

7 Steps to Preparing for an Open House

- 1. Hire a cleaning service.** A spotlessly clean home is essential; dirt will turn off a prospect faster than anything.
- 2. Pay attention to the outdoors.** Mow your lawn, and be sure toys and yard equipment are put away.
- 3. Serve cookies, coffee, and soft drinks.** It creates a welcoming touch. But be sure the kitchen has been cleaned up; use disposable cups so the sink doesn't fill up.
- 4. Lock up your valuables, jewelry, and money.** Although the real estate salesperson will be on site during the open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
- 5. Turn on all the lights.** Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle.
- 6. Send your pets to a neighbor or take them outside.** If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (a basement or bath), and let the salesperson know where to find them.
- 7. Leave.** It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.

Make Your Home Irresistible: 10 Open House Tips

- 1. Add a touch of color.** Use fresh or silk flowers to breathe life and color into the main rooms. A colored afghan or throw on the couch will jazz up a dull room.
- 2. Make the bathrooms feel luxurious.** Put away those old towels and toothbrushes. When buyers enter your bathroom, they should feel pampered. Add a new shower curtain, fresh towels, and fancy guest soaps.
- 3. Does it smell good?** Set out potpourri or fresh baked goods for a homey smell. Make sure that there are no lingering scents from cigarettes or pets.
- 4. Help them envision living there.** Set the table with pretty dishes and candles, and create other vignettes throughout the home to help buyers picture themselves there. For example, in the basement lay out a chess game.
- 5. Beautify the entrance.** Buy a fresh doormat with a pretty pattern or a clever saying.
- 6. Make the rooms feel bigger.** Take one or two major pieces of furniture out of every room to create a sense of spaciousness.
- 7. Accentuate counter space.** Put away kitchen appliances and personal bathroom items to give the illusion of more counter space.
- 8. Lay logs in the fireplace.** Or put a basket of flowers there if it's not in use.
- 9. Depersonalize the rooms.** Put away family photos, mementos, and distinctive artwork.
- 10. The lawn should sparkle.** Turn on the sprinklers for 30 minutes to make the lawn sparkle.