

CHECKLIST FOR MARKETING MATERIALS

First - Measuring your Interior Rooms

You need to measure the important rooms in your home and you need to do this conservatively. If you have built-in bookshelf, for example, measure from the bookshelf to the opposite wall instead of from wall to wall. You want to measure the living room, kitchen, dining room and the bedrooms and any extra rooms like playrooms, studies, dens that you might have.

Second - Square Footage

Know the square footage of your home and your lot. Remember the first element of a home's value is the square footage. You can get the square footage of your home from the tax records. It's important to have the correct square footage because that's leaving money on the table. If you think it is incorrect on the tax records, hire an appraiser to measure your home.

Third - Great Photos

Great photos are absolutely crucial to selling your home. Any digital camera should be fine. Just make sure you upload your shots in high resolution to make them look more professional; use the basic editing tools available on your computer's image software. Not confident in your ability to take good photos? Just do an Internet search and you'll see there are several guides. As far as preparing your home for photos, just tidy up beforehand like you're trying to impress someone. Make sure you read the tip sheet before you take pictures. Here's a list of tips to follow before photos are taken in case you're worried that you're forgetting something. You can also download this tips sheets on simpleandsold.com. Also, if you have anything overtly political or seasonal in plain view put it away before anyone shoots the photo.

Here's a list of tips to follow before the photos are taken
(in case you're worried that you're forgetting something)

- Clean up all clutter. This is the most important thing you could do.
- Have good light. Turn on lamps, open your drapes, and make sure all bulbs are working.
- Turn off ceiling fans because they can make weird blurs in some photos.
- Put away all personal items when you photograph your bathroom.
- Take everything off your counters, take the magnets off your fridge, and hide the pet bowls when you photograph your kitchen. Hide your pets too.
- If you have workout equipment in the living room, remove it!
- If you have young children, their stuff is probably everywhere. Unfortunately, you have to remove all of this stuff (high chairs, baby gates) before you take photos.
- Before you photograph the exterior, trim your trees, mow your lawn, and blow away the fallen leaves. Put away your hoses, trashcans, and recycling, and hide the sign for your security company. Move your car if it's parked in front of the house.
- Clean up your pool if you have one. Make sure no toys are lying around.
- If you have anything overtly political or seasonal in plain view, put it away before anyone shoots the photos.

Fourth - Description

Three bedrooms, two bath, charming home. Snoozer, how about three bedroom, two bath, granite and gourmet kitchen, maple flooring, state of the art entertainment room. Do you see the difference; it paints a picture of the house. *Freakanomics* revealed a dirty little secret about marketing code words and unfortunately this is done very, very often. Fantastic, spacious, charming, and great neighborhood all appear to be glowing descriptions of home they describe but they aren't specific! However the words that *Freakanomics* found to correlate with high sales prices were specific and visual words, granite, maple, gourmet, state of the art, use this as a lesson. Be specific and don't hide anything. There's nothing worse than a buyer who feels misled. You want to use simple yet vibrant words...words that really give a sense of the character of your home. The things that will set you apart here from the big real estate firms is that you can talk like a person and not like an advertisement.

Fifth - The Story

Add a short paragraph to your marketing brochure. You do this by focusing on telling a story in your description. One of the most overlooked aspects of marketing is story telling. It's a simple fact you must tell the story of the home in order to make it special. Make your marketing material interesting. Don Draper on the TV show *Mad Men* once said, advertising is based on one thing, happiness, so tell your potential buyers how your home has made you happy over the years. You sit down and write a short story about why you love your home. If you lack the creative gene, find a friend who has it. Bribe them with dinner and a glass of wine and shove some paper in front of them. Attach the story to your marketing material. If you get stuck by trying to tell your house story, think about what you'd say if you were bragging about that house to an old friend. Sometimes a home story is as simple as the kind of neighbors you have. Sometimes it's a little bit of history. Sometimes it has to do with the loving work that you have put into building or the wonderful times you've had there. Know your house's history; be ready to share it.