

Columns

5 tips for a successful winter sale

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Selling your home in the winter can present a unique set of challenges –it's cold, there's less daylight, and of course, there's the snow.

Some would-be sellers aren't willing to take on these hurdles, so why not take advantage of the decreased competition in the market?

The truth is, winter can be a great time to list.

Here are five effective strategies to help buyers warm up to your home.

1. Keep winter at bay – Shovel the snow. It might sound like a no-brainer, but all too often, home sellers don't shovel the walkway, driveway and sidewalks as often as they should. Try to clear the path as soon as it snows to avoid letting the snow and slush harden as the day wears on. Sprinkling sand or a de-icer wherever guests might walk will help ensure that no one slips or gets hurt.

2. Let in the light – With shorter days and cloudy skies, winter can feel like a gloomy time of year. Make sure that you let as much light into the home as possible by opening the blinds and curtains – you could even swap out your heavy drapes for inexpensive sheers. Also try to ensure that the windows are clean since the dim interior will highlight dirty window panes.

3. Create a cozy space – Winter tends to make us want to hibernate, so do what you can to make your home warm and inviting. Set your thermostat to a temperature that would be comfortable if you were in a dress shirt (as opposed to a sweater or a T-shirt) since most buyers try to look a little spiffy when they're viewing homes. If you have a cold floor, invest in a throw rug or runner.

4. Make your home smell welcoming – The best way to make your house smell fantastic is to ensure it's deep-down clean! Besides, efforts to cover up unpleasant odours are generally unsuccessful, especially when you can't open the windows to air out your house. If you want to add a little aromatic charm, boil some water with cinnamon about 10 minutes before homebuyers are set to arrive.

5. Point out your home's winter resistance – Canadians are acutely aware of how winter can tap financial resources, so make sure you provide details about how your home has been prepared for winter.

Did you replace the weather stripping in your doors and windows? Are your appliances energy savers to help reduce heating bills? Did you add insulation to any parts of the home? Provide as much information as you can about the less-visible work you've done to show your home's value.

Though the weather might slow the market down, there's no reason for you to shy away from a winter sale. You might just benefit from buyers who aren't overwhelmed by a multitude of houses to choose from.

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