

## H YOUR HOME



### SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET

Putting your clutter in the closet may not be good enough. Storage is one of the biggest draws for potential buyers looking for a home, and they will open any — and every — door to check out the space behind it.

To maximize the appeal of your storage space, be sure to organize, clean and condense all your built-in bookcases, closets and cabinetry. And if your closets are packed to the rafters, you may want to consider investing in a storage unit.

Here are some tips to help you slim down your clutter and give the illusion of broader space:

- Closets — If you don't wear it, it's not worth the space. Take a look at your closets and pull out old clothes you know you'll never wear again. Give them away or throw them out. Then take a second look and pull out all the off-season garments and store them in a separate closet or container. Get rid of wire hangers and plastic from the drycleaner.

- Bathroom Cabinets — Take out what you don't use and trash it. We often accumulate plenty of old tubes of makeup, creams, soap samples and the like. Get tough with your stuff and eliminate the excess. Try buying inexpensive plastic bins to organize the space under your sink to store the bathroom products you do use.

- The Pantry — Whether you have a walk-in pantry or a cabinet for your cooking commodities, don't leave buyers wishing for more space — create it. Pull out all the old canned soups and jars of jam that have been idle for months and box them. The products that remain should all be facing the same direction. Make sure there is plenty of space between the products; it shows buyers there is still room to grow.



### CRS: The Top of the Line

Choosing the right REALTOR® is the key to a successful sale. Picking an agent can be tough. But knowing the credentials to look for in a REALTOR® will help both the seller and the buyer feel at ease throughout the entire real estate transaction.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) agent has an outstanding level of achievement in the profession. CRS agents have both a high volume of sales and high number of transactions, as well as advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. As additional peace of mind, CRS agents must maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics.

CRS agents are in the top 4 percent of agents in the country. They offer years of experience, demonstrated success and advice to help you make smart decisions about selling your home. The real estate market is tough, fast-paced and competitive, but with a CRS agent by your side, selling your home becomes an enjoyable experience.

# FENG SHUI YOUR WAY TO A FAST SALE

Reducing clutter in a room can be an overwhelming task for many sellers, which is why many REALTORS® recommend the traditional Chinese practice of feng shui.

The basis of feng shui is to arrange items to harmonize with spiritual forces. The ancient practice hit mainstream America several years ago, and now real estate professionals are hopping on the harmonizing bandwagon. The idea is that potential buyers may feel more comfortable and happy in a home that is arranged à la feng shui.

Don't fret if your home's front door faces west instead of east or is more southwestern than Asian. Part of selling a home is selling a feeling that buyers have about the space. Creating a little Zen in your den will help raise its chi — and the possibility of a sale. Here are a few tips to help bring a bit of feng shui into your home:

- **Simplicity Sells.** Remove excess clutter and knickknacks from the room. Potential buyers feel uncomfortable and cramped when surrounded by an abundance of belongings that are not their own.

- **Look Toward the Light.** Natural sunlight creates a feeling of warmth and happiness. Make use of all windows that bring in the sunlight by pulling back the heavy drapes and raising the blinds.

- **Yin/Yang.** Place candles and potted plants around the room to create a feeling of balance with nature. When it comes to selecting a type of plant for the room, choose those that have round leaves to create a feeling of completeness.



- **Come-in, Chi.** Opening the windows for at least 20 minutes a day lets in fresh air (and chi), reduces odor and brings a feeling of fresh energy to the space.

- **Pack up the Pumas.** An accumulation of shoes by the front door can be very uninviting to newcomers. Gather up your family's footwear and store it out of the way. Walkways to and from the front door should always be clear and welcoming.

## IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Landscaping may not be the first thing sellers tend to repair around their homes, but old and sick trees, shrubs and grass can give the impression that the entire property has been poorly maintained.

Take an objective look at the current landscaping and assess whether any of the trees have the potential to cause damage to the foundation or structure.

In general, the following tips may help prevent future headaches when it comes to picking the right green for your garden:

- Consult a landscaping company for layout ideas about your yard.
- Plan your landscaping for both its beauty and functional value.
- Keep accurate records of landscaping and real estate appraisals.
- Take photos of trees and other landscape plants while they are healthy.
- Check to see if your insurance covers damage caused by landscaping.

Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? **Please mention my name.**

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