

Title:

Appraisals - Plan for It

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505

Summary:

A critical part of selling a home is the appraisal. Here's how to plan for it.

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Article Body:

A critical part of selling a home is the appraisal. Here's how to plan for it.

You have a contract to sell your home and now the appraiser is coming. The appraisal needs to come in at a good price in order for your buyer to get his loan. What should you do?

The Appraiser Says

Appraisers typically tell people not to do anything special before they come. They tell the owner they see lots of houses and they can look past a little clutter and dust. "Don't be nervous," they counsel. Appraisers are sincere people. I'm sure they mean what they say.

I Say

On the other hand, appraisers are human. They respond to cleanliness and order and to good maintenance the same way buyers do. If you've let your hair down, get your home back into "show" condition before the appraiser comes.

Everything you know about a tidy approach to your home, well mulched flower beds, door knobs that are attached firmly and work smoothly, lack of finger prints, lack of clutter, and all the rest applies. Take a look at a "Uniform Residential Appraisal Report" form if you doubt me. The age of the home and the "effective age" are asked for under the "General Description." Don't you think how well your home appears to be cared for affects the number that appears under "effective age?"

The Uniform Appraisal Report requires information about materials (and their

condition) used for floors, walls, trim and finishing elements, bathroom floors and wainscots, and for interior doors. Appraisers train themselves to notice these details. If yours are dusted, polished, and free of scratches and fingerprints, don't you think you might be giving your appraisal a nudge in the right direction?

The Report also asks about kitchen equipment (refrigerator, range and oven, disposal, dishwasher, fan and hood, microwave, and washer and dryer). Do you think it'd be a good idea to have them clean and purring?

The Report asks about amenities such as fireplaces, patios, decks, porches, fences, pools, and sheds. If an appraiser is going to take special note of such things, shouldn't they be swept, cleaned, and have paint in good condition? Also, clean out the gutters if they need it. If it should be raining on the day your appraisal is done, you want your house to handle the rain water well.

Let me share the "comments" section of an appraisal which got the owners what they wanted. I think it'll give you a good feel for what you need to do. "The subject is well maintained and no physical, functional or external inadequacies were noted. Marketability is enhanced by hardwood flooring throughout a majority of the home, an updated kitchen, fresh interior and exterior paint, transom windows, built-ins, a front porch, a rear patio, a large storage shed, 4 fireplaces, etc."

The appraiser is a human being. Make sure you do everything you can to appeal to them and you'll get a good appraisal.