

## **Improvements That Can Help You Sell Your House**

It's not always easy to determine what features home buyers value, particularly as desired features and amenities vary depending on the buyers' needs and tastes. Updated kitchens and bathrooms and ample storage rank high as must-haves for many buyers, but a few other improvements will also add value to your home and just might reduce its time on the market.

### **In the Kitchen**

Updated cabinets and counters catch a buyer's eye, but other less expensive improvements are just as important. The top three features home buyers from all racial and ethnic groups want in a kitchen are double sinks, room for a table and a walk-in pantry, according to "What Home Buyers Really Want: Ethnic Preferences," a study conducted by the National Association of Home Builders.

When you contemplate making improvements to your kitchen, keep these findings in mind. If you don't have room to create a walk-in pantry, consider buying a stand-alone pantry cabinet. Any improvements that add extra storage to the kitchen will be appreciated by most buyers.

### **Green is My Favorite Color**

Buyers also want environmentally friendly homes, but not surprisingly, don't want to pay extra for green features, according to the NAHB study. Although buyers don't want to pay more for a house with green features, they are willing to pay more for a home that's energy efficient. Installing energy efficient appliances that reduce utility bills can help you attract buyers, particularly if you buy appliances with Energy Star ratings. New energy efficient windows will also reduce utility costs. Buyers want windows that are constructed with triple-pane glass and have favorable Energy Star ratings.

### **Safety Concerns**

Take advantage of home buyers' safety concerns and install exterior lighting around the property. Exterior lighting was rated as essential or desirable by 80 percent of buyers in the study. Buyers also think highly of homes with security systems. Mention that you have a wireless home security system in your real estate listing, and you'll pique the curiosity of buyers who value safety and security.

Before you make any improvements, talk to a local real estate agent about the features buyers want in your market. You'll want to make sure that any improvements you make will help you sell your house, not reduce its appeal.