



# TOP 3 WAYS

## *to Add Value to Your Home*

# 1

MODERATE KITCHEN UPGRADES

# 2

UPDATES TO BATHROOMS

# 3

FRESH INTERIOR PAINT

### THE 1-2-3 OF HOME IMPROVEMENT

“Understanding how individuals enjoy and enhance their homes is vital for real estate professionals,” said **Ginger Wilcox, president of Better Homes and Gardens® Real Estate**, “as it allows consumers’ aspirations to achieve the utmost value and emotional satisfaction from their investment.” Agent expertise is helping buyers and sellers make informed decisions and seize opportunities in this dynamic market, reducing the apprehension that has weighed on consumers. These professionals are providing insights into what it takes to sell a home for top dollar so they have a bigger downpayment for a new property (keep reading for design tips you’ll love whether you’re in the market or not).

Homeowners who aren’t afraid to tackle renovation projects (or who love DIY) are finding budget-friendly solutions for transforming outdated and smaller homes. They’re embracing current and future trends and discovering how rewarding and enjoyable maximizing space can be— in a home they’ve just purchased or are prepping for market.

Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate took an in-depth look into home improvements by talking to the affiliated real estate professionals in our network. In our survey, agents felt that the majority of today’s consumers are curious about DIY but are wary of taking on too much and messing up. Other agents felt that consumers were open to taking on DIY projects, but needed help visualizing changes they would make.

We searched for insight into which projects consumers are most likely to tackle themselves (and when they’re likely to start renovations).

*Only 14% of agents felt that today’s buyers expected turnkey homes.*

We also asked our network which home improvement projects added value to a home when selling. The top projects included painted cabinets and new backsplashes in the kitchen, updated vanities and floors in the bathroom, and fresh paint on ceilings and walls. Followed by new fixtures, upgrading utility spaces such as mudrooms, entryways, laundry rooms, and converting space in garages and basements for additional living areas.

And the data supports these findings. Our brand partner, Dotdash Meredith, captured a Home Improvement & Décor Snapshot across their brands, including Better Homes & Gardens® and found that homeowners today want their kitchens to work harder and feel that making budget-conscious kitchen upgrades (to their existing or new homes) is worth the time and investment. 90% of BHGRE affiliated agents say that moderate kitchen updates, such as painted cabinets and new backsplashes, bring the most value to a home when selling.



## DESIGN TRENDS

### *To Give You a Leg Up When* GETTING A HOME READY FOR MARKET

#### *Gen Z is pushing maximalism to the extreme.*

Roughly 48% of the members of this generational group opt for bold design style, which includes cottage core, farmhouse and vintage décor. Think dramatic colors, flashy designs, lots of knick-knacks, thrifted and velvet furniture, and gallery walls.

#### *Minimalism is winning over Millennials.*

About 67% prefer modern, sleek, Scandinavian-inspired home decor style (i.e. monotone and muted colors, clean lines and simple shapes, open floor plans, multi-functional and clean furniture, and blank walls with minimal decorating).

#### *Cottage décor and farmhouse style are still going strong.*

With a 70% and 67% year-over year growth, respectively.

They also found that DIYers want low-risk ideas and inspiration, as well as tips and tricks to cost-effectively improve their kitchens. For example, new homeowners buying homes with vinyl floors are learning how to remove old flooring quickly. Additionally, they're having fun painting outdated cabinets and upgrading backsplashes.

Dotdash Meredith saw a 56% interest in kitchen layout content up year-over-year across its brands. From an increase in interest in hosting parties to an uptick in hybrid work situations, consumers are finding themselves in scenarios where it seems beneficial to invest in kitchens that pull their weight and are multi-functional.

Across the DDM ecosystem consumers increased their bathroom renovations searches, with a 72% increase in content on bathroom vanities and peaks in traffic for DIY Home Painting Projects.

Homeowners are teaching themselves DIY projects like installing wainscoting and millwork, resulting in a 134% increase in pageviews for power tool-related content according to DDM.



## MAKING SPACE

Consumers that opted for smaller, more budget-friendly spaces when making their homebuying purchase are turning towards maximizing their current spaces.

- **“Small entryways” are a trending search term across The Spruce,** with style and functional features being added in to the smallest areas.
- **Homeowners are looking for sleek and stylish methods for making spaces more functional.** DIY built-ins are transforming homes across the country—social media trends like turning IKEA furniture into built-ins for bookcases and storage are common DIY focuses.
- **Basements and garages are becoming desirable areas being used to complete homeowners’ visions.** Common DIY trends among homeowners in 2024 (and likely into 2025) include replacing and insulating garage doors, converting garages into living areas, finishing basements and adding a bathroom to a basement.

## LEAVE IT TO THE PROFESSIONALS

Staging is the process of readying a home for sale, but some design tips that professional stagers implement are so good you'll love them whether you sell or stay. Enhancing a home's overall look is a stager's primary job, but a stager's efforts also focus on cooperating with a homeowner to achieve five goals:

1. **Boosting curb appeal**
2. **Decluttering**
3. **Cleaning**
4. **Making repairs**
5. **Styling**



# 43%

OF THE BHGRE® AGENT NETWORK

say a wow-worthy exterior makes the best first impression

# 81%

OF BHGRE® AGENTS

say their clients are looking for neutralized spaces (grey, beige, clean, and decluttered spaces)

# 36%

OF THE BHGRE® AGENT NETWORK

say updated home décor makes the best first impression

## MAKING REPAIRS

Repairs are easier to take on when you start with a decluttered and clean home. Professional stagers advise that it's always better to assess a home and be proactive in fixing potential issues before they become too large (and too unattractive) for buyers.

The top two factors that could hinder a home sale, according to **Jessica Poulos, broker/owner of Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Northwest Home Team:**

- **Deferred maintenance** – roof cleaning, gutter cleaning, HVAC service, exterior paint.
- **Dirty home** – dirty windows, flooring or even concrete that needs to be pressure washed, can make a buyer question the condition of the home or make them assume it needs to be fixed or replaced.

Attend to the quick fixes at the least, such as repairing cracks in walls and ceilings, ensuring cabinetry hardware works and is in good condition, leak-proofing all plumbing fixtures, and sealing any gaps in moldings and tiling.

Tour your home's exterior and look for flaking or peeling paint. Check fascia boards and gutters and ensure they're mounted correctly. Walk your sidewalks and driveway and look for cracks and trip hazards.

**Benjamin Smail, from Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate The Good Life Group** in Omaha Nebraska, shares three important tips:

- **Touch up paint on walls and trim with the correct color and sheen.** For just \$100 in paint and a day's work completing touch ups, you can shift a buyer's thinking. Eliminating the perception that a house needs a full paint makeover prevents buyers from deducting \$5,000 to \$15,000 of value from a home.
- **An unkempt home can cost thousands of dollars in buyer enthusiasm.** A buyer doesn't feel warm and fuzzy purchasing a home from a seller who doesn't care enough to clean it well and prepare it for sale.
- **Every room should have the right number of possessions, positioned in the right places.** Too many items are overwhelming. Too sparsely decorated and the room feels abandoned and sad. As a last resort, a completely empty space is ok if clean and well kept.





## HERE'S WHAT TO DO WHEN *styling to sell:*

### STYLING TO SELL

After you've decluttered, cleaned and made repairs, it's time to put on your decorator's hat (or let your agent handle your home's styling). Staging gives a property a cohesive and neutral look that attracts buyers from various backgrounds and with different tastes.

**Annmarie Grenga from Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Metro Brokers** said staging is vital: "Staging a home is incredibly important. It helps buyers see themselves living in the space. It can create a warm, welcoming environment and can be what makes a home stand out amongst the other listings."

If you're following a stager's advice simply to refresh your house and not sell, you might want to focus on a specific design style while still implementing the pro's decorating tips. Generally, however, stagers can teach us a thing or two about creating an interior design that's both functional and visually appealing.

Let it go. Selling your house can be difficult, especially as you overhaul your home's look and feel to impress strangers. The more you detach yourself from that process, the easier it will be to apply your real estate agent's advice and ideally get top dollar for your property.

- Give your bedrooms a boutique hotel vibe by replacing bedding with a new white cover and adding throw pillows.
- Use mirrors to create the look of more space and light.
- Open curtains to fill rooms with natural light.
- Hang art at a visually appealing height (about five feet from the ground).
- Bring in fresh greenery and flowers.

Home trends are helping consumers turn houses that align with budgets, into dream homes. By diving into home improvements, consumers are remaining active in the real estate market, helping them create spaces that will sell faster or create a home they'll want to stay in for years.