

## home improvement

# 10 FIXES FOR A QUICK SALE

Mini makeovers and budget DIY solutions to bump up the price because first impressions always count

WORDS JAN MARKS

**T**he main aim of putting a property on the market is to sell it quickly and at a good price. Location is often said to be the key but, no matter where it is, your property will attract the most interest based on the first impression it makes.

Whether viewed online, at a real estate agent's window, in the newspaper or as a drive-by, it's the first glance that leads to closer inspection by potential buyers. If the house appears neglected, or as though it may present problems down the track, it will put them off. A general state of disrepair creates an unkempt appearance and suggests the buyer will need to spend more money later.

### SELLING OUR PLACE

We bought an investment property five years ago. Built in the 1950s, the house was overgrown and fairly run-down. We tidied it up, painting inside and out, and replaced the carpet with polished floors. A new kitchen and landscaping completed the home's transformation into an appealing rental property.

When it became vacant recently, we decided to put it on the market. The house was sound, but needed a good spruce up to create that favourable first impression crucial to a quick sale and fair price.



BEFORE



AFTER

### 1 OVER THE FENCE

**BEFORE** The original wire mesh fence was sturdy and provided security for dogs and children over the years but it definitely wasn't attractive.

**AFTER** The wire mesh was replaced with a quaint picket fence and a smart new gate that matched the house. The leafy yard now nestles beyond, inviting further investigation by potential buyers.

**COST** \$1900



BEFORE



AFTER

### 2 THE RIGHT PATH

**BEFORE** The paved path and garden leading to the front door were full of weeds.

**AFTER** The front lawn was mown and edged, and the path cleaned. The garden was replanted with new shrubs and topped with bark chip. The front of the house was washed down to remove spiderwebs and a wasp nest.

**COST** \$80

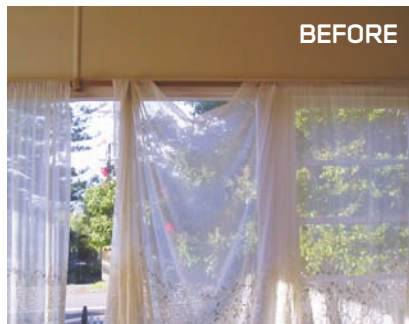


### 3 A GRAND ENTRANCE

**BEFORE** The entry was probably an add-on when the verandah was closed in. There were cracks around the concrete edge near the floor and a water stain on the ceiling.

**AFTER** Although the roof no longer leaked, the stain implied otherwise, so a quick coat of paint was in order. New skirting boards concealed the cracks, and a welcoming mat completed the job.

**COST** \$27



### 4 CURTAIN CALL

**BEFORE** The original curtains had become unstitched and were sagging from the rods in places.

**AFTER** They were replaced with some ready-made tab tops in a natural semi-sheer fabric. The windows and timber sills were cleaned before the new curtains were hung.

**COST** \$84



### 5 PULL THE CORD

**BEFORE** One of the windows had a broken sash cord and wouldn't stay open.

**AFTER** The beading was removed and the old cord taken out, then new cord was threaded in place and attached to the window.

**COST** \$3



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# HOW TO...

by Sutton Tools

## HOLESAW

– for when a bigger hole is required

Holesaws are used to create a bigger hole than a standard drill bit can achieve. Such as, downlight holes, door handles and locks.

Once you have selected the right size holesaw, use with correct size pilot drill. The pilot drill eliminates wandering of the holesaw.

Firstly mark where you want to drill the hole with a pencil. Lightly touch the mark with the pilot drill to start. See the reverse of the packet for recommended drill speed (RPM). Maintain light pressure on the pilot drill so that the holesaw cuts the hole.

To maintain cutting efficiency and life of the tool, pull out of hole every few seconds to clear the teeth of the material being cut.

A drilling lubricant is recommended when drilling steels.



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### 6 SURFACE REPAIRS

**BEFORE** It's inevitable that wear and tear is evident on a rental property. The last tenants had damaged a wall. There was also a missing door handle and the old light switches were shabby.

**AFTER** A plaster patch was glued behind the hole. The gap was then filled with plaster, sanded and repainted. The missing door handle was replaced and new light switches installed.

**COST** \$75



### 7 ON THE TILES

**BEFORE** Some tiles had fallen off walls and cupboards in the kitchen, and the stove and floor needed a thorough clean. The bathroom had peeling paint and grout missing along the edge of the bath.

**AFTER** The missing tiles were replaced in the kitchen. The bathroom wall was repainted and the tiles re-grouted.

**COST** \$23



### 8 PEST CONTROL

**BEFORE** There had been termite damage to the doorway of the outside laundry. The problem was treated and regular inspections had confirmed no further termite activity, but we hadn't replaced the original damaged timber.

**AFTER** Seeing termite damage would send an alert to any prospective buyer so we replaced the damaged timber with a new jamb.

**COST** \$42



## 9 PAVING THE WAY

**BEFORE** The concrete edge supporting the paved path had broken away, allowing the first few pavers to become dislodged.

**AFTER** The pavers were re-laid on a new bed of paving sand then fixed in place with a strong buttress of fresh mortar.

**COST** \$5



## 10 LOVELY LANDSCAPING

**BEFORE** It was a beautiful backyard, complete with gazebo, but the lawn was growing over the retaining wall and path, and the gazebo was covered in debris and spiderwebs.

**AFTER** The yard was mowed and tidied, creating a manicured grassy area for kids and pets, with a neat winding path leading to the classic gazebo.

**COST** \$0

## The end result

The total cost of our 10 mini makeovers was \$2239, which was money worth spending if the house sells quickly.



The shared side fence that runs along the driveway was falling down in places and we thought it may detract from the sale. But our estate agent suggested we leave it as a negotiating point as the cost of replacing it would be high and should be shared between neighbours.



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