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SENIOR REAL ESTATE JOURNAL

SENIORS REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE

Staff Writer

Three Compelling Reasons to Sell Your House Vacant

When it comes to selling a house, one common question arises: should you leave it furnished or empty? Many people wonder whether a lived-in look or an empty space will fetch a higher price for their property. While popular home staging shows on HGTV may suggest otherwise, it's essential to distinguish between television ratings and real-life scenarios.

The homes showcased on TV are devoid of personal touch, warmth, and character. They are strategically designed to emphasize products, highlight design elements, and create a sense of dissatisfaction among viewers. This feeling of inadequacy often translates into a desire to upgrade one's own home, furniture, lighting, or appliances.

Let's face it, most people don't live in the picture-perfect show homes seen on television. Personally, I wouldn't want to either. Consider the average family living in an average dwelling for several decades. Their decor preferences and furnishings may not align with the latest trends. This is not a critique; it's just the reality. We don't overhaul our homes and buy new furniture every few years as trends come and go.

While aesthetics do play a role in our argument for selling houses empty, there are three even more significant reasons why it generally makes sense for retirees, longtime homeowners, and downsizers to empty their homes before listing them on the market.



1. Safety and Privacy

By vacating the property and removing all valuable items, personal effects, and furniture, homeowners significantly reduce the risk of burglary, theft, and breakage. When hosting showings, owners essentially grant strangers access to their entire lives. Although real estate agents do their best to monitor visitors, it's impossible to discern who is honest and trustworthy and who isn't.

Prescription drugs and jewelry are the most commonly stolen items from homes. These can be easily concealed in a purse or pocket, and during an open house, agents are unlikely to follow people into bathrooms. Tragically, it's not just prospective buyers who engage in theft. Licensed real estate agents in several states have been caught stealing prescription drugs from homes they were showing.

2. Stress and overwhelm

Longtime homeowners, especially those downsizing or dealing with physical disabilities or illnesses, already have plenty to manage. By moving out first and then emptying the remaining items before listing the home, they can work at their own pace without the stress of maintaining a spotless and presentable house for showings or looming contractual deadlines.

When pets are involved, the stress level rises further. It is advisable for homeowners to leave the property during showings, and this becomes even more challenging when pets are present.

3. Distractions

Lastly, household items can become focal points that divert attention from the home's appeal or key features. Take family pictures, for example. It's common for people to spend more time looking at hallway photos than assessing room sizes or closet spaces. Similarly, plaques, certificates, diplomas, and other memorabilia belonging to the owners or their family members can be distracting.

Collections can also divert attention. For instance, if the homeowner collects owl figurines, and these items are displayed throughout the house, potential buyers may remember the property as the "owl house" rather than appreciating its beautifully renovated kitchen and dining area.

Dispelling the Myth of Furnished Homes

There has long been a belief that furnished homes sell better, but this notion is simply not true. The reality is that experienced agents understand what truly helps homes sell faster and at higher prices. Exceptional agents recognize that downsizers and those undergoing late-life moves have unique circumstances and goals that necessitate a different approach.

When working with clients in these situations, specialized agents tailor their strategies accordingly, providing recommendations that align with their specific needs.

Dealing with Deadlines

Emptying the home can often be the most laborious and time-consuming task associated with downsizing. Whether you feel the need to touch and feel every item before sending them to the local thrift store or you are employing professionals to handle the heavy lifting, this stage of the process is often fraught with many decisions - many of which may be emotional.

The last thing that you need or want when making these final choices is someone holding a deadline over your head and pushing you to work faster. By moving first and emptying the home, you not only avoid the three dilemmas listed here, but you also free your mind to focus on the sale of your home or doing the things that matter most to you.

This allows you to take your time, make thoughtful decisions, and ensure that the downsizing process aligns with your unique needs and desires. Ultimately, selling your house empty provides not only practical benefits but also the peace of mind and freedom to prioritize what truly matters during this significant transition in your life.



For guidance, coaching, or support for your next move, call our team of downsizing experts!

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