Make More Money from the Sale of Your Home



Provided By: Gail Overton, REALTOR®

(210) 862-5126

Email: gia@giaventures.com

Kimberly Howell Properties®
21252 Gathering Oak #100
San Antonio, TX 78260

Alright, so you've got the house on the market, and you're just dying for that first visitor to come and take a look. You think your house is great, but your viewers seem less than impressed. The next potential buyers seem the same, as do the ones after that. What's the problem? Well, it could be any number of issues from a cluttered look to lackluster curb appeal. Luckily for you, your hard-to-please-viewers situation can be easily rectified with a little bit of time and effort.

The fact is that there aren't very many homes around that don't need at least a minor facelift before they go on the market for sale. It's imperative for you to quit thinking of your house as your home, but rather as an investment that is going to provide a great return. That is, it can provide a great return if you can persuade someone to buy it. Well, my friend, you are in luck! That's exactly what I'm going to help you figure out how to do.

Before we get into the nitty-gritty, I want to make certain that you understand a couple of things about selling houses. Number one, your target consumers, your location and your actual existing structure have a lot to do with the market value of your home, among other complicated factors. Some of the following suggestions work quite well across the board for pretty much anyone selling their home, such as painting. On the other hand, some work better for specific sets of people.

As such, don't feel compelled to drop a ton of money on a project that might raise the value of your home, but that no one in your area is willing to spend money on. Does that make sense at all? For instance, a basement can greatly raise the value of a home, and some buyers are willing to pay more for that particular finished room according to the National Association of Realtors. That's great news for folks with existing basements. However, if you live near an area where basements are virtually impossible to build, don't go into the throws of grief because there's no way you can possibly make this improvement. Trust me; people in your area aren't dead in after basements anyway. We'll find something else that buyers where you live are looking. That will, in reality, increase the value of your home.



Solid Tip # 1: Spotless is the Name of the Game

Seriously, the single most important task you can tackle to easily increase the salability of your home is to do a thorough, deep clean on it. You can hire someone to do much of the hard labor for you, but there are some things that you alone can handle.

By deep clean, I don't mean to vacuum the cheese puffs out of the floor, and then also empty the vacuum cleaner into the garbage. No, ma'am. No, sir. A deep clean goes much further than this, although I pat you on the back for your efforts.

Decluttering: Begin with decluttering. We're going to use the standard rule of thumb here. You need to go through your home and literally get rid of 50% of your belongings. Ideally, this would be items like photographs, highly personalized items, out-of-season clothes, random junk and excessive furniture.

Now, don't get all upset. We're not throwing out your precious pictures! You can donate some items, yard sale a ton of items for extra cash, trash what's no longer in its prime and store what you want to keep, like your photos.

Once you declutter, you'll be surprised how much roomier and nicer your home feels. The goal is to depersonalize it from your family so that potential buyers can envision themselves living there. That's difficult to do when surrounded by a whole other family's massive amount of belongings.

Deep Cleaning: Now it's time to move on to some serious, hardcore cleaning. You'll want to meticulously tidy up each room from top to bottom. It's much easier to do this once you've removed half of your extra clutter, too.

Make sure you don't forget to:

- Cobweb first, or you'll get the dust bunnies all over freshly cleaned floors and furniture later.
- Wash walls, unless you'll be painting.
- Clean all glass surfaces such as mirrors, television screens, patio doors and windows.
- Dust ceiling fans and lighting fixtures while you're cleaning out the cobwebs.
- Polish all wooden surfaces, and wipe down any leather furniture.
- Dust your blinds.
- Clean out and reorganize the closets and cabinets.
- Attack all appliances with cleaning fervor and make it count.
- Sinks, toilets, tubs, showers, faucets and countertops need to be impeccable. Although every room is important, the kitchen and bathrooms need to be topnotch, could-eat-off-of-the-floor quality.
- Vacuum rugs, shampoo carpet and mop like your life depends on it. Just make sure to attack these tasks last, or you'll inevitably have to do them twice.

Solid Tip #2: Painting Provides a Prime Canvas



You should seriously consider repainting the entire inside of your home if you haven't done so in the last year. Even if you have painted in that time frame, depending on your color selection, it might do you a service to go ahead and repaint a second time.

Now, when I say repaint, I mean repaint everything. Paint the ceilings. Paint the trim and window casings. Paint the doors. Don't forget inside closets. And, of course, paint the walls. The trick is that it is imperative that you paint the right way.

You see, everything you're doing right now is so that the potential buyers who are viewing your home have the opportunity to see it as a blank canvas. On that canvas they will begin painting the picture of their family in your home. Now, once an artist sets out to create a new painting, he begins with a plain, primed canvas. Through your efforts with painting, that is precisely what you seek to hand your viewers. You're hand delivering a clean, primed canvas wrapped up in four safe, secure walls.

Keeping all of this in mind, you should proceed with your home's canvas using neutral colors, as well. That doesn't mean everything must be completely lifeless or stark white. Rather, you want your colors to be unobtrusive. So, stick with gray, beige, off white and white colors. Even if you just painted the master bath turquoise and added the cutest polka dot trim, you really need to change it. Remember, a blank canvas opens the imagination to endless possibilities. Turquoise polka dots do not.

Solid Tip #3: The Kitchen and Bathrooms are Super Important



I wouldn't dare lead you to believe that you could create stunning bathrooms and kitchens, leave the rest of the home a mess and sell your house for top dollar. However, among all of the rooms in the home, buyers are most turned off by dirty, grungy bathrooms and kitchens.

Let's face it. Nobody wants to eat from a place they feel is nasty. Likewise, no one wants to be naked in a disgusting place. That's why you need to make sure that your bathroom and kitchen get the most attention first. Viewers might forgive a less than stellar child's room, but a questionable bathroom or kitchen is far more likely to cost you a possible sell.

Since you've already done your deep clean, and I know you did a fantastic job, you're going to skip that step. The same thing goes for painting. In theory, you've already painted the whole house. Those two little nuggets apply to each area of your home, including the bathrooms and kitchen. Now, it's time to move on to some other pressing issues, such as whether getting new appliances are a good idea or if doing so is just a money pit.

Should I Really Buy New Appliances?

Honestly, it really depends on you and your particular situation. No doubt, new appliances make an impact with buyers. Most surveyed buyers between 2010 and 2012 were very concerned with buying a home that featured new appliances according to the National Association of Realtors. Only about 17% of these folks were very preferential to stainless steel. It seems that the most important factor here is that there are appliances present. Additionally, most buyers who were unable to get their sought after appliances said they would have been willing to pay, on average, nearly \$2,000 more for them.

So, here's the long and short of it. Potential buyers want appliances included in their purchase. They're willing to pay more for them. If you can afford to offer new appliances, it could be the very act that sets your house apart from the similar home that is for sale across the street. On the other hand, if new appliances are a bit out of your reach, think of offering your used, but immaculately clean, fully functioning ones.

Updating Hardware

It often isn't evident to you while you live in a home, but if you'll take a nice, long look at your bathroom and kitchen hardware, you'll probably notice that they look a whole lot used. Well, that's because they are. It isn't that big of a deal until you put yourself in a buyer's shoes. They're looking at your old house as their potential new home. Old, worn out fixtures aren't going to speak to them the way that nice, shiny, new hardware will.

I caution you here. Unless your knobs, pulls, handles and hinges are broken, there is no real reason to replace them. That's right. You can get the same look that you're shooting for, which is new and updated, by thoroughly washing and repainting them. I'm not kidding a single bit. There is actually spray paint made especially for this purpose, and the project is incredibly cheap.

You can actually give the same painting overhaul to a variety of household hardware including, but not limited to, the list below.

- * towel bars
- * toilet paper holders
- * door handles
- * hinges
- * old lighting fixtures

We want to patch your home up nicely with as little cash as possible. This is one great way to do it.

On the other hand, if you do have broken or completely worn out hardware, then you're better to replace the whole set unless you can find matching pieces. Then you could cleverly paint the old and new to match. Make sure that if you end up replacing your knobs that you get matching exposed hinges for cabinet doors and the like. Consistency is a good thing when selling a home.

Other Excellent and Cheap Update Ideas for the Bath and Kitchen

- * Buy a new toilet seat.
- * Refurbish worn out looking cabinets with a faux paint project.
- * Replace an old, ugly bathroom sink with a pedestal variety.
- * Repair grout in tile backsplashes, floors and tub surrounds.

Solid Tip #4: You Can Never, Ever Have Enough Storage



According to the National Association of Realtors, a majority of recent home buyers would have preferred improved and greater closet space, as well as other storage opportunities. People have lots of stuff, and they need somewhere to hide it all. That's what storage does, after all! However, when there isn't adequate storage available, their junk trickles out and clutters their lives. That clutter can leave folks feeling claustrophobic. Plus, everyone who comes over sees it. No one buying a new home wants to willingly buy into that kind of embarrassment.

Now, it could be that you can potentially add closets to your home with ease. If you can, that's a huge bonus for you. Really, building a simple closet isn't all that difficult if you are even just moderately handy. If you are selling an older home, closet space is typically at a minimum. You can improve on it! Give buyers great storage, and you've won their hearts.

However, putting in new closets isn't always a possibility. For instance, if your rooms are already small, you might not want to take square footage away from them. Or, you might not have the skills to build the closets yourself or the funds to hire someone to do it.

It is in these very moments that we turn to closet organizers for help. Now, you can certainly custom design your closet kit online through a place like ClosetMaid. On the other hand, your standard superstore or hardware store often has exactly what you need in an inexpensive, pre-fabricated form. Using organizers may not enlarge your

closets, but it uses both vertical and horizontal space to maximize the usage of the space that you do have.

Now, don't let me lead you astray by any means. "Storage" is not restricted to closets. Storage is actually all of your cabinets, clothes closets, linen closets, attic and basement space. Storage goes much farther than just the closets in your bedrooms. So, make sure that you organize your cabinets well, also. The same places that provide closet organizers can help you with this, as well. Don't be afraid to add extra shelving in your laundry room or in the linen closet. Wherever you can attractively and inexpensively add storage solutions will eventually be to your benefit. Really, buyers love this stuff.

Solid Tip #5: Bedroom Addition Trick

One thing that adds tons of extra value to most homes is adding another bedroom. Okay, before you start laughing really hard at me because I seem to be claiming that adding a whole other room to your house can be relatively inexpensive, let me explain.

I didn't say you should add square footage to your home, simply another bedroom. "Now, how are you going to manage that?" you ask. Well, the sole factor that determines if that extra junk room in your home is a bedroom is simply whether it has a closet or not. That's right. All it takes to make your den, your office, your spare room, your attic or any other odd room into a third or fourth bedroom is the addition of a closet.

Wait Just a Minute, Please

Now, before you get yourself started on building new closets, and thereby new bedrooms, keep this little piece of information in mind. If you are in a neighborhood that boasts mainly 3 bedroom homes, and these are selling well, a fourth bedroom might give you a real advantage. However, if you live in an area where people are seeking one or two bedroom homes, what actual good is a fourth bedroom going to do you? That's when this project becomes a waste of your money.

Ask your real estate agent's take on this. If your agent seems unknowledgeable, or if you don't have an agent, I'd be happy to help you determine whether or not you'd benefit from a simple bedroom addition. Assuming that your location is conducive to such a move, and you need a significant boost to your home's worth, adding another bedroom is one great way to do it. As long as you're just transforming an already existing room into a bedroom through the addition of a closet, this is a very inexpensive way to up your value quickly. You could also revamp a basement or attic for this project.

Solid Tip #6: Mechanical Maintenance

It is very easy to get wrapped up in the more eye-pleasing aspects of getting a home ready for sell. However, one factor that should never be overlooked is the upkeep of all of the mechanical aspects of your home.

Mechanics Worth Looking At

- * electrical boxes and wiring
- * natural gas lines
- * plumbing
- * central heating and air system

If these pieces of your home are old, outdated or not working properly, you can pretty much count on lowering your home's price significantly.

As a matter of fact, according to the National Realtor's Association, 65% of home buyers who were surveyed were very concerned with whether or not their new home had a central air system. On this survey, there were 31 features inquired about, and this was the most important one across the board.

People buying homes do want to purchase something that reflects their aesthetic tastes and their lifestyles. However, they also want to buy a home that is safe and sound. Faulty electrical systems don't provide that. Neither does leaky plumbing that induces mold infestations. No, these mechanically natured areas are not necessarily entertaining or fun to improve on, but extremely necessary. Plus, if these areas are overlooked, you could run into some real trouble with inspections and appraisals.

Obviously, these particular home updating projects should be left up to the professionals. Simply have a certified plumber come in and check over your entire water system for leaks. Hire an electrician to check out your wiring. Consider having antiquated wiring and plumbing replaced. No, this isn't cheap, I'll admit. Your natural gas supplier can double check the mechanics surrounding your tank and lines. Contact your local HVAC company and have them provide a thorough service on your heat pump.

Buyers love a house that's been worked on and updated beautifully. However, they love safe, secure homes for their families even more. Take care of these mechanical odds and ends, and you'll see profit from it. If you would rather not tackle some or all

of these areas, and you do have mechanical issues, dropping your selling price might remedy the situation for you. Then again, it may not.

Solid Tip #7: Handling the Carpeting and Flooring Debacle

Floors are not only something that buyers notice in your home, they can be quite expensive and difficult to replace. And, the truth of the matter is, that you might not even want to replace them. You see, putting down new floor coverings of any kind, whether it be carpeting, hardwood or vinyl, can get pricey depending on the size of your rooms and the flooring medium used. That's why, if there is any way in the world to get around replacing it, you absolutely should.

Carpeting

Hey, everybody's carpet takes a beating. Pets, young children, muddy shoes, cups of early morning coffee all have up close and personal acquaintances with your rugs. And, it is very, very evident, too. There is no way that a good vacuum is going to handle this mess.

- **Shampoo:** Luckily, you can either rent or purchase a carpet shampooer fairly inexpensively. Now, if your carpet just needs a good washing and doesn't necessarily have set in stains, this is a great place to start. You'll need to move all of the furniture from the room you're working on, and simply follow the shampooer's instructions. Make sure that you don't walk on the carpet again until it's completely dry. You should see a significant difference in both the smell and look of your carpet.
- **Steam Clean:** Now, it might be that your rugs need way more juice than a regular carpet shampooer can offer. You need to step up your game a little bit, and go with a good steam cleaning. You can either rent a steam cleaning shampooer, or you can hire a professional carpet cleaner such as Stanley Steemer. Yes, this is a little more expensive, but it can also make a tremendous difference in your carpeting. What the steam cleaning doesn't remove, cover with rugs.

Don't take me wrong. I'm not encouraging you to be dishonest at all. If your carpet is in bad enough shape that a steam cleaning doesn't take out all of the stains, it will be evident that the carpet needs replacing to buyers. Area and throw rugs can just make it a little less unattractive.

* Why Not Replace It? I know what you're thinking. You're thinking to yourself that you probably should just replace your carpet, but that really isn't a great idea most of the time. First off, replacing carpeting is very, very expensive for most people to fit into their budgets.

Additionally, it would be an absolute shame if you went through the trouble of re-carpeting only to discover that a family loved everything about your house but the new beige wall-to-wall rug.

My advice to you, in the event that your carpeting is severely stained and worn out, is that you do the best with it that you can. Clean it and put down rugs. Keep it vacuumed. Stop the kids from eating and drinking on it effective immediately. Pets need to find rooms with slick floors for easy mopping to roll around in. Do everything you can to keep this carpet from getting worse, and your efforts will be evident and pay off.

Now, if a buyer loves everything you've done in your home, except for the ugly carpeting, they just might overlook it. They may try to negotiate a lower price or ask for a flooring allowance in your contract. I'll admit that isn't ideal. But, you have to spend less money and do less work right now. That counts for a whole lot when the cash just isn't available, or when it would be wasted anyway.

Other Flooring Types

Really, you should take a similar approach with all of your floor types. If you have tile that's a little worse for wear, clean it thoroughly. If that doesn't work, have it re-grouted. Take tiny steps until you find the right fix. Your hardwood floor can probably get by with a good wax. Does your linoleum shine when you use a really good mopping solution on it?

There are some instances where you might feel your only option is to replace your flooring, but again, this should be a last resort. In the event that all your floor really needs to look great is some tender, love and care, work on that baby until it gleams. On the other hand, if it is cheaper to replace your floor than to repair it, go ahead and put in a new floor covering. Or, if your current flooring has holes or is otherwise damaged in irreparable ways, consider replacing it. You might consider your less expensive flooring options, too. For instance vinyl self-stick tiles are inexpensive, very easy to put down and it is a breeze to replace damaged pieces.

Solid Tip #8: Let Your Light So Shine



Lighting is most definitely an essential element to consider updating in your home when preparing it for sale. Like with the flooring situation, this is one area that you want to address with an eye to repairing what you can and replacing only what is absolutely falling apart. Just remember to be moderate and practical with your updates.

The National Realtor's Association shows that many home buyers actually replace lighting fixtures early on in their new homes. For this reason, we should really consider making our lights look as nice as possible without going too overboard. We know that most new owners will likely make some changes to complement their personal style, and any expensive replacements we make might just be wasted.

If you so choose, you can refurbish the good light fixtures that you have. Simply use the same spray painting principle as you did on your handles, pulls and knobs.

- Try new globes for an updated look.
- Make sure lights that you aren't updating are impeccably clean.

- Consider changing old, haggard ceiling fan blades with inexpensive ones which can be bought at any hardware superstore.
- Do replace any light fixtures that are broken, damaged or dangerous in any way.
- Feel free to purchase new light fixtures any time repairing an old one would cost more than replacing it would be.
- Don't forget the outside lights, as well!
- Purchase new fluorescent light bulbs and disperse throughout your entire home to brighten the place up.

Great lighting is important when showing a home. When your potential buyers can get a really good, bright look at your house they feel as though they can trust you. Also, bright lighting makes an area look more open and attractive!

Solid Tip #9: Front Entrance Revamp

Alrighty, my friends, it is time to take a step outside of the house and onto your front lawn. Don't feel bad if you've gotten so wrapped up in updating and improving the inside of your home that you have neglected the outside. It happens to all of us. But, it is now time to rectify the situation quickly and effectively.

- **The Lock and Knob:** We're going to begin with your front entrance. I suppose you could call what you're about to do to your door knob and lock subliminal messaging. Take a hard look at your doorknob. No, I'm serious. Look at it. Is it a mousy little thing from the 1970's? Is it dented up or rusted? Can you break into your house with only a bobby pin and concentration? If any of these questions are answered in the affirmative, you certainly need to consider replacing your door handle with a heavy duty deadbolt and knob combination.

You see, a less than sturdy looking door knob on the entrance to your home sends a message to potential home buyers; your home isn't secure. It might make them feel uncomfortable, and chances are that they won't even know why. Get a nice, big, sturdy set and they'll feel that your home is safe as can be.

- **The Actual Door:** Now, take a good look at your door. Is it pleasing to look at? Or is dingy and weathered? Perhaps you have a metal door that has never seen a coat of paint. You really need to change that. If you'd like a dash of

color, feel free to choose one that compliments the color of your home. There are also faux painting techniques that will allow you to make your metal door look like a wood grain door instead. If your door is in any way damaged or broken, you should either have it fixed or replace the door entirely. Go with whichever costs less.

Solid Tip #10: Really, Curb Appeal Matters

Alrighty, you've addressed the living area inside of your home and your front entrance. It's time to really take a good hard look at your front yard. Curb appeal, or how your home looks from the curb of your property, really is important. You want buyers to drive by, look at your home and immediately feel as though they want to go inside. This will not happen if your landscaping is in poor shape, your home looks dingy, the front porch steps are broken and your mailbox is hanging on by a thread.

Much like you did in your home initially, look around your yard objectively and make a list of everything that needs a little work.

- Are your shrubs, trees, flower gardens and walkways tidy?
- Is there trash or unsightly elements in your yard?
- Is everything (front light, garage door, porch rails, etc.) working properly?
- Does your home's exterior need a bath?
- Could any element be simply updated through quick painting projects, such as your patio furniture and garage door?
- Does your home look inviting?


Chances are excellent that you're going to need to do at least a little improving here. But just think of how many people are going to be begging to view your home when they see how beautiful it is from your curb!


I know this seems like an extensive list, but it really does take some hard work to get a home ready to really sell. After all, anyone can put their house on the market. But everyone doesn't sell their homes quickly or with great profits. If you follow the above suggestions and have a good realtor, you should have no trouble getting your home moved on the double.

In the event that you don't have a realtor, or that you aren't satisfied with the one that you do have, I'd be pleased to serve you. My goal is to help people sell their homes and realize their dreams as quickly as they possibly can. You, my friend, are no exception. Feel free to give me a call!

Sincerely,

Gail Overton, REALTOR®

 (612) 804-8928 (Cell)

 (210) 862-5126 (Direct Office)

<http://www.giaventures.com>

Kimberly Howell Properties®

21252 Gathering Oak #100

San Antonio, TX 78260

www.kimberlyhowell.com