

Drive-Up Appeal: Get Your Property Ready to Show



When preparing your property to show, work your way from the outside in. It is essential that your home possess a certain “drive-up appeal.” Remember, a potential buyer’s first impression of your house is formed while they’re still sitting in their car. So first, view your house from that perspective. Go stand on the opposite curb and observe your property. Compare it to surrounding properties. Concentrate on the following 3 areas:

1. Outdoors & Landscaping

How does your landscaping measure up compared to the rest of the neighbourhood? If you think it would rate below average, make a few adjustments:

- Consider buying and planting some bushes around the property.
- Avoid buying trees—mature trees are expensive and unlikely to provide ROI, while immature trees won’t significantly enhance curb appeal.
- If there’s overgrowth, trim it back. Landscaping should complement, not hide the home:
 - Trim shrubs to just below window height
 - Remove ivy clinging to the house
 - Prune tree limbs high enough to walk beneath
- Your lawn should be:
 - Freshly cut
 - Well-watered
 - An even green colour (for brown spots: reseed or re-sod in advance to allow time to grow in)
 - If fertilizing, start early enough for it to take effect
 - Rake up leaves or grass clippings
- Add colour:
 - Plant a flat of mature, vibrant flowers (e.g. petunias, marigolds) that will last through the season.
 - Avoid bulbs or seeds (they take too long).
 - If you lack garden space, use flower pots on the porch.

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2. House Exterior

When viewed from across the street, does your home appear weathered or faded?

If yes:

- A fresh coat of paint is often a great investment that boosts perceived value.
- Stick with neutral or classic colours that fit your neighbourhood and suit your home's architecture.

Check the roof:

- If it's old or leaking, you'll likely need to replace it (buyers will find out during inspection anyway).
- If it appears fine, wait for a home inspector's feedback before taking action.

3. The Front Door and Porch

The front entrance is the buyer's first up-close impression of your home.

Make it shine:

- If you paint nothing else, at least paint the front door.
- Replace or repair the doorbell.
- Polish the door hardware.
- Clean the mailbox.
- Sweep the porch.
- Buy a new, plush doormat.

All these details contribute to the sense of a well-maintained, welcoming home.

Lastly, check the lock:

- Ensure the key works smoothly and the lock functions properly.
- First impressions matter - don't have buyers waiting awkwardly at the door while the REALTOR® struggles with the key.



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