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## Prepping Your Listing to MAXIMIZE its Marketability

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### WHAT TO EXPECT

#### – Expectations Before the Photo Shoot –

Hi! My name is Lew Corcoran. I'm a home stager and real estate photographer, and I look forward to taking photos of your listing!

I want the photos of your listing to be the best they can be. This requires both cooperation and teamwork that will result in an outstanding online presence when your listing goes LIVE on the market.

Before I take photos of your property, I ask that all repair work, cleaning, and staging be done prior to my arrival. Please respect your photographer's time:

- Be ready in advance for the appointment. Reschedule if necessary;
- Photographer will not assist with staging;
- Photographer will not move furniture; and
- Photographer will not wait for "stage as you go."

The photos we take of your listing are usually the first impression that potential buyers will see. Over 90% of home buyers search online for homes for sale!

First impressions are everything, and these points will help make your property outshine the competition. Keep in mind that home buyers usually make up their minds about a property in approximately 8 seconds from the time they walk into your listing. And you won't get a second chance to make a great first impression!

Imagine how a buyer might see your listing for the first time. You'll want to create a welcoming entry and an inviting atmosphere so your listing will stand out against the competition.

Please have all pets restrained and out of sight on the day of the photo shoot. While I LOVE all animals, I appreciate being able to work without your client's furry friends getting in the photos!

To efficiently maintain my busy schedule and deliver the level of service my clients have come to expect, I am not able to spend unnecessary time at the listing waiting for it to be cleaned, dusted, decluttered, etc.

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### **DECLUTTER**

#### **– Make the First Impression Count –**

Home Shopping Online – It's where more than 90% of home buyers start their search for homes.

The majority of home buyers start their search for homes online, so it's important to make the first impression count! You won't get a second chance to make a great first impression.

- Have your clients pack early! When you sell their house, they're going to be moving. So now is a great time to sort, pack, donate, and generally simplify. You and your clients will have less to do to get ready for showings, and home buyers will see a clean, clutter-free listing! If your clients have packed boxes, make sure they are in an area that I will not be photographing (such as an unfinished basement or the inside of a garage).
- Please Remember... Clean Sells! And Clutter Eats Equity.
- If your clients don't want to clean it yourself, have them call a professional to do it for them.

You want potential buyers to use the word "Immaculate!" when they walk through your listing.

### **GENERAL**

#### **– Tips for All Areas in the Listing –**

Please follow these tips to prepare your listing for the best real estate photos possible:

- ☐ Thoroughly clean the entire listing (wash floors, vacuum carpets, clean countertops, clean windows and mirrors).
- ☐ Touch up paint and fill in any holes or scratches in doors and walls.
- ☐ Identify and make any repairs that are needed or required.
- ☐ Turn all overhead lights and table lamps ON and make sure they work!
- ☐ Replace all burned out light bulbs.
- ☐ Use bulbs of the same brightness throughout the listing.

**For the best photography results, use 40-watt (450 lumens), 60-watt (800 lumens), 75-watt (1100 lumens), and 100-watt (1600 lumens) equivalent daylight (5000K) LED light bulbs. For more information about lighting, see the lighting section at the end of this document.**

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### GENERAL (CONTINUED)

- ☐ Open blinds / shades / curtains / window treatments to let in natural outside light.
- ☐ Turn all ceiling fans OFF.
- ☐ Turn all televisions OFF.
- ☐ Turn all computer screens and monitors OFF.
- ☐ Remove all portable fans (window fans, table fans, floor fans).
- ☐ Make all beds.
- ☐ Open doors between rooms to give an open feeling and ensure all rooms are included in the virtual tour.
- ☐ Remove personal photographs (or replace with general landscape / object photographs).
- ☐ Declutter and remove all excess furniture and family items.
- ☐ We can't assume liability for moving furniture, etc. The property will be photographed as is.
- ☐ Remove floor rugs ... now is the time to let that wood flooring shine through.
- ☐ Conceal electrical cords. They remind us how many things we keep plugged in 24/7.
- ☐ Remove all trash cans, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, window air conditioners, table or standing fans, and children's toys.
- ☐ Remove pet food bowls and pet toys, and conceal pets.
- ☐ Place all shoes / boots / jackets / gloves / hats / scarves etc. in closets.
- ☐ Those baskets of slip-on shoe covers? Place them out of sight where you'll remember them.
- ☐ Open House and For Sale signs should be out of view.
- ☐ Remove small floor rugs to reveal actual flooring.
- ☐ Use broom to remove cob webs from walls and ceilings.
- ☐ We will not be taking photos of the laundry room (unless it is fabulous), the unfinished basement (unless requested), or the inside of the garage, so you store unnecessary items there or in a storage room.

### KITCHEN

#### – Sometimes the Focal Point, the Kitchen Deserves Attention to Detail –

- ☐ Clear countertops completely. No knife blocks, baking supplies, mail, etc.
- ☐ Have all counters, tables, top of the refrigerator, etc. cleared off.
- ☐ Leave out a maximum of one small appliance (i.e., coffee maker).

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### **KITCHEN (CONTINUED)**

- ☐ Clear outside of refrigerator of all magnets, papers, photos, calendars, to-do lists, children's artwork, etc.
- ☐ Empty garbage and hide garbage cans in pantry, closet, storage room, or garage.
- ☐ Do not leave any dirty dishes or utensils in the kitchen sink – make sure they are washed, dried, and put away in the cabinets or otherwise placed in the dishwasher.
- ☐ Remove small appliances, refrigerator notes and magnets, wash cloths, dishes, cleaning items, drainers, soap dispensers, sink stoppers, Bulletin Boards, calendars, etc.
- ☐ All food items should be put away in cupboards, the pantry, or the refrigerator.
- ☐ Remove rugs, trash cans, and any pet items.
- ☐ Remove items stored or displayed above the kitchen cabinets.
- ☐ Remove all but a few “kitchen type” decorator items. A clean coffee maker and a few live plants are fine.
- ☐ CLEAN! CLEAN! CLEAN!

### **LIVING ROOM / FAMILY ROOM**

#### **– The Space to Enjoy Conversation and Spend Quality Time with Family –**

- ☐ Remove stacks of magazines, papers, mail, etc.
- ☐ De-clutter fireplace mantel/hearth (no more than 5 items, including artwork).
- ☐ Clean interior of fireplace and re-paint if needed.
- ☐ Fluff and arrange furniture pillows
- ☐ Remove kid's and pet's toys.
- ☐ Make sure all remotes, extra cables, game consoles and miscellaneous books & magazines are put away.
- ☐ Remove any oversized or extra furniture that makes the room look crowded.
- ☐ Remove all photos of family and children.
- ☐ Remove any exercise equipment, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, window air conditioners, table or standing fans, etc. These rooms should be a stress-free, relaxing family area.

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### **DINING ROOM**

#### **– Allow Buyers to Imagine a Nice Family Meal –**

- ☐ Clear table, dust, and polish the table top.
- ☐ Okay to use decorative place setting if available (but not necessary).
- ☐ Feature one center piece such as a bouquet of flowers.
- ☐ Straighten all chairs and space them evenly.
- ☐ Remove child seats/booster chairs.

### **OFFICE / DEN**

#### **– Keep Your Workspace Organized, Even if You're Not –**

- ☐ Declutter office space.
- ☐ Put all files and folders away in a cabinet or desk drawers.
- ☐ Turn all computer screens OFF.
- ☐ Remove unnecessary furniture.
- ☐ Straighten all furniture and space them evenly.
- ☐ Empty trash and hide bins.

### **PRIMARY BEDROOM / GUEST BEDROOM**

#### **– Rest for You and Your Guests –**

- ☐ Make beds, including decorative pillows / shams if available.
- ☐ Press bed linens and bed skirts.
- ☐ Clear nightstands of all personal items.
- ☐ Store away phone/tablet charging cables.
- ☐ Remove all clutter from top of dressers.
- ☐ Remove family photos from walls.
- ☐ Put all clothing and valuables away.
- ☐ Clean under bed, removing items that may show in the photos.
- ☐ Declutter closets – remove and pack away unused clothing.

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### **CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS**

#### **– Don't Forget About Children's Bedrooms! –**

- ☐ Remove personalized names from walls.
- ☐ Remove wall stickers/posters.
- ☐ Clear nightstands of all personal items.
- ☐ Store away phone/tablet charging cables.
- ☐ Remove all clutter from top of dressers.
- ☐ Remove posters from walls.
- ☐ Remove diaper genies.
- ☐ Clean under bed, removing items that may show in the photos.
- ☐ Put away all clothing and children's toys.
- ☐ Declutter closets – remove and pack away unused clothing.

### **BATHROOMS**

#### **– To be Spa-Like, the Bathrooms Must be Clean and Clear of All Personal Items –**

- ☐ Clear countertops completely. No soap, toothbrushes, medications, deodorant, shaving cream / gel, razors, make-up, etc. By the way, have your clients hide their medications, else someone will help themselves to them.
- ☐ Clean mirrors, glass surfaces, toilets, tubs, and showers.
- ☐ Remove soap, shampoo, loofahs, etc. from showers and tubs.
- ☐ Place all toiletries in a basket and place it under the sink.
- ☐ Put toilet seats down.
- ☐ Empty garbage and hide bins.
- ☐ Close closet doors.
- ☐ Remove dirty towels – leave out only new, unused towels.
- ☐ Hang clean towels neatly on racks.
- ☐ Ensure linen closet is neat and tidy
- ☐ TIP: For all bathrooms, we recommend that you use a small plastic basket to put your favorite shampoo, soap, and personal care items into so that when you leave for the day or, if you have showings, you can quickly stash it in a cabinet and buyers will see a bathroom free of your personal stuff. Think Model Home!

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### **EXTERIOR**

#### **– Online “Curb / Web Appeal” and a Relaxing Oasis –**

Web appeal is the new curb appeal. The front exterior of the house is usually the first photo buyers see online!

- ☐ Close garage doors.
- ☐ Remove cars from driveway and from the front of the house.
- ☐ Mow the lawn and keep it watered during the summer months.
- ☐ Clean up landscaping (trim shrubs and clear leaves).
- ☐ Organize porch and patio furniture.
- ☐ Remove dead plants and dead leaves from live plants.
- ☐ Remove empty planters.
- ☐ Use broom to remove cob webs from eaves and door frames.
- ☐ Remove visible water hoses.
- ☐ Remove trash cans.
- ☐ Remove all toys, sports balls, basketball goals, soccer goals, and yard clutter.
- ☐ Wintertime: Keep driveway, walkway, and steps free and clear of ice and snow!

### **BACK YARD**

#### **– The Backyard Should Be an Oasis to Relax –**

- ☐ Clean porch, tidy up outdoor tables / chairs / cushions.
- ☐ Pillows / cushions should be fresh and clean, not faded or moldy.
- ☐ Clear out kid's toys, balls, frisbees, etc.
- ☐ Clean the pool.
- ☐ Remove pool vacuum / cleaner hose and hide pool cleaning supplies.
- ☐ Turn on pool fountains / water features.
- ☐ Remove visible water hoses.
- ☐ Remove trash cans.

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### **PETS**

#### **– Pets are Loving (and I love Them Too!), But Their Presence Should be Minimized –**

- ☐ Place food and water bowls in pantry or closet.
- ☐ Place pet beds / toys in pantry or closet.
- ☐ Use lint roller on furniture to remove pet hair.
- ☐ Contain pets in hidden crate, outside, or with a neighbor, relative, or friend.
- ☐ Clear back yard of pet waste / toys.

### **WINDOWS**

#### **– On a Clear Day, You Can See Forever –**

- ☐ If possible, have the windows cleaned – especially those with really wicked awesome views!
- ☐ Remove screens where possible to allow for even better views.
- ☐ Remove heavy or dated window coverings, and make sure the blinds are clean, are in good condition, and can open and close every way to Sunday.

### **PLANTS**

#### **– Ask Not What Plants Can Do for You –**

- ☐ If possible, fresh live potted or planted flowers are great on the front walk or porch, weather permitting.
- ☐ If your clients have live plants in the house, make sure they are free of dead leaves and are looking healthy.
- ☐ If you have artificial green plants, make sure they are clean and dust free.
- ☐ Remove any colorful dried or artificial “flowers.”



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### SEASONAL ITEMS AND DECORATIONS

#### – Ahh, the Holidays! And, Oh My, That Artwork! –

- ☐ Décor and artwork lend to a warm and cozy feeling throughout your home. However, if your listing is too taste specific, potential buyers will not be able to “see around” your client’s style to envision themselves living there.
- ☐ Now is not the time to put out any holiday decorations of any kind whatsoever.
- ☐ Seasonal items will date your photos. Please wait until after the photos are completed before you put any holiday decorations up.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

#### – Staging Helps You Sell Your Listing Quickly and For Top Dollar –

Selling your listing is like selling a product – it must be properly prepared, packaged, priced, presented, and promoted to reach the right buyer.

Although your client’s furnishings and décor are great for their lifestyle, it’s important to both neutralize and optimize your listing for the future buyer.

A professional home stager can provide you with a pre-listing consultation to help you prepare your listing for sale and help make sure your listing shows at its best online through the photographs.

Most importantly, if your listing is not ready for photographs when we arrive, we will take a photo of the outside of the home and leave. You will be encouraged to reschedule the photo shoot when you feel the listing is ready. As stated in our conditions and cancellation policy, there will be a charge for this because we were unable to give your time slot someone else.

And remember, a property that is properly prepared, packaged, priced, presented, and promoted will sell quickly and for the highest price the market will allow.

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### **CONTACT ME**

**– Reach Out. I Might Bark, but I Don't Bite! –**

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Real Estate Staging Association (RESA)

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### Lighting

**Overhead Light in The Hall** – Keep hallways brightly lit because they get little to no natural light. We suggest two or three 60-watt bulbs if there are multiple fixtures or a single fixture with multiple bulbs. For a single bulb fixture, try 75- or 100-watts.

**Porch Light** – Halogen lights in the 20-watt range should be perfect for a pathway so you're not being blinded on the walk to your house. However, for carriage lights or lanterns [on the porch], bump that up to 40- or 60-watts.

**Recessed Lights** – Keep recessed lights around 60-watts to prevent from turning them into spotlights.

**Nightstand Lights** – 40- and 60-watt bulbs is best for nighttime tasks like reading a book or reviewing notes. But, to keep from that seeming too bright in an otherwise dim room, make sure your lamp shade shields the bulb from your direct eye sight.

**Desk Lights** – When working at your desk, you want to make sure you don't strain your eyes. And the best way to do this is to find a desk light at about the same wattage as your computer screen. For a room with decent natural light, that should be around 60-watts. For a room with few/no windows, balance the 60-watt desk light with ambient overhead lights, or bump that number up to 75-watts.

**'Boob' Lamps** – This typical ceiling lamps (featuring a domed shade) often have more opaque covers, so we suggest using a 75-watt light.

**Kitchen** – Kitchen lights should be bright because you are working with knives and other cooking materials. For dark kitchens and more opaque fixtures, try 100-watts. If you get a lot of natural light, try using a slightly dimmer 75-watt bulb.

**Bathroom Sconces** – Keep bathroom sconces around 60- to 75-watts (But, this can be split. So two 40-watt bulbs in a pair of sconces or three 30-watt bulbs above the mirror for example).

**Dining Room Chandelier** – For the best results, keep the total wattage of dining room chandelier between 200-400 watts depending on the room size. So, this can mean two 100-watt bulbs, four 60- or 75-watt bulbs, eight 40-watt bulbs. and so on.

In general, you can multiply the square footage of a room by 1.5 to figure out the total amount of wattage needed to properly light the space. And, remember to always check the fixture to see what the maximum wattage allowed is because exceeding that number can be very dangerous.