

# GET SERIOUS! SELL YOUR HOME FASTER!

By: Michael Milford, The Neighborhood Guy

## Don't get your home ready to sell...get it ready to move!

My clients rely on my company, The Neighborhood Guy Handyman Services, Inc., to help them when it comes time to stage and sell their home. I am not a home staging professional, but I am a home builder, homeowner, property investor, and business owner that knows, through 33 plus years of experience, in many different housing markets, what home buyers want to see and feel in a home that is for sale. I also know what they **don't** want to see.

I provide a second set of eyes with unvarnished observations as to potential structural, mechanical, and cosmetic issues that may stand in the way of a home realizing its **full** sales potential. These unvarnished observations and, often times, "colorful", remarks are not ever meant to disparage a client's home or their personal lifestyle. They are a mechanism I use to capture their attention to specific "problem areas" in and around their home.

Humor, and the capacity to laugh at one's self, are essential qualities a home seller must possess when beginning the often nerve-racking process of marketing your home...especially when there are too many on the market, competing for the same buyer!

In the three years between 2007 and 2009, the **average** length of time a home was on the market, in the areas we service, was approximately 119 days. Of all the homes my company "made ready"; the longest one of our homes was on the market, was 48 days. An average of 23 days was achieved for the rest of our client's homes...and one of them sold the day the sign went in the yard!

Listed below, are the most important actions you **must** undertake, **prior** to putting the sign in the yard, insuring your home sells FAST...so fast in fact, you might think you under-priced it! Keep in mind, these suggestions are only meant to do one thing...SELL YOUR HOME FAST!

If you and your family will follow these simple procedures, and work your collective tails off for a week, you **will** be victorious. I promise!

I've written this piece hoping to help all those folks in need of some honest to goodness, right from the heart, straight talk. Please don't take any of it personally...heck; odds are we've never even met! Let's all be brutally honest right now; you know, I know, and The Lord knows just how much "stuff" you've managed to acquire over the years. Now, let's get going! There's a boatload of money to be saved...and a house to sell...FAST!

## Price the home properly with the help of your Realtor!

Your “move out” time frame, the current housing market conditions, and financial circumstances aren’t the only factors controlling how fast your home sells. A well maintained home, priced just one percentage point **below** the average square foot selling price of the last 50 homes **sold** in your area, will move very quickly.

You must remind yourself, over and over if necessary, whether you’ve been in the home for one year or the last twenty years, that this home is not **your** home anymore! The home now belongs to the **next** owner!

While you may have wonderful and cherished memories of the time you’ve spent making it your home, it is now just another piece of property for sale...for sale to the highest bidder, don’t forget!

Home valuations have nothing in common with all your warm and fuzzy memories of the kids growing up, or the romantic evenings you spent in front of the fireplace, or even the time you threw all his clothes into the front yard.

Use your common sense here...it is now an inanimate object for sale! Treat the sale of your home just like the sale of a car. Price it to **sell** ...not to sit. The faster it sells the more **time and money** you and your family will save! Just think...**no** double mortgage payments... **no** double gas, electric, water, sewer, and insurance payments, either...not to mention, those **expensive** extra property taxes! Any good realtor will use the countless tools at their disposal to help you formulate the proper listing price. Ask around at the local mortgage and title companies which **listing** realtor seems to be the busiest. Contact them and ask them for a list of names and numbers for their latest ten **listing** clients. And don’t forget to visit the local Better Business Bureau website to confirm their good standing in the community.

## Present your home to buyers in “move in” condition!

What kind of home is in “**move in**” condition, you ask? A home in “**move in**” condition is presented in such a fashion, that the new buyers can walk right in and make your “old” home their “**own**” home...**immediately!**

Now, keep in mind, while the new buyers may not **love** the carpet style, or even some of the paint colors in the home, they will at least be able to **see** how large the closets are! **All** closets, bathroom countertops and cabinets, kitchen cabinets, drawers, kitchen counters, pantries, and garage shelves need to be dang-near **empty**...**before** you even try showing your home. Otherwise, your home will sit and sit and sit! This “**less is more**” principle also applies for all the bookshelves, dining tables, coffee tables, and bedside and end tables, as well!

You must get rid of all the **crap!** There, I said it. Somebody has to be an adult here. Buy a case of large lawn bags if you must, and start pitching everything that hasn't seen the light of day in the last **six** months. **Think about this for a minute!** You'll have to move it all to the new home, and who in their right mind wants to do that?

Be honest here! That stupid lawn dart game should have been thrown out 3 years ago... **before** your Uncle Jack (while downing his umpteenth Tanqueray and tonic) put out his left eye while trying to see how high he could launch one.

Start in the basement (or garage, or the attic) because that's where you've hidden most of it, to keep from looking at it every day. You may need some help to keep **each other** brutally honest ...so, in the interest of fairness, let's say the wife gets to pitch hubby's stuff...and he gets to pitch hers! Not fair, you say? I will tell you very candidly... this whole deal won't be easy at all, on anyone, if you're not honest with yourselves and each other. **Everyone** gets on board with the program because it will be worth it.

Divide the rest of the items you haven't thrown out into two camps: Camp 1 is what goes to the new house. Pack it up for a trip over to the storage unit. Don't have a storage unit? You'll need one, because the garage needs to be dang-near empty, as well. The new buyers will need to see where they'll be throwing all their "stuff"!

Camp #2 is what you, the kids, and your spouse will continue to argue over. This "stuff" is what I call "found money". This is the "stuff" you sell at the garage or yard sale...or give to Goodwill for a nice tax write-off. (Even President Clinton donated old underwear and socks for a write-off, and if that unholy rascal can get away with it, you can too!)

This also happens to be the perfect time to "lose" all those "gifts" and bric-a-brac (more crap) you couldn't before, because your Mother-in-law gave it to you. Or, how about that oil painting by some "artist" in New Orleans, that crazy Aunt Marcie "commissioned" for you as a wedding present?

**GET IT ALL GONE!** Now you can blame it on the movers! Get a storage unit, POD, or space for everything going to the new house (except furniture and every day essentials like dishes and flatware, towels and clothing that will be worn for the next 30 days **ONLY!** Chinette is what I suggest you use for **every** meal. It's a great time saver, and the kids will think they're at a picnic!

Open up **all** the bathroom vanities and linen closets. Empty **everything** into boxes except necessary medications, toiletries, towels, paper products and emergency kits. Do you really need that bushel basket of cotton balls?

How many Q-tips will you need for the next 4 weeks, anyway? Label the boxes appropriately. Load all boxes into the car for a trip to the storage unit. Junior's old sling can be tossed out. The chances of someone (even Junior, bless his heart) breaking their arm again in the next month or so, are about as likely as you winning the Lottery's Power Ball game...TWICE.

Open all the kitchen cabinets. Remove all the baking pans, cookie pans, Bundt pans, and mixers. Yes, the toaster can stay...but the Betty Crocker Citrus Juicer that Hubby gave you for your 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary **has** to go. Be honest, you haven't used it more than a few times. You may want to put this wonderful token of his affection in the garage sale. Load it all up, mark the boxes, and get it into the car for a trip to storage.

All spices, cake mixes, Hamburger Helper, etc., get boxed up and stored. Most can goods can go, as well. **You're working here!** You don't have time to cook! Call Domino's or Pizza Hut and stay focused on the task at hand. The faster you get this work done, the faster you can move on to the "fun" projects!

Open **all** kitchen drawers and remove at least 90% of all utensils, pots, and pans. Box them up and mark for storage. The "under sink" stuff **all** goes except for soaps, Windex, Pledge, and scrubber pads. Move everything sitting around the sink, including the "froggie" scrunge pad caddie, to **under** the sink...and you don't **even** want **anyone** seeing a plunger or a bottle of Liquid Plumber while viewing your home! Talk about creating doubt in the minds of the new buyers **or** their inspector!

Kid's closets need to be **empty** except what they will wear for the next 2 weeks...PERIOD! You'll just have to wash the same outfits more regularly. Seriously, people! Buyers will look at the storage space in the closets of a bedroom **before** they look at the size of the bedroom. A jammed closet makes a small bedroom "**feel**" even smaller. If you can't close the closet doors because of all their crap...**that** should be your first clue! Give the old clothes away, for Pete's sake. Give **another** kid a chance to hate the same stuff your kid does, but is afraid to tell you, because it would "hurt Mommy's feelings". Remove and pitch (or donate) any pair of shoes they haven't worn in 60 days...they don't fit them any more...or they probably hate them, as well! Oh, and tell the kids they get to choose two toys and a game each to play with. Box up the rest and get them to storage...and STOP whining, kids! You haven't played with that stupid Chutes and Ladders game for 3 years...GET OVER IT ...and go help your father load up the car!

All other closets, including Master bedroom closets, linen and hall closets, cedar closets, broom closets, garage closets, and yes, basement closets, must

be **emptied** and the contents taken to storage, given away, sold, thrown away, or even burned, if you must. Only the clothing that you will wear in the next 30 days should be left in the Master closet. You are **not** going to need “the” suit, Ned. No one is going to die in the next month. And tell Patsy she can do without virtually every pair of shoes she owns, except what she “swears” she will wear in the next two weeks. Come on Patsy-girl...if the shoes have dust on them...offer them up to the garage sale. Sacrifice them for the poor souls in Purgatory! And don’t forget all those fanny packs and sweaters, sweat suits, and skorts that are way too big/small. Sell them! Cable knits in Tuscany Tan are **so** 1999. Just think...you’ll be able to spend all the garage sale money you rake in, for a new wardrobe at Target!

Next, you will want to turn to the bookshelves, fireplace mantles, and **everything** on **all** the tables, counters, and dressers. Remove **all** personal photos and box them up. This reasoning is important and twofold: First, **complete** strangers will be in your home. You do **not** want strangers ogling your little darlings or the photos of your trip to Maui...**you want them looking at the home!** Secondly, photos, vases, and figurines make spaces look smaller and more cluttered. This clutter takes the buyer’s **focus** off the home! You may think it’s cozy and charming, but it’s not...IT’S CLUTTER! And all that clutter is **standing in the way** of you selling your home! Jewelry boxes, magazines, **everything** but mantle and alarm clocks, and the lamps, must go! Box up 75% of all the books and magazines you’ve already read. No one really cares about your National Geographic collection...or how smart you are! They only want to see where all **their** books and magazines will fit!

True story: I **actually** witnessed a very nosy young woman rifle through my client’s bookshelves, while she was touring the home with her realtor. When I asked her what she was looking for, she told me she wanted to make sure she wasn’t buying a home from some right wing Rush Limbaugh lover! The poor realtor would have fainted from embarrassment had her client not said, in the same breath, “Let’s make an offer today!” I called my clients after the young woman and her realtor left to let them know they had a buyer...and, oh, by the way, weren’t they glad they listened to me and packed up his service medals, commendations, and all their mementos from Reagan’s 2<sup>nd</sup> inaugural? The Colonel and his wife were moving back to Washington D.C. where he was assigned to The Pentagon. Remember: **LESS IS MORE!**

Now, **at last**, we have a home with a minimum of interior clutter... a home we can work with and stage for **maximum appeal** to the most buyers possible! Don’t you feel better? If not, then you are one of the 15% of sellers that don’t **deserve** to sell their home. This 15% deserves the self fulfilling prophesy of home selling, as their personal slice of Hell on Earth! I realize you think the Hummel figurines are artistic and identify your “style”! I understand those Precious Moments cuties you paid **way** too much for, have a soft spot in your heart. **LOSE THEM!** Make them vanish! For a lousy 30-

45 days, you can do without them. If all the stuff you have lying around the house **costs** you just one month's mortgage payment because you've got to have it out in the open, for folks to mock, snicker, laugh at, break, or worse, **steal**... You **really** don't want to move, do you? Bite the bullet and **take one for the team!**

The thousands of dollars you will save following these few, very basic directions will bring you more peace of mind than all the little porcelain figurines in the world ever could!

Let's now direct your focus to exterior items like the entire garden tool collection you **never** use! Throw it all away or take it to storage. Include the weed killer, fertilizers, snow shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes, and, **especially** those mole traps you never learned how to use. Now is also the time to take all the power tools and extension cords you won't use for the next 45 days. Christmas and other holiday decorations need to be put in storage, as well. Moving all this to storage now will make storage spaces in the home like the attic, garages, and basement, look **much** larger. The treadmills and weight benches you hang all your clothes on, need to go, too. Barbeque pits need to go if they have wheels. If you use your pit just half as much as we use ours, you know a new pit looks new for about a month. Put the BBQ pit in storage...please! You're eating pizza, remember?

Contact a professional lawn services company to come by and give all the beds a good weeding and mulching. Have them trim the hedges, and edge all the side walks, patios, and driveways, as well. This is money well spent. You are much too busy getting rid of all the crap! Besides, the "streetscape" is the new buyer's **first** impression of **their** new home. Don't disappoint them. A good job will last at least 45 days, or so...even with the kids and dogs running around.

And please, in the name of **everything** that is sacred...**PICK UP THE POOP!** The last thing you want is a realtor or buyer stepping in one of Lucky's land mines, then tracking it back through your clean home. If you have a cat, please move the litter box to a well ventilated area of the home, or, if possible, the garage. The cat **will** find it. I recognize Miss Mittens is a valued "member of the family", but what potential buyer needs the foul scent of ammonia to help them **start** hating your home? If, during these 30 days or so, the cat's "creature" comforts trump the efforts of getting your home sold...you, my friends, deserve to be one of the 15%!

The exterior of your home needs to **look and feel** well maintained. Take a walk around the **entire** perimeter of the home and identify the areas needing maintenance.

Gutters and downspouts need to be cleaned out and re-secured. Expansion joints in the brick work need to be sealed. Loose boards on the deck need to

be secured. Screens on windows, doors, and covered patios need to be repaired or replaced, as necessary. Loose or missing shingles need to be repaired and/or replaced. Power wash **all** your concrete flatwork. If you have green “stuff” growing on your siding, brick patios, or walls, get rid of it! Remember, **you are getting your home ready for the buyer to move into**, and you only have **one** chance to make a positive first impression.

Depending on the condition of the exterior paint on your home, you’ll want to at least “freshen up” the areas that show wear, sun damage, and where you removed the moss. Most sellers do not want to go to the expense of repainting the entire home if they can help it, so, if the home looks pretty good, maybe just hosing down the siding and brickwork, to get rid of cob webs and dirt, will do the trick. Junior’s chalk drawings might be cute, but who in their right mind would want to show their home with recent “tag” graffiti still showing?

At any rate, it is **VERY** important that the entry area and your front door look as clean and crisp as a new home. Remember, this is the buyer’s **next** “first” impression, after the streetscape. Paint the front door and frame areas a color that will “pop” from the street. Don’t try to make too bold a statement, but black looks great on 80% of all homes...sometimes a very dark green, or red looks great, as well. A color that makes the locks, kick plates, and address numbers stand out, is the color you are going after. Paint the rear door and frame, as well. If your address is displayed on your home, make sure the numbers look fresh and new. The cost of new numbers from the home supply store is minimal. A new front door mat made of a natural jute fiber helps warm up the front porch, while it helps with tracked in dirt. The “Happy Holidays from the Snickelfritz Family” door mat is **NOT** appropriate, nor is the worn out “astro turf” model that spells out “W L COM”. Come on people! It is only going to set you back 15 or 20 bucks. **Do the right thing!**

It is also advisable to look at the condition of your exterior door locks, dead bolts, and handle sets. If the brass is green and dull, buy new ones at the same time you buy the new address numbers. Brushed nickel has replaced polished brass in this, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. You should choose to go in that direction, if possible. The attention paid to your home’s “**bling**” conveys to the buyer that you’ve maintained your home on a somewhat regular basis, and that you take pride in your home’s appearance. The cost is minimal, and it really changes the exterior appearance of your home from “old and tired” to “fresh and crisp”. Any handyman worth his salt can do the installation of the new locks in about an hour or so, if you don’t have the patience or the talent.

Now we’re in the home stretch. It is time to take on the easy stuff like the interior paint, wall hung pictures and mirrors, art work, and the furniture placement. The walls **must** look uncluttered or you are just shooting yourself in the foot. Door and trim work enamel **must** look fresh. Repair all holes in walls. You don’t have to repaint entire walls, but they must look **fresh** and

**even** in color. That massive poster of a café, with a bunch of French words none of us mere mortals can pronounce...or any one piece that takes up more than 15 percent of any wall, needs to go into storage. It's better to have nothing on a wall than too much. Remove as many pictures as possible and set them aside. Fill all the nail holes and touch up the paint. Now, here's the easy part...rehang only **half** the pictures! Remember, since you won't be hanging any family or personal pictures, this will reduce your choices dramatically! **You want the buyer deciding where their pictures and artwork will hang!** Small entries, above the mantle, and hallways are the perfect place to hang mirrors. The mirrors reflect light, and they make a smaller area "feel" larger. Go to Hobby Lobby or Wal-Mart and buy the cheapest **framed** mirrors you can. You can even group smaller mirrors together in lieu of one large one, for a more dramatic effect. As long as they are the same color, and closely related in design, you can hardly mess this up...well, yes, you can, but let's not go there. You are making great progress, and we're almost done!

If you have hardwood floors, it is time to freshen them up. There are a number of products available at Lowe's or the other place. Bruce makes a great many floor care products, as does Johnson and Johnson. You don't have to get on your hands and knees with paste wax, but you do have to show the wood floor off. Wood floors are a fantastic asset to any home, as long as the buyer sees a floor that is dust bunny and pet hair free... and one that won't need extensive refinishing in the near future!

Wall to wall carpeting must appear and smell fresh and clean. Contact a quality carpet cleaning service and have the carpet cleaned. If you identify any ripples, ask the serviceman to stretch the carpet **BEFORE** he cleans it. Nothing looks and smells worse than poorly maintained carpeting. A quality cleaning can breathe new life into all but the dingiest of carpeting and rugs. Remember, you have only one chance to make a great impression! A nice thorough carpet cleaning is money wisely spent...and no one smells the cat and dog odors, either!

Kitchens and baths are the hardest lived rooms of the home. They also happen to be the **most** important reflections of your pride and your readiness to maintain your home. The time you will spend making these rooms sparkle could add **thousands** of dollars to the final sales price. Following the steps recommended below will insure you get top money for your home. Get lazy and you might lose a bunch of money...and a potential buyer, as well. You've come too far in this process to slack off now. **Giddyup!**

#### Kitchens:

Now that you've removed all the needless pots, pans, dishes, boxed foods, and spices from all the cabinets, clean them out with some warm, soapy water.

After they've dried, install some shelf liner to make them look fresher. Check all the knobs and handles and secure them, if necessary. New knobs are cheap, so if you're missing a couple, or the finish has worn off...for Pete's sake, replace them, and the handles, too, if need be. It will update the cabinets without costing you a fortune! The knobs and pulls should generally match the finish of the kitchen faucet, unless it's black. In most cases, chrome, nickel, and brass work best. Wiping down the exterior of the cabinets and doors with Murphy's oil soap will remove all the grease and grime that's accumulated over the years. If you have solid wood cabinets, it couldn't hurt to rub a small amount of Old English scratch cover over them, hiding all the scratches while giving the finish a little pick me up. Just remember to use a scratch cover color that is a shade or two **lighter** than your cabinets are. You want to "mask" the scratches, not draw attention to them. Focus on the base cabinets, especially around the sink and dishwasher areas, as these are exposed to water on a more frequent basis. Years of wet hands can damage the upper cabinets as well. Since these are at eye level, it couldn't hurt to do these while you are at it.

**Appliances need to sparkle!** Clean them as well as you can...**then go over them again** with a toothbrush and tooth pick to get **all** the gunk out of the crevices. Electric cooktops and ranges can be made to look new by going to the appliance store with the model number and make, and buying new burners and drip pans. A standard set of four will cost you less than \$75.00. The return on your investment, especially if the stove or range will be sold along with the home, could be tenfold, or more!

Refrigerators need to be pulled from the wall, vacuumed and mopped under. **Remove the magnets** and all those "important" notes, artwork, church bulletins, and photos from the front and **both** sides of your refrigerator. Clean the exterior refrigerator panels and doors, and utilize the very same toothbrush and toothpick for around the door seals and handles! If the frig stays with the house, the buyer will want to see it! If it goes with you to the next home, you are going to **have** to remove all the crap that has accumulated anyway. This is the perfect time to pitch every little meaningless piece of paper you **thought** you couldn't live without...except for the phone numbers to Pizza Hut and Papa John's...you'll need those!

When I updated our kitchen with stainless steel appliances, one of the best surprises I discovered was... stainless is **not** magnetic! You would have thought I had discovered gold in the back yard, I was so happy! Now, only the sides can be used for bulletin boards, so the front stays free from clutter! Halleluiah, there is a Higher Power answering my prayers! But I digress...

Dishwashers **must** work if you have one. Either have it repaired, or get a new one. PERIOD, enough said.

Disposals need to operate smoothly and quietly. If yours sounds like a jet engine chewing through a flock of geese and all you're running through it is water...**REPLACE IT!**

Kitchen sinks and faucets come in all types, colors, and sizes, but there is the only rule here: If the porcelain on the sink is chipped, **replace it!** I have only met one man that could do an undetectable porcelain repair...he died ten years ago...and took the secret with him, the selfish rascal. If the faucet is old and corroded or pitted...even a little bit...**REPLACE IT!**

This should go without saying, but I'll say it anyway...Your kitchen floor **must** be clean enough to eat on! Do **whatever** it takes to present the flooring (and counter tops, as well) in as good a light as is humanly possible.

**Bathrooms must be immaculate!** Now that you've removed all the unnecessary stuff from the vanities and linen closets, wash out the cabinets and shelves. Use shelf liner here, as well. Tubs should **shimmer** with cleanliness! If necessary, have someone regROUT and recaulk the tubs. No one likes to pull open a shower curtain or shower door and see living, breathing organisms...**MOLD!** Straight bleach sprayed onto the surfaces will kill **everything**. Let it sit for a couple hours and give it a good rinse. Any remaining black stuff can be removed with a razor knife. Then caulk all the corners around the tub with a quality siliconized latex caulk. If you've never caulked, now is **not** the time to start learning! Ask the same handyman you're going to use to install the locksets, if he'll do the caulking while he's already there. It takes four dollar's worth of caulk and 15 minutes at most, per tub or shower stall... if he's any good...and it will look great! If the painted wood toilet seats have seen better days, remove them and buy new ones. If the seats are in decent shape, make sure they are not sliding around on the toilets by tightening the bolts. Make sure the caulking around the base of the toilet is clean. If not, bleach the living daylight's out of it. No one wants to look at old, yellowed, or brown sealant that **used** to be white! Remember, you are trying to convey to the new buyer that the home has been maintained on a regular basis.

Shower valves, handles, drain covers, and the shower heads need to shine like a new penny. Windex, Kaboom, or CLR and a non-scratching plastic scrubber pad will always do the trick. Jiggle the toilet handle...if it's loose, tighten it. Don't forget that most toilet handles have reverse threads! So it's lefty tighty, righty loosey. Finally, for those of you that have glass shower doors...for the love of Mike, **clean them!** A good spritz of bleach or Kaboom and a plastic scrubber pad will loosen all the soap scum, while killing all the mold that is growing near the edges and the threshold. Finish up with a good Windexing of the shower doors and mirrors.

Check the light fixture above the vanity...it probably needs some gentle wiping, as well. Each bathroom should get the same methodical cleaning it would get, if your Mother-in law was coming for a visit. I know she doesn't

deserve or appreciate all the effort you put into getting the home ready for one of “Queeny’s” visits, but your new buyers will take note, I assure you...and you’ll be handsomely rewarded!

**CLEAN THE WINDOWS!** Buyers will **always** look out the windows of each room they visit. Your home’s windows **must** be crystal clear and clean inside and out! While you’re power washing the exterior, it’s a great time to hit all the windows to loosen up all the caked on gunk...not to mention all the cob webs and old mud dauber nests. This will make Windexing them a whole lot easier.

If your windows have sheers on them wash the sheers or, better yet, remove them altogether to allow the buyers an unobstructed view to the outside.

If you have miniblinds in **ANY** color other than white (unless you’re living in a doublewide trailer down by the river) you need to replace them **now!** If you can’t afford to replace all of them, at least replace the Living, Dining, Kitchen, and bath room blinds. I’m sorry people, but nothing says “trailer trash” like peach, mauve or blue window blinds! Who wants to buy a home from “trailer trash”? You can find new blinds or sheers at Target or Wal-Mart for next to nothing. Odds are, your blinds are missing slats or cords, or still have Lucky’s puppy teeth imbedded in them.

I’m quite confident you can solicit some help to reconfigure the furniture in the Living room and Family rooms, making them feel inviting and spacious. If at all possible, furniture should be grouped **away** from walls. Perimeter placement of couches, chairs, and tables generally makes a room feel smaller. Traffic patterns through a room always feel cramped if you have to dodge a chair or table to make your way into or out of a room. We all have a neighbor who fancies herself an interior decorator. She might even offer suggestions on where to put what on the walls. **Remember: Less is more!**

After rearranging the furniture, pour all the kids into the van and take them out to a movie. Hey, they made some big sacrifices too!

Mark up all the garage sale items with **realistic** prices and have the garage sale on the earliest Saturday possible. Whatever doesn’t sell goes into a few of those black lawn bags you have left, and set on the curb for the trash man on Monday.

Now you can start counting the days until the first offer on your home. As I promised before...if you will do **everything** I recommend, your home will sell fast. Good luck and hearty congratulations on a job well done.

Total average materials costs of this home transformation, not including replacement of any appliances are listed below. Your costs may vary

depending on how much crap you had to store, and how much paint you may have needed.

Storage garage for 30 days.....	\$115.00
Brass Address numbers.....	\$43.12
Jute welcome mat.....	\$21.26
2 gallons of flat wall paint.....	\$38.86
1 gallon semi-gloss trim paint.....	\$26.24
Brushes, rollers, roller pans, and plastic tarps.....	\$53.22
2 boxes of lawn bags.....	\$14.74
Power washer rental for 2 days.....	\$68.00
Lawn mowing and mulch service including mulch...	\$335.00
10 really cheap mirrors at Hobby Lobby.....	\$28.88
1 30x44 mirror for the fireplace at Hobby Lobby.....	\$42.55
New burners and drip pans for stove top.....	\$74.97
20 Boxes from Costco.....	FREE
20New Boxes from Storage Office.....	\$61.00
2 gallons bleach.....	\$4.58
2 large Windex trigger spray at Target.....	\$9.12
2 pack of Febreze linen and sky (too much pizza).....	\$8.05

**Cost for the above: LESS THAN \$1,000.00!**

I would love to hear from you regarding your successes. Perhaps you can even share some tips with me. I'm always open to another set of eyes and ears!

Michael Milford  
The Neighborhood Guy  
[www.theneighborhoodguy.com](http://www.theneighborhoodguy.com)