

How Marketable is Your Home?



If you're thinking of selling your home, you have probably wondered about its marketability. Will potential buyers be impressed with your corner lot, stainless steel appliances, or three-car garage? Will they be deterred by an outdated bathroom, a 20-year-old HVAC system, or leased solar electricity equipment?

As you prepare your home for sale, there are some foundational things you can do to make your home more appealing to a large percentage of potential buyers. Below are some of the most common and important factors that affect how attractive your home is to potential buyers.

1. How recently was your kitchen remodeled?

Today's buyers want stainless steel appliances, an open-concept design, and islands or breakfast bars. According to a HelloFresh survey, 64% of home buyers claimed that a large island is a must-have in the kitchen.

Maple cabinetry, which has been a popular choice for many years, has recently decreased in popularity, while farmhouse sinks and tile backsplashes have become more highly sought-after.

Granite countertops are still popular with buyers, but quartz and marble have grown in popularity over the years.

According to Realtor.com's *Active Spring Home Shoppers Report*, 80% of homebuyers view the kitchen as one of their top three most important rooms in their home, so the condition of your kitchen will have a heavy influence on how buyers see your home.

2. How recently were your bathrooms remodeled?

According to Modernbathroom.com, bathrooms tend to be overlooked when homeowners make renovation decisions. Instead, they focus on more heavily used spaces, such as kitchens and living areas.

But buyers want updated bathrooms, and while you may not recoup the full cost of high-end upgrades, some upgrades may help your home be more desirable to buyers. Many buyers want updated vanities with granite countertops, large walk-in showers, and high-end finishes, but if you don't want to do a complete renovation, there are still things you can do to improve your bathroom's appeal. Even something as simple as re-caulking the bathtub and installing a new toilet and fixtures can improve how buyers view your bathroom.

3. How old is your roof?

According to Bob Vila of *This Old House*, a roof in poor condition is a major red flag for potential buyers because roofs are so expensive to replace, and new buyers do not want the extra expense.

If your roof is fairly new but has discoloration or looks dirty, cleaning it could make it look like new again. If there are small areas that need to be repaired, you may be able to do that without replacing the entire roof.

If your roof is older, it's important to consider the durability of the materials when deciding whether or not to fully replace it. Cedar shingles typically last up to 20-25 years, metal roofs 30-50 years, concrete tiles 40-75 years, and clay tiles 50-100 years. So, if you have a 20-year-old cedar shingle roof, it might be time to replace it, but if you have 20-year-old concrete or clay tiles, you've got some time.

4. What type of roof does your home have?

There are many different types of roofing materials, some of which are more appealing to buyers than others. Concrete roofs can look like wood shingles, but they will last a lot longer, and many of them have 50-year or lifetime warranties. Wood shingles may be less desirable since they don't last as long as some other materials. Tile roofs are a plus, but the drawback is that they are difficult to walk on and repair.

If you are planning to replace your roof before you sell, you should also take the cost of materials and return on investment into consideration. Metal roofs look clean and modern, but the cost of a metal roof is a lot higher than traditional shingles, and the return on investment is much lower for metal, according to the *Remodeling 2019 Cost vs Value Report*.

5. How efficient is your HVAC system?

Your HVAC system includes your furnace and air conditioning units, as well as the ventilation needed for those units to run efficiently in your home. If your system is older than 20 years, it could have a negative effect on your home's marketability.

HVAC systems are costly to replace and potential buyers are unlikely to want the added expense after moving in. Today's buyers expect energy-efficient systems that are properly working and not in need of repairs, and many buyers also want thermostats that they can control through Wi-Fi with their smartphones. If your system has seen better days, you should consider replacing it.

Routine maintenance can help your HVAC system run more efficiently and last longer. This includes changing filters regularly and having an annual inspection. A well-maintained HVAC system lasts 15-20 years, according to an article on Realtor.com. If you've had your system for several years, and you've properly maintained it, buyers will appreciate your efforts.

6. What type of water heater do you have?

A conventional water heater heats water and stores it until you need it. As you use the hot water, the water level in the tank lowers, and then cold water enters the tank and is heated. If you use hot water faster than your water heater can heat it, you'll end up with a cold shower. A tankless water heater provides hot water on-demand, rather than heating water and storing it for later use. Since there is no tank, when you turn on the water, cold water flows through the unit and is heated instantaneously.

Tankless units can produce 2-5 gallons of hot water per minute and can be more efficient than conventional units, but they can cost up to three times more. Many buyers like the idea of having hot water on-demand, so having a tankless unit will increase the appeal of your home.

7. How many stories is your home?

About 64% of home buyers want single-story homes, according to a study by the National Association of Home Builders. This is due in part to seniors and Baby Boomers who are retiring or downsizing. Fewer than half of Generation Xers and one-third of Millennials reported a preference for single-story homes.

While two-story and multi-story homes can offer extra privacy and a lower risk of burglary, they are also more expensive to heat and cool and have a greater risk of accidents. Single-story homes are easier to maintain, safer to navigate, and easier to evacuate, but they may offer less privacy than those with more stories.

Keep in mind that certain types of buyers are attracted to certain types of homes, So young families might love a two-story home, while smaller families or older buyers may feel right at home in a single-story home.

8. How old are your windows?

Buyers favor energy-efficient windows, which may reduce heating and cooling costs by 12%, according to Kiplinger.

Heat gained and lost through windows makes up 25-35% of the cost of heating and cooling homes, according to Energy.gov. Windows that are old, single-paned, or of poor quality are a turn-off for buyers.

9. How many garage spaces does your home have?

92% of buyers looking for new-construction homes want a two-car or three-car garage. The majority of home buyers are couples, so having at least a two-car garage provides both of them with space to store their vehicles.

The *Consumer and Products Insights Report* found that approximately 53% of all homebuyers want at least a two-car garage in their new homes. Not having a garage is a deal-breaker for some potential buyers, while having at least a two-car garage makes it much more marketable.

10. Does your house use solar electricity?

Starting in 2020, California will require all new homes to be built with solar panels, according to a CNBC article. Even if you have an older home, installing solar panels may be a smart choice. Installing solar panels in your home could eliminate or drastically reduce your electric bill. Today's home buyers are looking for energy-efficient features in their new homes, and solar energy helps meet the demands of these savvy buyers.

Purchasing solar panels can be expensive, but leasing them may create problems and deter potential buyers, according to *Consumer Reports*. If you sell your home before your lease is up, your buyers will have to assume the lease, or you will have to buy out the lease, which can be costly. In addition, leasing companies may install more panels than you would like or place them in highly visible areas.

11. What are your home's landscape features?

The outside of your home is the first thing potential buyers see, so it's crucial to make sure your home has great curb appeal. If a home has poor landscaping, buyers may think the inside is also not up to par.

Having an automatic sprinkler system may make it easier to maintain the lawn, which is a plus for buyers. And having a private backyard with mature trees will also add to the appeal of your home, especially if your new buyers plan to spend time outside.

In addition to improving your home's curb appeal, a well-maintained, attractive landscape may add up to 10% to the value of your home.

12. Is your home near shopping, entertainment, and amenities?

According to Porch.com, the neighborhood is the second-most important feature for homebuyers, after the number of bedrooms. A great neighborhood should be in proximity to amenities that buyers want to access within their communities, rather than travel for long distances for things such as shopping, entertainment, and doctor's appointments. If your home is close to public transportation, shopping, restaurants, medical facilities, retirement communities, or other amenities, it may appeal more to buyers.

You may not be able to change the neighborhood in which your home is located, but your location may affect the type of buyer attracted to your home. For example, physicians and medical professionals may be more likely to buy a home near hospitals or facilities where they work. If your home has easy access to public transportation, it may attract those who depend on it to get where they need to go.

13. Does your home have any special features?

Some buyers look for homes with a great view, while others focus more on the features just outside their doors, such as a sidewalk or additional detached garage. Buyers with children may look for homes within walking distance of schools, and others may want a guesthouse for housing friends or family members.

Some buyers may want the extra space offered by a corner lot, but others may be concerned about the additional maintenance and traffic it brings, as well as the greater risk for break-ins in a space that isn't surrounded by other homes on both sides.

Although not many homes have all of these special features, it's good to promote the ones you do have. Whatever special features your home has, there are buyers out there who will value them.

14. What is the Condition of your home?

Most buyers are looking for homes that won't require them to do major renovations, so if your home is in poor condition, it can be a deterrent to buyers who don't want to take on costly and time-consuming home improvement projects.

Buyers will notice things like creaky wood floors, broken tiles, evidence of previous water damage, cracks in drywall, and HVAC systems that are past their prime, and these could be deal-breakers for some buyers.

While some things may be seen as quirky features, other things just need to be fixed. So if your carpet is worn out and stain-covered, it's time to replace it. If your roof is leaky and worn, it's time to get a new one. These improvements make your home more marketable regardless of its character.

In Conclusion

There is no one size fits all home, but the list above reflects the foundational characteristics that should be considered when trying to understand how marketable your home is.

To gain an even better understanding of what matters to homebuyers today, make sure you read one of our articles on [home renovations ROI](#).

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