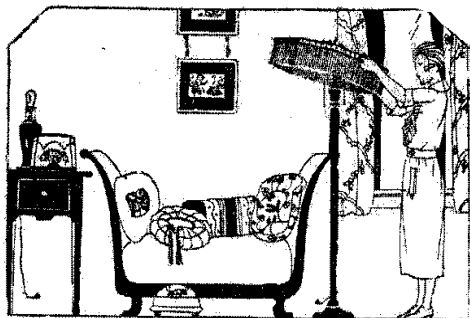


## **Dressing Your Home for Success**

### **You only have one chance to create a great first impression.**

This is more than an old adage, it is a rock-solid fact.

First impressions are so important that new car dealers have mobile car wash companies sneak by in the middle of the night and wash the dust off the cars on their lot. Why? That little bit of dust hurts sales. New car dealers discovered years ago that they made more profits by spending that little bit of money to keep their cars looking spanking new.



First impressions are so important that major corporations spend untold sums of money in designing the appearance of both the interior and exterior of their buildings to be fresh and inviting. McDonald's looks the way it does for a valid reason, as does Quik Trip, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and any other sizable business.

Part of the reason corporations pay so much attention to appearance is function and part is corporate identity. However, a big part of the reason is marketing. In today's competitive environment offering a good product is not enough. You have to entice the customer into the door or the customer will never have the chance to buy the product.

### **A good first impression does not have to cost a lot of money.**

Walk in to Moe's Southwest Grill and what is the first thing that happens? One or more of the employees on staff yells out "Welcome to Moe's!". When our son was three years old he began yelling the same phrase when he walked in their door, and still does at five. The same thing happens at Quik Trip gas. The first thing you hear when you walk in the door is "Hello!".

A warm greeting is so important to marketing that Walgreens states in their *Walgreens World for New Employees* (2006 Special Edition) "When friends visit your home, you greet them, chat with them and smile a lot. The same thing should happen in our stores".

### **Why Most Women Wear Cosmetics**

Women wear cosmetics because it enhances their appearance. Cosmetics highlights a woman's good features and helps draw attention away from their little imperfections. The best cosmetics in the world can not hide a significant fault, but properly applied cosmetics can draw attention away from the fault and to the beauty surrounding it. Cosmetics, when not over-applied, also result in a much healthier and overall appealing appearance.

### **Home Staging is Cosmetics for Your Home**

Home staging is the term most commonly used for the process of dressing a home for success. Home staging is more than making necessary repairs. Home staging is adding those little cosmetic touches which will allow your home to make a better first impression than the competition. Home staging is presenting your home in the best possible light.

## **Home Staging is Not a Disguise**

Home staging should not be used to hide problems which exist in your home. A throw rug over a worn spot on a wood floor might fool the buyer, at least until they do their final walk-through before closing the transaction. A picture will do a great job of hiding a fist sized hole in the wall, until the final walk-through. A shrub might hide the crack in the foundation, at least until the home inspector arrives.

Home staging should be used to draw attention away from faults. That worn spot on the wood floor would look better in a nicely decorated room than in a bare room. The crack in the foundation will appear less menacing if caulked than as a gaping open crack. That fist size hole in the wall? Fix it, or make it bigger and install a shadow box.

## **Appearance Affects Value**

The real estate investors best friend is peeling paint and worn floor covering. Peeling paint and worn floor covering severely diminishes the value of a home, often much more than the cost of correction.

Real estate appraisers fall into the same trap. If you send a real estate appraiser into a well maintained, yet cluttered and dirty home and two weeks later send a different appraiser into a the same home, thoroughly cleaned and tastefully decorated, in all likelihood the second appraisal will be considerably higher than the first, without you spending a dime on the real estate.

Why is this? It is simple, appearance sells. This is why fine furniture stores decorate their furniture with accessories in their showrooms. They can sell a bedroom set sitting on a carpeted floor, decorated with nice accessories, big fluffy pillows and a nice comforter for much more money than they can sell the same bedroom suite sitting on a bare concrete floor with empty bed frames and undecorated.

## **This Report is not a Checklist**

In real estate appraisal there is something called the Law of Diminishing Returns. Simply put, this means that, in some cases, the more you spend the less you get in return for each dollar spent. Your objective is to give your home the edge over the competition, not to blow them away. With either advantage you home should perform better than the competition, so be thrifty and don't throw away your money.

Don't go through this report item by item trying to accomplish everything. It is not a checklist. It is a compilation of ideas. A lot of ideas are included in this report and there are a lot more which are not included. Use reason and good judgment. Search out your own ideas by visiting furniture and department stores. Watch a little *HGTV*, *Trading Places* or *Flip this House*, or other such shows all the while remembering that such shows are sensational or they would not be so popular. They typically show the exceptions instead of the rule, but you can gleam some great ideas from them. Also consider looking through home decoration magazines.

Use this report to put you in the proper frame of mind.. to make you consider, how can I best dress my house for success?

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## **How Much will Dressing my Home for Success add to its Sales Price?**

That depends on your marketplace, the condition of your home, and what measures you take and the market reaction to those measures. The purpose of dressing your home for success is to make it more attractive to buyers than the competition. Your home is compared by buyers to similar homes offered for sale and by appraisers to similar homes which have recently sold.

Buyers see the inside of many of the competing homes offered for sale. Appraisers seldom see the inside of homes they use as comparable sales. Appraisers usually base their opinions of comparable sales on the exterior of the house (curb appeal), public records, MLS listings and interviews with buyers, sellers or real estate agents participating in the transaction.

You will usually gain more by bringing a home in below average condition up to average condition than in taking a home in average condition and bringing it up to above average condition. (The law of diminishing returns, mentioned earlier). This is why we emphasize using common sense and good judgment in what you do.

If your home typical for the marketplace (marketplace, in this instance being what is being offered for sale at the time) in terms of curb appeal, cleanliness and aesthetics then you will need to do much less than if your home is below typical.

By making your home more attractive to the typical home buyer than the competition, you stand a greater chance of selling it quicker and for an amount closer to the asking price.

### **Invite the Buyer into Your Home**

The buyer's first impression of your home is formed from the street. It does not matter that the inside of your home is immaculate, if you can not get the buyer inside to appreciate it. The exterior of your home is what invites the buyers inside.



Your lawn should be nicely maintained. Pine straw or bark should be around all of the shrubs. Blooming flowers should be placed around the mailbox and/or next to the stoop.

Grass does not grow overnight and new sod looks like a green patchwork quilt, if you have a glaring bare spot in your front yard, consider turning that bare spot into a small flower garden or art garden. You can even plant a small tree and place pine straw around it.

Edge your lawn along the driveway, curb and walks. This creates a very nice effect.

Pay particular attention to your mailbox. If there are number decals on it, make sure they are fresh and new. If your mailbox needs power washing or painting, or replacing, do it. If your mailbox is leaning, straighten it. Even brick mailboxes can be lifted and straightened.

Use some oil stain remover to clean up any stains in your driveway. If your drive or walks look really bad, consider having them power washed. Do not paint your driveway or walks. They will look good only until the first time you drive or walk on them. While speaking of power washing, your gutters and downspouts might need a good squirt too. If the exterior paint is faded, peeling or chalking, paint your house. If you can not do this, at least paint the front door and trim.

Repair any broken windows and damaged or discolored window screens. Make sure the window screens on the front of your house all match. If one is bright, shiny and new, they all should be. A better idea is to simply remove all of the screens from the front of the house, storing them in for the buyer.

If you have a door bell, make sure it works. All exterior lights on the house should also be working. If a light fixture is bad, replace it or remove it.

Electric or gas lamps in the front yard should be in operational and cosmetic condition.

A full view glass storm door without a screen can remain, but you should remove a screened door from your front entrance. It detracts from the appearance of the house.

The appearance of a roof can be greatly enhanced by a good cleaning. If you have any loose shingles, re-nail them. Do not replace a roof unless it is in really poor condition, unless required to by the purchaser. Be sure and tighten up any sagging gutters.

### **The Grand Entrance**

It is common practice for developers to spend a great deal of money creating a grand entrance into a new subdivision. In a way, this creates curb appeal much like you manicuring your front yard and fixing up the front of your home. But developers and home sellers have even more in common.

Often, developers will require builders to build larger homes at the front of a subdivision than they do at the rear. The larger homes continues the effect created by the grand entrance, maintaining the perceived value of the development and slowly easing the buyers into more modest houses at the rear of the development.

The first area the buyer steps into upon entering your home should continue the effect you created with curb appeal. It should be immaculate and well apportioned. You should pay great attention to this area.

### **The Kitchen**

The kitchen can be one of the strongest selling points for your home, so treat it appropriately.



First, it should be thoroughly scrubbed. This includes the floors walls, cabinets, drawers and appliances. All cabinets, drawers and appliance should be cleaned on both the inside and out, including the refrigerator... even if you are planning to take it with you. Stove tops should also be cleaned in and out. With most you can lift the top for easy cleaning. If your stove has replaceable splash pans, replace them with new ones.. These are very inexpensive and are available at most appliance dealers and large retailers.

*We appreciate your hard work and all the hours spent working with us to ensure we got just the price we needed to get out of the sale.*

*-Clyde & Connie M. - Clayton, Georgia*

Any damaged, worn or discolored pots, pans and utensils should be discarded or boxed and stored off-premises. This include dinnerware, glasses and other items. The interior of your cabinets and drawers should be orderly and grouped according to use and type. Your should give the same treatment to your pantry.

If you store your cleaning supplies in your kitchen, place them in a clean basket designed for such products available at your local retailer.

If the bottom of the cabinets and drawers are discolored, use lining paper to give them a fresh clean look. Brown paper bags, cut to fit also works very well.

Your kitchen table should be set and ready for dining, complete with a centerpiece of flowers. Do not clutter the dinner table with other accessories.

Small appliances should be stored in your pantry or cabinets, leaving the kitchen with a more roomy feel. The kitchen should be very well lit. Add under cabinet lights if necessary.

### **The Baths**

Baths are a problem for any dressed for success home: They are used every day for some of the nastiest things and are subject to high humidity, bad odors and sometimes indiscernible staining.

Baths should be cleaned thoroughly. Chipped porcelain tubs and sinks can be touched up with products available at home supply stores. Most tubs and sinks can also be refinished by professionals much cheaper than they can be replaced, but they often appear refinished.

You can draw attention away from the negatives and make your baths much more attractive by adapting a few simple ideas.

Keep clean, new towels on your towel racks. These towels should compliment the color of the bathroom. .

We all have personal bath items that we do not want put on display for others to view. Place these in a nice topped basket and slide it in the bathroom cabinet or closet. There is also less chance for the curious to rummage through it.

Place small, colorful scented soaps in an attractive dish next to all bathroom sinks.

Placing a shower mat in the tub can add color and distract from an otherwise unsightly tub.

Your tile and grout should be spotless. If you can not get it clean, there are commercial products available at home supply stores which you can use to paint your grout with. You should re-caulk any caulked areas.

If your bathroom fixtures are worn and unappealing replace them. If only the knobs are worn, inexpensive replacement knobs are available at home supply stores.

Is that thunder or is it the exhaust fan? If your exhaust fan rumbles replace it with a new one.

The shower curtain should be new and have a pattern which enhances the decor of the restroom.

If the mirror is chipped around the edges or the silver is chipping off, replace it or consider framing it.

### **Windows**

Windows are important to buyers. They bring light and warmth into a room, makes a room appear larger, and allows the buyer to view your manicured yard as well as monitor activities occurring outside the home.

Your windows should be spotlessly clean, inside and out. Re-glaze the windows where needed. All windows which were designed to be opened need to be operable. If they are painted shut, un-stick them.

Drapes should be left open at all times the property is available for showing. The drapes on your living room windows should be left open at all times, day or night so that potential buyers can see your handiwork from the street.

Worn or unappealing drapes should be replaced. When replacing drapes and curtains, consider using swags. They are often much less expensive.

### **Focus on the Obvious**

A focal point is what a person notices most when they enter a room. It may be a fireplace, window, piece of art, or anything else that might be of significance. Furniture and accessories should be arranged so that they acknowledge the focal point.

This does not mean that you line all of your chairs up in front of the the fireplace theater style. Instead, create a intimate grouping from which all seated in the room can interact easily and also enjoy the ambiance of the fireplace.

In rooms without an obvious focal point you can create one by using an inexpensive prop or focusing on the largest piece of furniture arranging everything else accordingly.

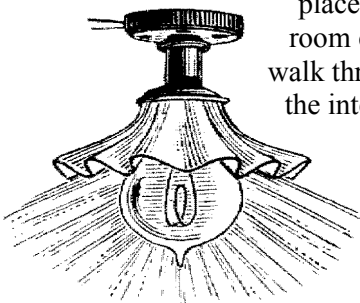
*As a listing agent, you were prompt, courteous, professional, diligent and tenacious as a bulldog.*

*-Evan B. - Jonesboro, Georgia*

The largest piece of furniture should face the focal point. After arranging the largest piece, work your way down in size to the smallest piece. After the furniture, place your accessories and plants to enhance the desired effect. You do not need a place for everything. Once the room looks warm and inviting, box up what you do not need in the remainder of the house and store it off-premises. This also helps you get ready for your move.

### **Don't Let Walls Define Your Groupings**

When arranging furniture in a room, imagine the room as being a defined space without walls. Where would you place the furniture? Would it be in a rectangle, or would you group it so that visitors to the room could interact comfortably among each other? Should those passing through the room walk through the midst of those interacting or flow around the grouping as not to interfere with the interaction?



### **Light, the Origin of Color and Warmth**

Humans advanced from caves to houses a millennium ago, so why would your buyer be interested in living a dungeon? Window curtains should be pulled back to allow natural light into the room. If the view is unattractive, use opaque sheers to obscure the view.

Artificial lighting should be used to enhance the effect you are seeking. Lighting should be concentrated in at your groupings and focal points and be at the right brightness to enhance the mood or use of the room. There should be no dark spots .

Rooms such as kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms should be particularly well lit (and therefore immaculately clean).

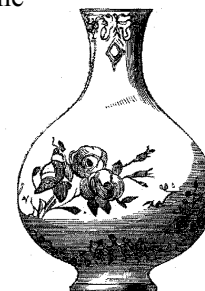
If, with proper lighting the room still appears too dark, repaint it using a lighter, but complimenting color. You may be able obtain enough brightness by repainting just the ceiling or one wall, or it may require the entire room being repainted. When repainting one wall, be careful not to draw attention away from your focal point.

Well placed mirrors can be used to add brightness by reflecting light into dimly lit areas. Mirrors also can have the effect of adding size to a room.

### **Bring Your Home Alive With Accessories**

The accessories one displays is a reflection of their personality and values. These are the little things that one accumulates which turns a house into a home. When dressing your home for success, the accessories serve a much different and very specific purpose. Accessories are a sales tool.

The first step you should take with accessories is to remove anything a buyer might find offensive. Go through your house and remove any items portraying nudity, foul language, scantily clad males or females, obscene gestures, drug paraphernalia, alcohol ads or slogans, cruelty to animals, religious or anti-religion symbolisms, and such items. These have no place in a home which is dressed for success. Box these items up and store them off-premises.



The next step you should take is to remove large collections. You may absolutely love pigs, and have 10,000 of them displayed in every nook and cranny of your home. Box them all up, maybe with the exception of a few that you can actually use in dressing your home for success, and store them off-premises. The same holds true for large collections of plates, bells, glass figurines, rock & roll memorabilia, clocks, street signs, piggy banks and other such items. Large collections have a place in a home dressed for success.

A velvet Elvis should be very carefully rolled up, wrapped in plastic for protection and deposited into the nearest landfill for prosperity.

Accessories are used to add charm, color and personality to a room as well as to enhance its theme and maybe add a sense of history.

For example, a home with a den having wood faux beams, knotty pine walls and a Tennessee fieldstone fireplace would benefit from accessories running along a country theme. But not just any country theme accessories will do. With all the wood and stone the room is already dark, so the accessories must add color and brightness to the room, without competing against the focal point for attention.

Make sure your accessories enhance the theme of the room. In the above case, a chrome clock in the center of the mantle would detract from the theme whereas a brushed brass or wood clock might enhance.

Do not be afraid to use the unusual. In the room described above, if the theme is sufficiently rustic, an old rusted shovel or rake might be appropriately hung on the wood wall or propped against the fireplace. Just be careful that the unusual accessory does not become the focal point of the room.

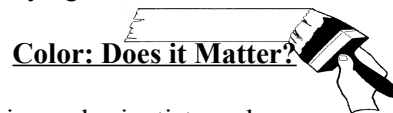
The best way to accessorize a room is to initially remove all of the existing accessories, and replace them one by one in small odd numbered groupings. It seems that three is more pleasing to the eye than two or four, as is five as compared to four or six.

Accessories should be grouped by color and material with the individual items within the group arranged in order of height. Leave some room between groups. For example, do not fill a book case with books. Instead use small groups of books separated by open space and a small accessory.

Use personal memorabilia, but sparingly. Photographs of family and friends are wonderful accessories if used sparingly. Use them in themed groupings or as part of a group. For example, an old appropriately framed photograph of your great-grandmother would be fine on a mantle or bookshelf. You should use enough of such items to make your home feel warm without making the buyer feel he is intruding into your family. Remember, the buyer is only interested in making this house his or her home.

After each step, stand back and take a look at the room. Does it look inviting, warm and comfortable? Does it look lived in, but well kept and uncluttered? If it does, then stop there, saving the remaining accessories for use in other rooms or to be boxed for storage off-premises.

If you need additional accessories for your home, do not spend a lot of money. Visit some yard sales, thrift stores or flea markets. You can usually find all you need in one afternoon and for very little money. If you are not into thrift shopping visit some home decor stores and try to find items which you can use both as accessories in your current home and in the home you are contemplating buying.



Much research has been performed by academics and scientists and many reports and books have been writing on the psychological effects of colors. Much of this knowledge has been incorporated into the sale of consumer products and the appearance of retail establishments and even into politics and professional sports. It is said that vibrant red tends to excite while pale blue tends to calm; purple is the color of royalty, while black is the color of death, so-on and so-on, so say the experts. Here is what we feel to be the truth, in regards to real estate.

How does the specific color of your home affect the marketability of your home? It doesn't. In the eyes of the real estate marketplace there are only two colors: that which meets the expectations of the marketplace and that which doesn't.

Back in the 1960's pink tiled bathrooms were the rage. In the 1970's, everything was harvest gold or avocado green. In the 1980's beiges and browns became popular. White trim used to be the standard on all brick homes. Frame homes were usually painted entirely white. Today, we are seeing almost every pastel color under the sun used on the exterior of new homes.

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The bottom line is that while the psychological effects of colors remain fairly constant, changing slowly over centuries, the market acceptance of colors seems to change with each new decade. So, what is the right color for your home? It doesn't really matter, so long as it enhances its architecture and is well accepted in the current marketplace.

Neutral colors remain the constant safe choice, both interior and exterior. Bold colors tend to alienate a segment of the population. You want your home to be found acceptable by the majority of the marketplace. If you are planning on repainting or re-carpeting, chose a neutral color.

To best determine what specific colors are most popular for your home, visit new home subdivisions and see colors they are using. Builders sell in volume so everything they do is geared towards the attracting the largest body of buyers. What they are doing is what you should do.

Besides bold colors, wallpaper and faux painting should be avoided. While they are common in the marketplace, buyers know it is often more costly and troublesome to change these should they not like them. It is often a very small difference in the pattern that determines the acceptance of these wall treatments by the buyer. This is not to imply you should run around your house and rip down all of the wallpaper you installed last week. Just do not add any. If you have wallpaper or faux painting that is in less than desirable condition and needs something done with it, do not replace it. Instead, paint the wall a neutral color.

Bold colors are acceptable in accessories. They can add personality, character, and brightness to a room. Use bold colors sparingly and be certain they compliment the existing decor of the room.

### **Use Plants to Add Life and Color**

Plants and colorful flowers add life and color throughout a home. You can use plants as accents, accessories and to fill in otherwise stark bare spots. Vases of colorful flowers throughout your home exudes a warm lived-in feel.



Live plants are nice, but can be a job to properly maintain. In recent years the quality of plastic plants and flowers have increased to such a degree that it is difficult to tell them apart from live plants. Often, we find ourselves feeling a plant and asking if it is real. Use plastic plants instead of real plants. Their only maintenance is a light dusting every now and again.

### **Restore Rooms to Their Original Use:**

Has your den become a home office and one of the bedrooms a sewing room? Is your bonus room above the garage now an art room? You should convert these rooms back to their original use. If you must have a home office, make it a part of the den instead of the entire den. Your sewing and art can probably be put off until after your move. In any event, everything that you do not absolutely need for these purposes should be boxed and stored off-premises.

### **The Garage, Attic and Other Storage Areas**

Storage is important. We never seem to have enough. Now matter how big of a home you own you will eventually fill it all up with something. Because of this, our garages, attics, closets, crawl spaces seem to fill up over the years. When we run out of room in our houses, we buy storage buildings and rent self storage spaces. In a sense, we should be thankful for our tendency to be pack rats. If it were not for this trait all of our landfills would fill up overnight.

Buyers are in the same boat as the rest of us. They need storage. If the house does not have enough room to store all of your stuff in an orderly fashion how are they to believe they can store all of their stuff in an orderly fashion. Clean out these storage areas. Discard what you don't need and box up the rest, storing it off-premises keeping just what you have an immediate need for and maybe a little extra to be sure the space looks lived in. Arrange your stored items neatly in groups.

If your garage walls are unpainted, paint them, even if the drywall joints are not finished. If you have storage areas which a discolored concrete floor, paint it. Make sure all storage areas are very well lighted. Even though most often used for storage, garages are not storage rooms. Garages are intended for the parking of cars. Make sure there is enough free room in yours to comfortably park the number of cars it was intended for.

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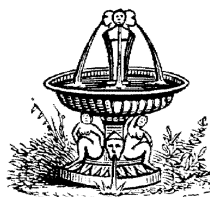
### **Stairwells: Give the Buyer A Goal**

Assume you are a buyer looking at a home for the first time. You find a stairwell and look up, seeing nothing but a blank wall at the top of the stairs. What lies ahead at the top of the stairwell? Can you be certain?

Invite the buyer up the stairwell by placing a grouping at the top landing. The grouping may be a collage of pictures, a framed mirror, or a small display table with an attractive grouping sitting on top.

### **Your Back Yard**

Your back yard is your private space. Buyers expect it to be more individualized than your front yard, and probably less well maintained. However, back yards are just as important to buyers as front yards. They too need their private space.



The back yard is where they will relax. They will often entertain friends and family in their back yard. If they have children, they want a safe place for their children to roam and play.

Your back yard should be treated much as your front. The lawn should be manicured and pine straw or bark placed around the shrubs. The house itself does not require the same attention as the buyer typically looks at the back yard from the house not the other way away around.

If you have a patio, some weather resistant furniture and a couple of potted plants will set it off nicely. Your barbecue grill should be clean, but not necessarily spotless. A slightly stained grill will underscore the fact that you find the back yard enjoyable and entertain there often.

Particular attention should be paid to possible safety hazards. This will be of great concern to buyers with children or pets. Any possible safety issues should be resolved. Fences should be in good condition and the latches on any gates should function properly. There should be no openings under the fence or gates that would allow a child or dog to pass through.

*Without you we would not have gotten this far. I am so excited, you would not believe it.*

*-Marvin & Lori S. - Jonesboro, Georgia*

Any outbuildings should be secure and the crawl space entry latched. Be sure the crawl space door is in good condition and freshly painted. Many buyers will look here.

A bird bath makes a nice focal point in back yard, as does decorative benches.

Make sure that any items stored in the rear yard are stored in an orderly fashion and hidden from view from inside house.

### **The Vacant House**

Vacant houses are more difficult to dress for success than occupied homes. The same attention to detail should be paid to the yards and the house itself as with an occupied home.

On more expensive homes it may be worthwhile to rent enough furniture and accessories to stage the entrance, living room, kitchen, baths and master bedroom. Or, for a few thousand dollars you can purchase inexpensive furniture from a discount retailer and give it to the buyer at closing as an incentive to purchase.

## 21 More Tips to Help Your Home Show & Sell

1. **The Pleasing Aroma of Flowers:** If using vases of plastic flowers to brighten up your home, place a small container of appropriately scented oil behind the vase to enhance the effect.
2. **Use What You Have in Unique Ways.** Benches and trunks can be used as coffee and end tables. Or you can drape them with linen and use them to display accessories. Hall tables can be used against the back of a sofa. A coat tree can be used to display hanging accessories, as well as old book cases. Throw rugs can be used as wall hangings and old draperies can be used as covers for damaged tables or furniture. In our home office, we use an old refinished examination table from a pediatrician's office as a printer stand and for storage of bulk paper and printer cartridges. It was one that Chris' pediatrician used when he was a child.
3. **Make Desks Ready for Work:** Do you have a desk or secretary in your home? If so, make it appear ready for work. Have all of the necessary items on it including stapler, pen, paper and envelopes arranged in an attractive manner.
4. **Clean out Your Drawers & Cabinets:** Drawers and cabinets must be spotlessly clean inside and well arranged. This includes drawers in your bedroom chest of drawers. Some buyers will look everywhere, even some places they shouldn't.
5. **No Dirty Dish Rags:** Don't leave dirty dish rags in your kitchen sink. A new, clean, white dish rag with an appropriate pattern placed next to the kitchen sink is a plus.
6. **Hang Pictures at Eye Level:** Pictures are noticed best at eye height, say 5 feet or so off the floor. Much higher or much lower and they will lose visual effect. The exception to this is groupings on narrow walls. In this case, it is acceptable to place pictures as part of the group a little higher but not much lower.
7. **Scented Candles:** Scented candles are a nice way to add both warmth and aroma to your home. The problem is they can not be left burning all of the time. In the excitement of showing a home it is difficult to remember to go back in and extinguish all of the candles. It is best to use candles for color and warmth, and leave the aroma to other methods mentioned in this report.
8. **Worn Carpets and Floor covering:** It is best not to hide these items from buyers. Replace them with new floor coverings of modest price and neutral color, or do your best to draw the buyer's attention away from them with decor.
9. **Bold Floor Covering Colors:** Not everyone appreciates bold red carpeting, black vinyl kitchen floors or pink bathroom floors. Lessen their impact on buyers by using throw rugs.
10. **Traffic Flow Matters:** Be sure potential buyers can move freely throughout the home. No door should be blocked with furniture or other items.
11. **Clean Out All of Your Closets:** Box up what you do not need and store it off-premises. Make sure closets are neatly arranged with plenty of open space. Towels, linens, clothes and such should be in good condition.

*With the challenges we face, I could not have worked with a more caring, professional, team minded person than Brande.*

*-Gwendolyn S. - Norcross, Georgia*

12. **Make Your Beds in the Morning:** Beds should be kept made and decorated with comfortable, colorful comforters.
13. **Clean Ceiling Fan Blades:** Most people forget about these. These are dust collectors of the worst sort. If your ceiling around the ceiling fan is textured, sweep it. Texture tends to collect dust blown off by the ceiling fan.
14. **Use Battery Operated Scent Dispensers:** Much safer than candles, these small dispensers sit about the house squirting out a little bit of your favorite scent at time intervals you select. These are available at most retailers.
15. **Balance Your Ceiling Fans:** Buyers love to flip switches and push buttons so any ceiling fan in your house should be properly balanced so it operates smoothly with no wiggle.
16. **Make Sure all Locks & Latches Work Properly:** Make sure all of your door knobs are tight and the locking mechanism works properly. Window and screen door latches should also be secure and function properly.
17. **Replace Damaged, Painted, Missing or Mis-matched Switch & Outlet Covers:** The switch and outlet covers in each room should be in good condition match their counterparts in that particular room.
18. **Use Upgraded Switch & Outlet Covers in Important Rooms:** Your main entrance, kitchen, and living room deserve something better than cheap ivory plastic switch covers. Consider replacing these with upgraded versions available at your local home supply store. Buyers will appreciate the extra attention to detail.
19. **If Something Does Not Work, Fix It or Remove It:** Garbage disposals, stoves, ovens, dishwashers, ceiling fans, trash compactors, ice makers and many other common household accessories are subject to failure. If one of these items do not work, fix it. Ceiling fans and some other accessories can be easily removed and replaced with a less expensive alternative.
20. **Every Space Should Have a Light:** Make sure there is a light in every space in your house. This includes your closet, attic, crawl space, pantry and other similar areas. There is no need to call your electrician. Simply go to your local retailer and buy some inexpensive battery operated lights. This extra lighting will help your home show better.
21. **Make Sure All of Your Light Bulbs Work:** Light bulbs are everywhere! Light bulbs are found in ceiling fixtures, ceiling fans, table lamps, vent hoods, ovens, refrigerators, attics, crawl spaces and many other places you may not think about.

*Thank you so very much for the selling of my home. I was very satisfied with all the hard work and effort you put into this for me. Thanks again.*

*-Dorothy H. - Jonesboro, Georgia*

### **If the Buyer Wants a New House, They Should Go Buy One**

By now, you might be feeling overwhelmed or you might feel offended. Who would expect all of this to be done to a house? After all, if they buyer wants a new house they should go buy one, right? If it is good enough for you it should be good enough for them.

We understand your reasoning. That is why that throughout this report we have stressed common sense and good judgment. Very few of the ideas presented here are set in stone and all are not required to be done. They are presented only as ideas to help you make changes which might give your home the edge over the competition.

Pick and chose from the ideas presented here or come up with some of your own. Nothing is required but any steps you take may go a long ways towards presenting your home to its best advantage. If you asked us what was the two most important factors in dressing your home for success, we we would have to respond with curb appeal and cleanliness. If you do nothing else, pay close attention to these two factors. You should also keep your home ready for showing at all appropriate times. You never know when a the right buyer will want to see your home.

This free report is just one of the many services we offer our clients. We hope it helps you dress your home for success. The next time we visit, we would love for you to point out the changes you have made.

**We love referrals! If you know of someone interested in buying or selling real estate in Clayton or Henry Counties, please let us know!**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Their Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Their Interest:  Buying  Selling  Renting / Leasing

Property Type:  House  Multi-Family

Commercial  Industrial

Acreage  Other

**Drop this form in the mail to Brande Bradford, 1115-D Morrow Road, Morrow, Ga 30260 or complete the on-line form at:**

**<http://www.bradfordrealtygroup.com/dept/109/m/>**

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