

10 Reasons Buyers Don't Buy

Odors

House odors are number one on the home selling *uh-oh* list. And narrowing it down, odors from cigarette smoke and pets take top billing, with mildew not far behind.

If you smoke indoors--it smells. I'm sorry, but it's true. If you have pets, the house *might* smell--even if you don't notice it. Ask someone who doesn't live there to take a sniff (and don't get angry when they tell you the truth).

There's only one solution. *Eradicate* the odors so that you can present potential buyers with a clean, fresh atmosphere--*not* a house that's full of perfumes to cover up the smell.

2. Dogs that Meet You at the Door or in the Driveway

Dogs frighten some people and irritate others. You'll have a much better response from showings if you control your pets--dogs, cats, whatever.

You say you plan to put them in a bedroom or garage and then ask people not to open the door to that area? Bad idea. Would you buy a house you can't inspect? Of course not.

Remove pets during showings if possible. If you can't, contain them in crates for their own safety and to show respect for the feelings of potential buyers.

3. Dirty Bathrooms

Grimy bathrooms are an instant turnoff. Scrub them, paint them, buy a new shower curtain, rugs and towels--do what it takes to make them shine. If you're serious about selling the home, the extra work will make the task much, much easier.

4. Dimly Lit Rooms

Dark homes are a turnoff to most home buyers. Here are some potential fixes:

1. Replace dim light fixtures
2. Install additional light fixtures
3. Install (quality) sun tunnels or skylights
4. Remove heavy drapes to let the light stream in
5. Repaint some rooms with colors that reflect light
6. Trim tree limbs that shadow the house

While you're at it, clean the windows, inside and out. If you can, replace any insulated windows that have broken seals (you'll see fog withing the windows that cannot be removed). Dirty and fogged windows are another buyer turnoff.

5. A House Full of Busy Wallpaper

This is another critical issue to think about if you're selling a home, because busy wallpaper in every room turns off *most* buyers, and even people who love wallpaper rarely like what you've chosen. It's a personal decorative touch that they want to select themselves.

It's the masses you must appeal to when you're selling a home, so take a hard look at your wallpaper and decide if it should be removed and replaced with paint. *Don't paint over it*, because that usually enhances every seam and looks terrible.

6. Damp Basements

Any dampness (or damp smells) in the basement throw up a red flag to buyers that *the basement leaks!* Even if it doesn't truly leak.

If you have leaks, fix them. No leaks? Look for drainage issues. Maybe water is pooling around the foundation, keeping it damp. Most problems we see are caused by rainwater that's being diverted towards the foundation instead of away from it.

- Underground drains might be blocked.
- Downspouts could be aimed the wrong way.

Go outside the next time it rains and take a look.

7. Bugs

Roaches, spiders, *any* type of insect that shouldn't be in the house. Get rid of them.

8. Poor Curb Appeal

You *must* grab their interest from the curb if you want to sell the home for top dollar. Buyers often refuse to go into a house with an unkempt yard, sagging doors or peeling paint. You say you can't afford to paint? Okay, but get that yard in tip-top shape and grab a screwdriver to fix those doors.

9. Gutters with Plants Growing in Them

I'm serious. Some people never clean their gutters, and it *always* makes buyers wonder what else hasn't been handled.

Remember the drainage issue in #6? Cleaning packed gutters might help.

10. Sellers Who Hang Around for Showings

Yes, you... leave the house during showings. Home buyers feel awkward about opening closet doors and lingering for a really good look at the house if the seller is there.

If you're selling by owner, give them some space, don't hover.

Parting Words

Most of the Top 10 problems are home selling issues you can correct without spending a lot of money. Do it now, before you put the house on the market, because if your house develops a reputation among agents as the *house that smells*, the *house with the huge barking dog* or the *house where the owner won't leave people alone* it will be too late. Your house will be last on their list to show potential buyers.