



There are many ways to increase the value of your home. Below are a few great ideas to help you get started. Enjoy!

1

An updated kitchen. Kitchens are critical. Today, people like a big kitchen with a lot of workspace. They look for solid surface counters and high-quality flooring, such as wood, laminate, tile or stone. And they want newer appliances in working order. Even if it's not huge, it should have countertops that are serviceable that aren't going to have to be replaced soon and cabinetry in good condition. It has to be well-appointed and large enough to fit your needs. And it doesn't hurt if it opens onto another room. A lot of families are looking for that openness.

2

Modern bathrooms. Buyers are looking for master baths that give a little room to roam. A big asset: spa or whirlpool tubs. It's a big feature. Some other features buyers are seeking: separate showers with steam and/or multiple jets, double sink, separate room for the toilet. And make sure the plumbing and hot water heater can handle the job. The pipes have to be large enough to carry an adequate volume of water and the hot water heater has to be big enough to accommodate it. You need a bare minimum of a 75-gallon hot water heater, and most of my customers have 100 to 150. Remember, you don't want to see that false economy of a \$30,000 bathroom but nobody spent a few thousand dollars to upgrade the pipes.

3

A well-appointed master suite. People are really excited about master suites. The wish list: a luxurious bathroom, lounging areas and walk-in closets.

4

Natural materials. People like natural materials. Ceramic tile, hardwood floors, granite. We've gone back to a real appreciation for historically true materials. And simulated works as well. The look is very popular. In floor coverings -- especially bathrooms or kitchens -- look for ceramic tile or wood rather than linoleum, which can tear. In the rest of the house, wood or laminate products are a plus over wall-to-wall. But if you have carpet, it should be a good product and well maintained so that a person doesn't have to walk in and think, "I'm going to have to spend five grand right off the bat".

5

Curb appeal. A good first appearance on a home can add as much as 5 percent to 10 percent to the value of the home. Homes in a neighborhood tend to vary about 10 percent from house to house, assuming all other things are the same.

6

A light, airy spacious feel. People buy space and light, I have yet to have anybody walk into a really dark house and say, "I love this". It's a very big feature, I haven't sold many homes that aren't bright and airy.

7

Good windows. People are looking at exposures and windows. It's been a cold winter for most of the country and energy efficiency is very important. Insulated windows are always a plus. Typically, they pay for themselves in five years. Well-placed skylights are also a good touch to add value.

8

Landscaping. Mature trees are worth \$1,000. And having outdoor spaces with touches such as pergolas and Victorian garden swings can be very helpful. You don't have to spend a fortune on plants, either. Just keep it typical with the neighborhood.

9

Lots of storage. Nothing beats an oversized garage, some attic space and plenty of closets. If you have a two-car garage, do you have extra space for those things we all have -- bicycles, lawn mower? Space is important. A nice plus in the master suite? His and hers walk-in closets.

10

Basement. If it's dry, it's a plus but it's a negative if it has water problems. A finished basement adds even more value.