

Poor workmanship which can impede your sale

By Diane Black

More and more homeowners are upgrading their properties with an eye to sell quickly and for top dollar. "Today's buyers are attracted to move-in ready homes - especially those who lead hectic lives and are accustomed to upgrades. The days of buying a home to fix up have faded," explains Greater Toronto Area realtor, Jackie Peifer.

"When selling two virtually identical properties, in my experience the upgraded home can sell for up to 10 percent more and sometimes higher, depending on price point."

Still, Peifer advises home sellers not rush upgrades without first seeking professional advice. "You need to do your homework. It's important to understand which upgrades generate the highest resale value, how much to invest, potential impact on your list price and competitive home sale factors."

She advises you choose materials and colours with mass buyer appeal - even if they don't match your tastes.

Also beware that hurrying renovations can increase the potential for poor workmanship which can impede your sale.

Don't rush contractor selection, says Holmes

Canada's most recognized renovation expert, Mike Holmes, says rushing any renovation carries consequences. Holmes cautions you resist the urge to select the first contractor you come in contact with.

"There are no short-cuts to getting the right contractor on board. You need to start by asking the right questions: how long have you been in the

business, what do you specialize in, can I call homeowners you've done this work for?"

Holmes advises you call every reference you're given. As added safeguards, he says you should ask to see proof of certification and insurance, and question the need for a permit.

"Don't assume someone who's done work for you in the past is equipped for biggest jobs - even if you can get them on board quickly. Whoever you choose must demonstrate they are qualified to do the work, without exception," says Holmes.



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Staging helps to sell your home



Before listing, consider staging your home to give it a competitive advantage.

"Homes that present as move-in ready have strong buyer appeal in today's market," explains Jackie Peifer, a realtor with 20 years experience. "These properties sell more quickly which helps protect them from price reductions."

Still, some sellers resist the idea of home staging. "Sellers often confuse decorating with staging.

They worry the stager will be critical of their belongings," explains Diane Black, a home staging expert. "If they've lived in their home for years, it becomes difficult to view the space with fresh eyes, from a buyer's perspective."

According to Black, sellers often equate stagers with furniture and art placement. "Experienced stagers

know that helping sellers attend to home preparation basics to make their property move-in ready is our first order of business."

Peifer agrees. "To sell for top dollar, I can't stress enough the value of a freshly painted, clean and orderly home, with upgraded flooring if needed."

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