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## **REPAIRS BEFORE SELLING – RETURN REWARDS**

PRESENTED BY BILL WHITE

Quick fixes before selling a home always pay off, but which repairs bring the biggest return? Specific answers to this often-asked question largely depend on a variety of factors such as:

- Time of year
- Location of the home
- Market temperature
- Competing inventory

There is no hard and fast rule. But there are general guidelines that apply to most homes.

### **FLOORING FIXES**

In some neighborhoods built up in the '40s have hardwood as the original flooring. Wood floors are a hot item today, but preferences change over time – carpeting became popular as a cost and time saver during construction.

Carpeting became vogue in the '50s and '60s. Some homes today, sadly, still sport '60s shag carpeting. The final movement away from hardwood happened when installing hardwood floors became too expensive. Plywood was easier to obtain and faster to install. Plus choices in carpeting were plenty. It's still relatively inexpensive to install carpeting.

- Hardwood floors – if your home has hardwood floors, that's what buyers want, and it would pay to have the carpeting removed and the floors refinished.
- Carpeting – If your sub-floor is plywood, then replace the carpeting with light tan – neutral carpeting is your best for resale.
- Carpeting – If your sub floor is plywood, another choice is any one of the many laminate flooring colors and styles.
- Ceramic – Replace chipped or cracked tiles. Clean or replace the grout. But don't install ceramic ( it's too expensive) unless it's for aesthetic reasons in an entry way.

## **PAINTING CEILINGS & WALLS**

Buyers spend more time than you would think staring at ceilings. They are looking for signs of a leaky roof, but what you don't want them to see are stains from grease or smoke and ceiling cracks. Ditto for walls. Nothing says freshness like new paint, and it's the most cost effective improvement. Use fiberglass tape on large cracks, cover with joint compound and sand. Paint a neutral color such a light tan – think of coffee with cream.

- Wallpaper

It's not that all buyers hate wallpaper. They hate your wallpaper – because it's your personal choice, not theirs. And they hate dated wallpaper. Get rid of it. The easiest way is to steam it off by using an inexpensive wallpaper steamer.

- Wood paneling

Even if your wood paneling is not real wood but a composite, you can paint it. Dated paneling must go. Older wood paneling such as walnut, mahogany, cedar and pine, it's all gone out of style. Paint it with a neutral and soft color after priming it.

- Textured ceilings

Older popcorn ceilings with the “sparkles” often contain asbestos and if disturbed are health hazards. Say goodbye to it. But even recently sprayed ceilings turn off buyers. It's not expensive but it is time consuming to remove. Lay down drop clothes and scrape it off. You will need to repaint.

## **KITCHEN IMPROVEMENTS**

Appliances and cabinets are typically the most expensive items to replace in a kitchen. If you don't have to replace them, you'll save a ton of money. However, if your cabinets are dated and beat-up, your house might not sell if the cabinets aren't replaced.

Kitchen remodels return nearly 100%. According to “Remodeling Magazine”, the high-end kitchens don't return as much as the mid-range or minor remodels. Most buyers won't pay extra for a built-in Sub Zero refrigerator, professional 8-burner stove, undercount sink or travertine floors.

- Cabinets

Resurfacing is your best option. This involves attaching a thin veneer to the surface of the cabinets and replacing the doors and hardware. If your cabinets are painted, add a fresh coat of paint and new hardware.

- Counter tops, sinks & faucets

Granite counters are not necessary. Simple laminates, newer faucets and sparkling sinks sell. Buyers don't want leaky faucets or stained sinks.

## **BATHROOMS**

The average of recouped cost is more than 100% for bathrooms. New floors, fixtures and lights payoff.

## **SHINGLES AND EXTERIOR**

If your home needs new shingles, bite the bullet and do it. Even though most roofing tear-off jobs take one to two days, buyers shy away from buying a home if the shingles need to be replaced.

- Patch cement cracks in sidewalks
- Resurface asphalt driveways
- Plant flowers
- Caulk windows and doors
- Replace doorknobs and locks
- Fix or paint fences

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, buyers want to buy a home that has no deferred maintenance, newer appliances, updated plumbing, electrical and heating (including A/C), modern conveniences and is ready to occupy.