

# *The "Amanda List" Basics*



A lot of people contact me asking for the infamous "*The Amanda List*," which is a checklist of things to do to prepare your house to show in tip-top shape when it hits the market. My clients started calling this checklist of things that I recommend "*The Amanda List*" a while back and it just kind of stuck. For some people "*The Amanda List*" takes them a day and others casually work on it over the course of a year or more, depending on when they are ready to sell. As always, I am the *zero-pressure Realtor*, so my clients can take as much or as little time as they would like and when they are ready, I am ready. I find this list to be SUPER important in assisting my clients to get top dollar for their home.

Here is a sample of some of the basics on "*The Amanda List*" to help you get a head start.

- 1. Curb Appeal.** Power wash the exterior, clean out the gutters if needed, weed the flower bed, mow the lawn, touch up paint on wood trim and around the front door. Most people come into the house through their garage and rarely even look close at their front door! Pay attention to it, because that's the first thing people see! Sweep off the front stoop, get a new welcome mat, put a wreath on the door if you can and place some potted plants where you can for a punch of color. Oh, and remove the "No Soliciting" sign! We want buyers to feel welcomed (and not concerned that they will be bothered daily with solicitors!)- If you need landscaping help, I

recommend Boitnott's Lawn and Landscaping. Tracy Boitnott's number is: 309-275-2252.

2. **Clean & De-clutter!** Having a clean house is a given when trying to sell it, as is de-cluttering. But, some people's version of clean and de-cluttered is another's version of a hoarder! Here are some guidelines: Remove everything off the countertops besides a couple MUST HAVE pieces. Things that you don't use daily: Stuff them in a cabinet! Even tooth brushes need to be tucked away! Clear off all fridge art and everything you store on top of the fridge! Clean all ceiling fan blades, all vent covers, window sills and blinds. Dust off all light fixtures. If you don't have time to clean, call my go-to cleaning pro: Stacy Ward at 217-454-6644. Be sure to mention me for great rates!

Move the kitchen trash can into the garage or a pantry. If you leave the trash can out, it subliminally telegraphs to the buyers that there isn't enough room in the cabinets or pantry to store it.

**Closets:** I don't take photos of closets, so make closet organization LAST on your to-do list! As long as the buyers can see the space and nothing will fall on their heads, you get a thumbs up in my book! I feel the same way about garages and unfinished storage areas. Just remember to be sure the buyers can access important areas like the mechanicals!

**Remove all furniture that gets in the way!** I know you love your antique hutch that grandma gave you, but having to walk around it to get into a room is not a good idea. You want your house to seem spacious, not full. And, think of it this way... When an agent shows the house he or she could be showing it to two buyers, their three kids and the in-laws who are coming along for support. You don't want a traffic jam in your hallway- it will send the message that the house is cramped and doesn't have enough room for their family. Also, remove furniture from the foyer in order to make a grand first impression on the buyers.

3. **Get your carpets cleaned!** I recommend Jeff Helm with Aqua Dry (309-242-0334) and Mike Norris with On The Spot (309-212-5326) for this.

They are quick, efficient, priced right and really care about doing a good job for you.

4. **Speaking of carpets....** if your carpets are worn, dated or just plain ugly, it may be time to swap them out with something new. This will not only give new life to your house and make it look updated instantly, but it will also make your house smell fresh & new! I recommend Rob Connor at Carpet Weaver's Flooring Depot. His cell is 309-287-9327- mention me for your "Amanda Discount!" EVERYONE that I recommend him to not only loves him, but also loves the deals he gives them! Oh, and make sure you get Ed's crew to install it. They rock. Really.

5. **Lighting!** Swap out all energy efficient bulbs with the regular ones. The energy efficient ones are great and all, but they take a while to warm up and produce bright light. When the house is being shown the agent will turn on a light, show the room, then turn the light off. There is not enough time in there for the bulb to really get bright and your house will show DARK! We don't want that!

6. **Touch up paint!!!** Walk around the house with sticky notes and put it on every place where the trim looks chipped or worn and every place on the walls what have marks and need some freshening. If you do this you will be surprised how many sticky notes you use! Places that are typically needing a lot of touch ups are the front door, foyer, hallways and stairways. If you need a lot of new paint, please call my favorite painters, Todd Bottles (309-531-1248) or Mark McCown (727-692-6071)!

7. **Wipe down the light switch covers!** They can get really dirty and a bright white cover can look yellow if not wiped down! Magic Eraser will be your best friend! Hit the baseboards while you are at it. It makes a big difference

8. **Wipe down the furnace and water heater.** It will make them look well maintained! "Uncle Louie" likes to accompany the buyers prior to making an offer in order to "check out" the mechanicals. Usually "Uncle Louie" doesn't know as much about water heaters as he makes out to

know, so as long as they look clean and well maintained, he usually will give the thumbs up for the buyers to write an offer.

9. **Plumbing!** Run all your faucets and flush your toilets. Do you have any leaks or is the water pressure a little lack luster? Do you have to hold down the handle on the toilet for it to flush properly? Get those items taken care of before hitting the market!

10. **Odor!** If you are concerned about odor due to pets, cooking spices, etc, it is best to open the windows for a while and run fans. You may want to put Febreze plug-ins *moderately* throughout the house. Choose the Spring Meadow/Fresh Rain scent in the blue and green packaging (NOT the one with Gain in it). The idea is to have a fresh sent that isn't overpowering. Orange & lemon scents are also a good choice, as they smell *clean*. The scent in the foyer is of major importance! We don't have scratch and sniff photos online, but when people enter a house they can sense an odor even if it is slight. You may be used to it ("nose blind"), but the buyers can pick it up the second they enter the house.

11. **Check the temperature.** Now is NOT the time to worry about your utility bill! We want the buyers to feel comfortable and stay a long time, not have to leave because they are too hot or cold!

12. **De-Personalize!** Do your best to let go of your emotions for the house and try to look at it as a product. Living in a home and marketing a house are two different things. If you focus on your *new* home as yours and the one you are living in as *someone else's*, it will help tremendously!

Remove all personal photos. Many times the buyers will spend more time looking at your photos to see if they know you than looking at your house! In addition, remove all signs with your children's names. A lot of parents put their children's names on their bedroom wall. Since we focus on online coverage in order to market our listings, we don't need the general public to have knowledge of your children's names! It's a different world out there and we take your security incredibly seriously! Since we can't control *who* sees the photos online, it's best to not give too much personal information away in the pics.

### 13. **Bleach your dingy grout!!!**

14. Get some new bath towels and perhaps a new bath mat and shower curtain- white looks the cleanest. You would be surprised at what a difference it makes!

15. Get a new, fresh rug for your foyer. Again, first impressions are everything!

16. When the house looks like nobody lives there you are almost done! :-)  
Seriously! Box up as much as you can and think of the head start in packing you will get!

17. Remove all signs of pets. Leashes, food, pet beds, cat trees, water bowls, toys, etc. It is best to take your pets with you when you leave for showings or have them boarded.

As I said above, marketing a home and living in a home are two totally different things! When you are officially on the market, assign tasks for each person in the family to do prior to a showing. For instance, when you get the call from an agent everyone has their **SHOWING DUTY**. For instance, you wipe off the counters and make sure the dishes are out of the sink, your son is on bathroom duty- he puts all the toilet seats down and makes sure the towels are folded, your daughter walks through each room and makes sure the beds are made and everything is in its place and that drapes are open, etc. I like my clients to have a "**Showing Bin**" that they throw all random clutter into prior to a showing. It's a quick way to de-clutter when in a rush to get out of the house! I have a checklist for suggested pre-showing duties and would be happy to email it to you upon request.

**Suggestion:** Since the market is moving so fast and you will likely have back-to-back showings for several days, I suggest taking a trip for a few days. If you would like to book a "staycation" at Eastland Suites or the DoubleTree, please let me know, as I have a "friends & family" discount. They even allow pets!

I hope these guidelines help you! Each house is different, so I am happy to come out to visit with you and give you a customized "Amanda List" anytime! Just give me a call!

***~Amanda Wycoff, Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway Central IL,  
REALTORS  
(309) 242-2647***

