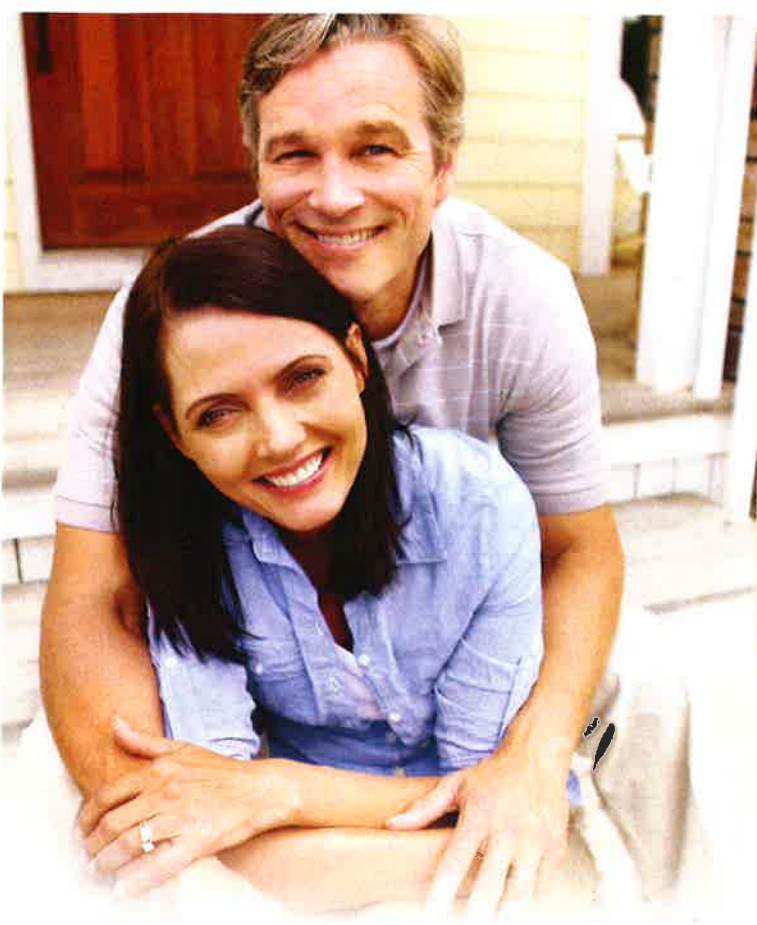




7 Features That May Sell Your Home Faster

If you're thinking of putting your home on the market this spring, you may be wondering how to make your home more attractive to prospective buyers. The following are the most common features buyers want in a home.*

1. Laundry room. While many homes have a nook in the hallway or within a bathroom for a washer and dryer, most buyers (**92%**) of all ages want a separate laundry room with space for these appliances, plus room to sort and iron.

If you want to add a laundry room, think of putting it in the basement or in an area where there are utility lines and plumbing is accessible. Since the utility lines are already there and many basements aren't finished, it'll be much cheaper to install than if you have to take out walls or move utility lines.

Cost to install: \$1,000 to \$10,000*

2. Exterior lighting. **90%** of buyers want a home with outdoor lighting, including spotlights, walkway lights and pendant lights. Not only does this lighting highlight your home's curb appeal, it's also a safety measure. For example, motion lights will turn on whenever they sense movement.

Cost to install: \$63 to \$135 per fixture*

3. Energy-efficient windows and appliances. Energy Star-rated windows and appliances are a top choice of buyers—**90%** prefer energy-saving appliances and **87%** prefer energy-saving windows. Energy-efficient windows can reduce heating and cooling costs by **12%**. Additionally, homeowners may save up to \$40 a year on their utility bills by including energy-efficient appliances in their homes.

Cost to install: \$270 to \$800 each for windows; cost varies for appliances*

4. Patio. More than **84%** of buyers feel a patio is an important home feature. Many people entertain outside during the warmer months of the year and a patio allows them to do so without having to modify their home.

Cost to install: \$961 per 120 square feet for a concrete patio*

5. Hardwood floors. For **82%** of buyers, hardwood floors are a desirable selling point in a home. Hardwood floors tend to be more durable and easier to maintain than carpet. They also offer a timeless aesthetic to a home. Homeowners can add rugs to improve the warmth of a space or tie the room together.

Cost to install: \$1,473 per 120 square feet of unfinished hardwood; \$1,353 per 120 square feet of prefinished hardwood*

6. Garage storage space. Storage is important to **81%** of buyers, especially if they have growing families. Additional storage in the garage keeps the main living areas free of clutter and is more accessible than attic or basement spaces. Improvement options include installing pegboard on the wall for tools, improving the lighting and electrical circuits or adding cabinets.

Cost to install: \$2,025 - \$2,363 for a 380 square-foot space*

7. Eat-in kitchen. Many buyers (**80%**) like the appeal of eating their meals in the kitchen, especially if they have children. Creating space in the kitchen for a small table and chairs may be as simple as removing a wall. You will want to make sure the wall is non-load-bearing, with limited repair work involved and without pipes or wires needing to be removed. If the wall contains any of these factors, your costs could increase dramatically.

Cost to install: \$1,000 to \$10,000*

*Source: Kiplinger, August 2016

Other Features that Make Your Home Stand Out

While buyers may not have cited the following features as ones they specifically look for in a home, they are ones that are appreciated. Most buyers, especially first-timers, find added value in a home with the following:

An updated kitchen. If your kitchen hasn't been updated in years, a minor renovation may be in order. For a minor update, paint the walls and replace lighting and cabinet fixtures to present a fresh look.

An updated bathroom. As with the kitchen, a dated bathroom is a drawback for many buyers. You don't have to break the bank; updating the sink, toilet and shower or bathroom fixtures will go a long way in giving it a modern look.

An open floor plan. Whether they intend to entertain guests or simply want to keep an eye on the kids while they cook, many buyers, especially millennials, are attracted to an open floor plan. If your home has an open floor plan, play it up. Otherwise, look into taking down non-load-bearing walls if you'd like to create a larger space.

A home office. Americans are working from home now more than ever. Even if the buyers aren't planning on working from home, a home office creates a space where buyers can pay bills or plan for work. It can also double as a guest bedroom.

A wireless security system. Safety is important. A wireless home security system is one of the top technology features buyers would like to have in their new home.

Ready to Sell? 3 Tips to Help Your Home Stand Out

- 1. Have your home inspected.** This will help you isolate the repairs you need to address before you list your home. If you make the most important repairs, you'll be ahead of the game and may be able to list your home for more than if you left the issues unresolved.
- 2. Declutter and start packing.** Buyers want to see the details of the home, so be sure they have a great view. You'll have to pack when you move anyway; starting the process now allows you to pack up anything you don't use regularly, including valuable dishes, photos and knick-knacks.
- 3. Stage your home.** When you're selling your home, it's difficult to see it through the eyes of a potential buyer. A professional stager will present your home in the best possible light, making sure the focus is on the features that sell, such as great view or notable architecture.

