

These top selling points are what homebuyers want right now

According to Grant Smee, MD of Only Realty Group, despite an increase in the repo rate, the local homebuying market remains a hive of activity. Whether your home is in hot demand or has been on the market for some time, there are various steps that one should take to make sure that it sells to the "highest bidder", says Smee.



Grant Smee, property entrepreneur and MD of Only Realty Group

"There are many things that one can do to 'up the ante' and stand out from the crowd. Edits to the home can be the difference between selling above asking price or below. It can also open your home up to a bigger pool of potential homebuyers," says Smee.

With this in mind, here are five key selling points that sellers should focus on to entice homebuyers:

1. Keep it light and open plan (where possible)

"An open plan, light and airy layout makes a home look bigger and more inviting. Many potential homebuyers are on the lookout for these homes as they create multi-functional areas (great for entertaining) and help to maximise space in the home," says Smee.

He encourages those with an open plan layout to embrace it. "You don't have to spend hundreds of thousands of rands to dress up your rooms prior to listing your home. Simple pops of colour like bright scatter cushions, chunky

blankets, beautiful rugs and lighting can make all the difference in the eye of the buyer. Remember, homebuyers want to visualise themselves in a space and great furniture can really help to seal the deal."

For those without open plan layouts, Smee advises to embrace natural light in the home. "Sheer curtains and soft blinds make a difference. In a case where you don't have a lot of natural light, make sure to use soft wall colours that make the areas look bigger."

Sellers should remove clutter, make sure that the property is clean and well-maintained, and cover personalised items such as wallpaper. "These may polarise the buyer."



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2. A low-maintenance outside area

"Everyone loves an outdoor area that's great for entertaining but they also want an area that's easy to maintain."

Smee suggests that sellers invest in low-maintenance, eye-catching plants – and not too many. "Limit the number of different plants you have to keep the maintenance required down – try to stick to between five to ten varieties and it's often a good idea to buy ready-potted plants from the nursery that you can just plonk down in your garden."

“Aim to reduce the size of the planted areas in your outdoor space. You can do this by moving the flower beds back towards the boundaries and replacing them with paving if possible – a path around the garden works well and is aesthetically pleasing.”

3. Kitchens are the heart of the home

“It’s true – in many cases, the kitchen sells a home,” says Smee. “If you already have a great kitchen, then you are in luck. Homebuyers are always on the hunt for kitchens that are well laid out. They’re also focused on long-lasting, hard-wearing countertops.”

Additional changes that make a difference include installing open shelving, creating a small coffee bar, updating your splashback (behind the sink), adding a new light fixture, some herbs or even a piece of artwork.

Prior to listing your property, make sure that the plumbing is working, that there are no leaks under the sink and that all the cupboards in the kitchen open with ease. “Prospective buyers might want to inspect small details more closely so make sure that your kitchen is well maintained.”



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4. Embrace energy efficiency

“It’s a fact - homes with alternative power solutions such as inverters, solar and generators sell faster. Many homebuyers are on the hunt for homes with these provisions in place to reduce their reliance on standard electricity, especially with loadshedding.”

Smee says that for those unable to take their home ‘off-grid,’ simple tricks can help to make a house more energy efficient.

Some ways to reduce your property’s energy and water consumption are:

- Good insulation
- Low-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads
- Energy-efficient built-in appliances
- LED lighting

5. Security is key

“The unfortunate reality in South Africa is that crime is always a possibility and concerns around security are often a top priority for a buyer. Features such as electric fencing, outdoor sensor lights, alarm systems, and installing Trelidor or similar security doors in bedrooms will help to make the home more secure,” says Smee.

“Finally, I would also recommend telling prospective buyers if there are any neighbourhood watch groups set up in your neighbourhood or what other measures are in place to help keep the area as safe as possible,” he concludes.