

8 ways to turn off a homebuyer

In 2007, homebuyers would beg to purchase your house. They would even bid more than the asking price for the privilege to do so.

Today ... well, not so much. Once the real estate bubble burst and foreclosures poisoned the housing pool, buyers suddenly regained the upper hand. But instead of buying, they're waiting, convinced that housing prices will continue to drop.

8 home sales killers

1. Dirt
2. Odors
3. Old fixtures
4. Wallpaper
5. Popcorn acoustic ceilings
6. Too many personal items
7. Poor curb appeal
8. Clutter

1. Dirt - Nothing turns off a buyer quicker than a dirty house. The home should be neat and clean and free of all debris.

2. Odors - Buyers buy with their noses. Make sure your home smells fresh and inviting.

Odors are a big one. Some pet owners mistakenly believe pet smells to which they've become accustomed help make their abode homey. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you're a dog person, you tend to think everyone else is a dog person. But the truth is, 50 percent of the population hates dogs and doesn't want to be near them. The minute they walk in and see this big dog bowl, they immediately won't like the house.

Make sure the animals are not around when the house is shown.

The same rules hold true for smokers: Remove all ashtrays, clean all curtains and upholstery, and only smoke outdoors while your home is on the market.

3. Old fixtures - Change out old fixtures in your house. Updated cabinet hardware and doorknobs will probably cost all of \$400 or \$500, but it makes a huge difference."

The same holds true for dated ceiling fans, light fixtures and kitchen appliances.

Homes that have old fans, lights, ovens, microwaves, ranges and dishwashers can really turn a buyer off. . "Sellers will say, 'Oh, the buyers can take care of that.' Well, yes they can, but it's going to impede you from getting the highest price possible for your home."

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www.dinahfuller.com

e-mail me at dinahsue@dinahfuller.com

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4. Wallpaper - Your grandmother may have had it in every bedroom. Your mom may have loved it as a room accent. But today's buyer wants no part of wallpaper. Wallpaper is extremely personalized. You've spent hours looking over books to pick out the wallpaper you want. What are the odds that the person walking in the door will also like that wallpaper that you chose?

5. Popcorn acoustic ceilings - Times change, and with them home decor styles. Acoustic popcorn ceilings, once the must-have for fashionable homes in the '60s and '70s, now badly date your space. The popcorn acoustic ceiling is a major, major turnoff to buyers these days.

6. Too many personal items - Psychologically, when buyers tour a home, they're trying it on to see how it fits, just as they would a skirt or a pair of pants. If your house is cluttered with too many personal items, it's like the buyer is trying on those clothes with you still in them. A fit is unlikely.

Place a mirror strategically so that people can actually see themselves in the home, so they can actually picture themselves living there."

7. Poor curb appeal - Much is made of curb appeal, and for good reason: It's your home's handshake, the critical first impression that lasts with most buyers.

Trim and edge your yard to get it into the most immaculate condition you can. Freshly mulch the beds and trim the trees. Every little detail counts.

Clean mud dauber and wasp and bird's nests from your eaves and above your doors.

8. Clutter - Whether inside or out, less is more when it comes to clutter.

Follow the rule of three. For kitchens, there should be no more than three countertop appliances. Meanwhile, bookshelves should be divided into thirds: one-third books, one-third vases and pictures, and one-third empty.

Toddler parents ... pack away extraneous "kiddie litter" and keep a laundry basket handy. When you get that phone call one hour before a showing, toss everything in that basket and take it to the car with you and your kids, and you're all set.



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918-298-1700 *text* 918-284-5539

www.dinahfuller.com

e-mail me at dinahsue@dinahfuller.com

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