



MADE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU BY:
ROUGH DIAMOND STAGING & PHOTOGRAPHY



THE ULTIMATE SELLER'S CHECKLIST

Hey there, friend . . .

A little bird told us you're selling your home!

...and we want to help!!

Do you want to sell your home for the absolute most it's worth?

Do you want to sell your home as quickly as possible so you're not sitting on a mortgage, property taxes, utilities, and other expenses for longer than you need to be?

Do you want potential buyers to walk in and say...'wow!!'???

Well then, it's time for some hard work.

Not just elbow grease – although there'll be plenty of that.

But it's time to do the work to transition emotionally from a **homeowner** to a **home seller**.

Right now your house is your home. It's a place where you laughed and cried, made memories, and celebrated milestones in life.

It's tough to let go of that, and it's easy to forget that the value you feel around that space isn't always going to translate into financial value.

However, you've decided to move for a reason. Whether it's because you're downsizing, upsizing, moving towns, growing your family, changing jobs, or just chasing a new adventure, **it's time for a new path.**

Our advice? **Keep your focus on that new path** and remember to celebrate each old attachment...*as you let it go.* Selling can be a time to be grateful and proactive even while you celebrate old memories. But don't be afraid to have fun with it, and enjoy preparing to make some moolah!

We know selling a home is rarely easy, but if you're willing to do the work **you can see huge financial returns** and a sense of unmatched satisfaction!

This is a great place to start. **Our list includes every little thing we can think of to help you prepare.** If you want to be a rockstar seller, then just follow each suggestion and when your Realtor is ready to bring in a photographer, you'll be **100% ready to sell your home for top dollar!**



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Example

Check each item off as you complete it. Good luck! We're rooting for you! :)



De-clutter

Use this as an opportunity to lighten your load, make packing MUCH easier, and to give back to your community. Recycle, sell, donate, or toss any items that are expired, past their prime, no longer useful to you, or that you won't need in your new home.



De-clutter again.

Buyers love clean, clear spaces. And honestly, living in a less cluttered space is mentally healthy! Less to clean, less to organize, and much less overwhelm in general. So take the time and do another sweep – be ruthless! Every item gone is one less thing to pack! 😊 And if you need help letting go, check out Marie Kondo's book, *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up*. It really is life-changing!



Clean Everything.

And boy, do we mean everything. Nothing can kill a sale like yuck-factor. Don't give buyers a single reason to walk away! This isn't the time for the faint-of-heart. This is time to scrub behind, beneath, under, and above. Clean things you didn't even know existed! Clean inside cupboards, clean walls, clean windows, clean siding, clean garage, basement, and attic cobwebs, clean appliances...do you know the feeling when you walk into a space that's so clean it sparkles and smells super fresh and welcoming? Make THAT happen for potential buyers. And if you're just not up for it, don't be afraid to hire a cleaning service. It doesn't cost as much as you might think!



Take a sniff.

Does your home smell super fresh? If not, invest in a great odor-absorber and/or air freshener. Remember, this is no time to be shy, so ask a friend you trust to help with this. Sometimes our noses get used to smells when we live with them every day, so while you may not notice it, your house may have a pet odor, mustiness, or other pervasive scent that could kill a deal. When choosing scents, stick with clean and subtle products. We love the Febreze Gain scented air fresheners – who doesn't love the smell of clean laundry?!?



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Light it up!

Replace any lightbulbs that don't work or don't match, and add lamps to dark rooms. Something as simple as three mismatched lightbulbs in one light fixture can make a listing photograph look truly mediocre. The devil is in the details! And remember, light and bright sells!



Clean up the landscaping.

At the very least, be sure to weed and trim along sidewalks and driveways. But if you're feeling ambitious, this is your time to shine! Freshen up your flower beds with a new layer of mulch, and add some gorgeous seasonal plantings. Be sure to maintain your hard work throughout your home sale process.



Make sure buyers can find you.

Check your address wherever it appears (house front, curb, mailbox) and make sure it's clear and legible. Imagine it – your perfect buyers are heading toward your house to check it out. They loved the pictures, the price is right, it's the perfect neighborhood for them...they WANT to love it! But...they can't find it!! Nothing is more frustrating for buyers than not being able to spot the address they're looking for.



Spruce up your address placard.

While you're at it, consider replacing your address placard! A simple and updated address placard can add tons of curb appeal with very little expense and trouble. If you're handy, search for DIY projects, or scour the internet for countless customizable products you can order with just a few simple clicks!



Replace & Repair.

Comb through your property – inside and out – to identify anything that's broken or in disrepair. Not only do you want to send the message that the property has been well-maintained, but you also want to avoid unexpected expenses and alleviate any safety concerns! Don't give buyers and inspectors a single excuse to complain – that can equal low-ball offers! Repair wobbly railings, replace broken fixtures, and fix all those little things you've been putting off forever.



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Rearrange!

Now's the time to dig deep and try to forget your pre-conceived notions about your home. Sure, the sofa has ALWAYS been on that wall, but would it open up the room and feel more welcoming if you tried a different arrangement? Be creative and patient – and try a few different things! A few pro tips: open up traffic patterns, try to avoid placements that feel unwelcoming like walking in to the back side of a sofa, focus the furniture on the best feature of the room – maybe a fireplace or wall of windows, anchor furniture with a rug, and place the bed in the middle of the longest bedroom wall to create a feeling of spacious drama and symmetry.



Avoid triggers!

Remove controversial items. If it's not something you bring up in polite conversation with strangers, then it should get stashed. Political, religious, and other controversial items can turn off buyers. If you're not sure, err on the side of caution and hide it away for photos and showings.



Tone it down.

Although your ski-ball obsession is rad and all, it's time to de-personalize a bit. If you have lots of family photos or evidence of super specific hobbies, just tone it down a little. It's ok to have a few items – especially if they're critical to your décor. But the more you can do to allow buyers to imagine themselves in a space instead of being forced to see how YOU live in the space, the more likely they are to become attached.



Add greenery.

If you have a black thumb, never fear! Even fake greenery can add TONS of life to a space! Just be careful to avoid pieces that look TOO fake, and skip the ivy. It's had its day and looks dated to current buyers. Check out discount stores like Marshall's and TJ Maxx for great greenery choices on a budget!



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Hide your fur friends!

Although LOTS of people love animals, many others don't – and even those who do might be suspicious of lurking pet odors or damage even if there's no evidence of them! The best bet here is to completely eliminate any evidence that you have a pet for open houses, showings, and especially pictures. Problem solved!



Lighten up.

Consider painting any dark or damaged trim and cabinetry white. Light and bright sells, and paint can cure many ills! Lots of sellers discount how valuable this step can be. Seriously consider it if you're working in a dark or dated space – we promise it's worth it!



Upgrade where you can!

Make any upgrades you can – but always check with your Realtor first to be sure it's worth it for your listing. Kitchen and bathroom upgrades often see great returns, as well as outdoor spaces like patios and decks.



Replace broken hardware.

This is another big bang for your buck. Updating broken or dated kitchen cabinet and closet hardware is simple, inexpensive, and makes a HUGE difference. If you're not sure what to buy, go for clean, simple, and nickel, and you'll be amazed at the transformation a few bucks and an hour of work can make! Be sure to measure depth and length of hardware before you buy replacements.



Scrub stains away!

Don't get buyers thinking about hard water issues when they haven't even fallen in love with the kitchen yet! If you have stains from hard or iron-heavy water, scrub with a strong cleaning agent, or consider replacing fixtures if they can't be cleaned. Check everywhere – bathrooms, kitchens, and even the laundry room.



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Work on curb appeal!

This is big. We're talking first-impressions-matter big! Make sure potential buyers' first impressions are nothing but great by adding fresh flowers, touching up front door paint, getting a fun welcome mat, and fixing uneven walkways and wobbly railings/stairs. Even if you have no flower beds to landscape, this still applies to you!!



Clear your counters.

Horizontal spaces should be as clutter-free as possible! Even small appliances should be stowed out of sight. Crowded countertops tell buyers there isn't enough storage space, and makes pictures look busy and distracting. This goes for bathrooms, too! Stash that toothbrush, and find another home for your hairdryer until you sell.



Let the light in!

Remove dark and dated window treatments!! Today's buyers LOVE light and bright homes, so show them how bright it gets! Heavy drapes and valences are no longer appealing to most buyers, so if you need privacy while you still live there, think simple white sheers and/or curtains that can be pushed to the side to allow light in. This trick alone can have HUGE impact. A few tips: hang curtain rods high and wide instead of just at the window frame to make the space appear larger, and remove window treatments entirely from windows that don't need them. Bare is better than dark!!



Declutter your cabinets.

Remember how you de-cluttered already? Well, make sure you hit the pantry, cabinets, cupboards, and closets, too. Not only will chaotic, messy storage spaces turn buyers off, but crowded storage makes buyers think there's NOT ENOUGH storage! A super-organized space with extra room is the best possible outcome – it will make buyers feel like there's TONS of generous storage, and not distract them from the goal...an offer!! Remember, use this as an opportunity to simplify your life and eliminate things you'll have to move!



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Leave the light on!

If you're not going to be living in the home while it's for sale, then do NOT use that as an opportunity to save some cash by turning off utilities unless it's absolutely necessary. Buyers want to know what works and what doesn't, and walking through a home with caution tape over the toilets or lights that don't work doesn't exactly scream 'welcome home!'



Gather the troops.

Find all your extra keys, garage door openers, fan remotes, appliance manuals, and anything else you'll need to pass to the next owners and place them in a convenient spot for your Realtor like an empty kitchen drawer.



Note past paint colors.

Collect any paint cans you've used in your home and stack them neatly for the next owners to reference. If the paint is dried up, save the information in a folder and toss the cans.



Hit the books!

Do your research now to save time later – how old is your furnace? Is your water heater new? When was the roof replaced last? Other questions to consider: Age of home, age of appliances that are staying, age of roof, age of windows, any applicable warranties etc...Use the notes on the next page, and make a file for your Realtor with any other info you dig up.

...you're almost done!!



Get ready to welcome buyers!

If you haven't already done this, be sure to purchase a cute, welcoming (duh) welcome mat for the front door, and consider buying mats to place inside and outside of *all* doors buyers will use. They'll be walking in and out and you want to avoid them tracking too much dirt around. After all, you'll need to keep the house clean between showings, so a little prep now will mean less work later! Make one final sweep to be sure you didn't miss anything. Walk through as if *you* were shopping for a house, and make sure everything says 'welcome'!!



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Last but not least, use this cheat sheet to collect info for your Realtor & buyer. They'll love you for it!
CONGRATULATIONS! You're a rockstar seller!!

Our furnace was installed _____

Our water heater was installed _____

Our roof was replaced _____

Our windows were installed _____

Other useful notes:

Trash day is _____

Trash pickup is provided by _____

Electricity is provided by _____

Heat is provided by _____

Water is provided by _____



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Rough Diamond Staging & Photography provides Vacant Staging services, Design Consulting, and professional photography solutions for Realtors and homeowners in the Akron area.

If your vacant home is in need of staging or you need your listing photographed, we'd love to help!

Visit us at roughdiamondstaging.com to learn more!

Good luck, and don't forget to ENJOY the process!!



Much love,

-The Rough Diamond Team





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Meet the Rough Diamond Team!



Amy Vartenuk
BOSS LADY

Amy is a lover of books, animals, Akron, and nerdy sci-fi/fantasy stuff when she's not busy making Northeast Ohio sparkle with her Staging finesse. ;) She opened Rough Diamond's doors with her husband, Mike, in 2016 and loves every minute.



Lisa Buie
LEAD PHOTOGRAPHER

As an expert real estate photographer and videographer, Lisa's passion is creating bright, crisp images guaranteed to grab the attention of your prospective clients. When she's not knocking your socks off with stunning imagery, Lisa is an artist, avid dreamer and mom to her dogs, Jack and Marty McFly.



Jes Tierney
ASSISTANT BOSS LADY/MANAGER

Jes is Amy's Right Hand Woman and manages everything from inventory processes to client relations. She has a gorgeously adorable daughter and another little on on the way - and loves getting down to some 90s jams while playing tourist in her beloved hometown of OH-IO!

