

## Tips for preparing an open house

In this day and age, the real estate market has become very highly competitive. It is therefore very important to make your property stand out from the crowd of unsold properties. Holding an open house is one the most efficient ways of moving your property and making a sale. An open house is an occasion when real estate offered for sale can be viewed by prospective buyers and the general public without an appointment.

Open house has been a tradition among realtors for a long time. Though there are many and more convenient internet tools for viewing houses, the open house tradition will still continue because for most people, seeing is believing. The agent could suggest an open house to their client if they feel that it would help sell the property. Here are a few tips on holding a successful open house.

### 1. Advertise! Advertise! Advertise!

How else are people going to know about the open house? Your house will not sell itself. Before the open house is held, the agent may list the property in the ads of the local newspaper, put up a notice of the open house on their personal websites or on sites where the house is listed online. Signs may be put up in the neighborhood, or on the busiest intersection to alert passers-by of the open house. Pamphlets and flyers may also be used. Balloons are also great ways to attract attention. The more creative and visible the ad is, the higher the likelihood of more human traffic to the open house.

### 2. Timing is everything.

Open houses are mostly held on weekends when most people are off work and have ample time to visit, observe and take in the sights. You could take a risk and change things up bit. Hold your open house on a weekday evening. Dare to be different. Different attracts attention, and attention means more people. You could also time your open house to coincide with a community event; a local soccer tournament or the opening of a local restaurant. You would be forgiven for shamelessly borrowing traffic from another event to help yours.

### 3. Clean and repair your home.

This should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway. Clean your house as if you were going to eat

off the floors. Polish, dust, clean every nook and cranny and make a few cosmetic changes to your house. Repair any broken windows, plant fresh flowers and touch up on any peeling paint. Make your house as presentable as possible. It is also important not to have any strong smells as these may leave a lasting impression on potential buyers.

#### 4. De-clutter and De-personalize.

Put away any ceramics collections and pick up any toys that the kids may have left lying around. Remove things and any sort of clutter lining the bathroom and kitchen counters. A crowded house makes it look smaller and harder for the buyer to imagine the house as their own. De-personalize by removing any family photos, trophies or any other personal touches, even that book on your nightstand. This will make it easier for the buyers to imagine the house as a blank slate, ready to be occupied and personalized by them.

#### 5. Make yourself scarce on the day of the open house.

Having the owner of the house present may make the prospective buyers feel that they are intruding on your personal space. Do not be home for the showing. Disappear for a while and let the public view the house comfortably without feeling that they are walking on eggshells. Make sure your real estate agent or consultant is present during the open house. Do not just open your house to complete strangers without having someone present to keep an eye on things. Security is key.

#### 6. Lock away the valuables.

Do not leave any jewelry, prescription drugs or precious family heirlooms lying around for the duration of the open house. There is bound to be a lot of human traffic – people walking in and out of the house. You wouldn't want your expensive pair of diamond earrings or that Rolex watch to find a new owner, now would you?

#### 7. Leave a contact sheet.

Open houses can be great opportunities to network, make new contacts and even grow the agent's client base. Leave a sheet for the public to leave their contact information. Send a thank you email to those who came to your open house and ask if they had any questions regarding the house.

An open house is a marketing event. It therefore requires careful planning and execution to guarantee great returns.