

Junction Realty Newsletter

Bringing People and Properties Together

Junction Realty Inc., Brokerage



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Please enjoy this newsletter, which will provide you with general real estate tips and ideas.

If you, your family or friends have any questions on the topics covered here or any other real estate or mortgage matters, please call for more information.

Your REFERRALS are always welcome.

All the best,

Sal D'Angelo



It's All About Teamwork!

Buying or selling a home involves many functions that can overwhelm even the most organized of us. To make the whole process less stressful, it's important to choose a support network of professionals who can guide you through the technical parts of home shopping. Included on your team should be:

A LENDER OR MORTGAGE BROKER. Whether it's your local bank or a mortgage broker that helps you find the best financing for your new property, you would be wise to talk to them first, before even starting your house hunt. Having a pre-approved mortgage in hand not only allows you to focus directly on the homes you know you can afford, but also makes your offer more appealing to a seller looking for a quick and smooth transaction.

A LAWYER (OR NOTARY IN QUEBEC). A real estate lawyer or notary protects your legal interests and will review all your paperwork before you sign. Again, it's best to find a good lawyer early, so that he or she can review any offers you may want to make before you put in your formal offer.

A PROFESSIONAL REAL ESTATE SALES REPRESENTATIVE. Sellers who attempt to sell properties themselves are often perplexed at why they can't get offers, or why the offers they do get aren't as high as they expected. The benefits of having professional representation are priceless when it comes to knowing the market, and how to sell your house quickly and efficiently. In addition, when it comes to buying a new property, the real estate salesperson can not only provide the choice of a large selection of homes to fit your criteria, but will also negotiate on your behalf, ensure the proper paperwork is produced and follow the sale through to make sure all parties are satisfied.

For more tips on smooth home transactions, please call me at any time for a no-obligation discussion.

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DÉCOR DON'TS

There's a reason why people hire professionals to design and decorate their homes for them: it's not an easy job. For those taking the DIY approach to home décor, here are five common decorating mistakes – and ways to avoid them.

NOT PLANNING AHEAD

Failing to plan can mean wasting money or getting stuck with furniture that doesn't fit your décor – or even through your front door. Before hitting the stores, make a shopping list of items necessary to accomplish your décor goals; this way, you're more likely to stay focused on your priorities instead of making costly impulse purchases. Also, take measurements of the spaces new pieces will occupy before you go shopping, as well as doorways, stairways and so on. Consider taking photos of the room with you to help you visualize the new furniture in your space, while you're standing in the store.

PAINTING FIRST

If you paint your walls first, as so many homeowners do, you'll likely be disappointed when it comes time to choose your drapes and sofa, as you're now forced to pick from what matches your walls instead of what you love. Choose your furnishings first; you'll have no problem finding paint to match what you've chosen, as it's available in every shade imaginable. Bring in a swatch, pillow, rug, piece of art or other element of your décor and a paint can be mixed to match it.

POORLY PLACED FURNITURE

Furniture pushed back against the walls and rooms that are difficult to navigate are examples of bad furniture

placement. Avoid sterile layouts that make conversation difficult by pulling furniture out from the walls to form groupings (two chairs in front of the fireplace, for instance). Doing so also forces the flow of traffic in a room to its perimeter, an ideal arrangement because it's less intrusive on the people and activities going on.

ADHERING TO TRENDS

Trends, by their very nature, come and go. (Remember shag carpeting?) Let them dictate your décor and it will need to be replaced that much sooner. Trendy schemes are particularly problematic when trying to sell your home, as their appeal is limited to a small segment of potential buyers. If you really want to follow a trend, the smart thing to do is incorporate it with easily replaced accessories.

TOO MUCH STUFF

A room in which every available surface is covered in knickknacks, and where there's no place to sit on the sofa for all its pillows, feels claustrophobic. This crowded look also makes the room appear smaller than it is – exactly what you don't want if you're planning on selling your home. Edit your accessories: if you love it, keep it; if you don't, find a home for it away from yours. Or rotate your accessories so only some of them are out at any one time, to keep your home fresh and interesting for visitors and, more importantly, you.



SHOW OFF

A home that's difficult to show is difficult to sell; after all, buyers won't buy what they can't see. To increase your odds of a speedy sale, make your property easy to show. Here's how.

TRY TO AVOID MAKING SUCH STIPULATIONS AS REQUIRING 24 OR 48 HOURS' ADVANCE NOTICE FOR SHOWINGS. Buyers aren't keen on waiting; if your home isn't readily available they'll move on to those that are.

BUYERS WANT TO VIEW YOUR HOME AT THEIR CONVENIENCE, NOT YOURS – and that often means at a moment's notice. If you're serious about selling, you'll make it as easy as possible to accommodate showings. Establish generous, reasonable hours of availability during which buyers and their real estate representatives can drop by: weekdays from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and weekends from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., for example. And stick to those hours: a buyer or representative who shows up during appointed times only to be turned away isn't likely to return.

TO MAXIMIZE YOUR HOME'S AVAILABILITY, CONSIDER HAVING A LOCKBOX INSTALLED. These sturdy boxes are usually affixed to your front doorknob, storing a key to your home that's accessed via another key or a combination and replaced when the showing is over.

BE SURE TO KEEP YOUR HOME CLEAN AND TIDY SO IT WILL SHOW WELL EVEN WHEN YOU'RE GIVEN LITTLE NOTICE OF A VIEWING. Establish a game plan for vacating your home, along with children and pets, so that buyers can feel more comfortable looking around.

SCHOOL DAZE

For homebuyers who are parents, choosing a new school for their children is an important aspect of moving to a new neighborhood. Once you find out what schools are in your area, you may want to think about the following.



- Ask to tour any school you're considering, preferably while classes are in session. Bring your child along – they should be part of the decision-making process. Check to see if the facilities (classrooms, gym, cafeteria, computer labs, playgrounds, etc.) have been well maintained. Ask about teacher turnover, class sizes, student test scores and attendance rates.
- Request copies of the school's student handbook, policies and report card to familiarize yourself with school rules and how your child will be evaluated. If a school isn't receptive to handling your requests and answering your questions, it's probably not one where you'd want to enroll your child.
- Remember, school is about more than just academics. You'll also want to know about extracurricular activities. If your child has a keen interest in art or sports, for example, you'll want to enroll them in a school that will allow them to develop those interests.
- Consider, too, how your child will get to school. Do you want a school that's within walking distance from your home? How far are you willing to have your child bused or how far are you willing to drive to drop them off and pick them up?
- Even homebuyers without children would be wise to take schools into consideration when moving. All other factors being equal, a home near quality schools is going to offer higher resale value than one lacking that access.

Don't Get Burned

When viewing a potential new home, it's easy to overlook what's going on behind the walls of a house. But purchasing a property with electrical problems can prove costly in more ways than one. Don't pay more than you bargained for – look out for these signs of a poor electrical system.

- Too few outlets (e.g. one per room)
- Abundant use of extension cords
- Electrical boxes that look past their prime
- Flickering lights
- Switch plates and outlet covers that are hot to the touch
- Discolouration around outlets
- Frayed or loose wires
- Outlets that give off sparks

Older houses are particularly vulnerable to electrical problems, as they simply weren't built to handle the demands of the many lights, appliances and electronic equipment used today. It's not uncommon to encounter electrical problems even in newer homes, thanks to homeowners who take a DIY approach to wiring projects, which are considerably more complex and potentially hazardous than, for example, fixing a leaky faucet.

Evidence of electrical problems should never go ignored. Not only can they be costly to repair, they can also cause bodily harm to you, your family and your pets, especially if they ignite bigger problems like fires, which could threaten your whole house.

Should you spot any of the warning signs above, make note of them and hire a professional to follow up. Even if you don't see warning signs, it's always in your best interest to perform an inspection on any house you're seriously considering purchasing, for these and many other reasons.



Terminology Tip

Chain of Title - Simply put, Chain of Title refers to the recorded history of the ownership of a property. Part of a Title Search, the Chain of Title traces the legal documents transferring the title ownership of a property, starting with its original owner and ending with its current owner or vice versa. When a document is missing, the Chain of Title is considered to be broken.

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