

## Ask the expert



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette file photo

**Elegant window** treatments can increase a house's appeal to would-be buyers.

### What are the most effective improvements I can make to sell my house at a decent price?

Homeowners play an important part not only in how their property is perceived by prospective buyers, but also its actual appraised value. To help sellers better maximize profit potential, Robert Jenson, chief executive officer of Las Vegas realty firm The Jenson Group at Re/Max Central, offers 10 tips for readily increasing a house's worth:

**1. Paint the exterior.** A fresh coat of paint can give even a relatively new house a much-needed face-lift and can often be done for as little as a few thousand dollars. Select a neutral tone that is consistent with other residences in the neighborhood. Eaves, gutters and drains may also need painting.

**2. Complete all needed repairs.** To maximize a house's worth, it should be in good condition inside and out. Don't wait until there is an offer on the house. Hire an inspector now, and fix any and all problems, such as roof deficiencies, leaky plumbing and electrical concerns.

**3. Buy a home warranty.** Establish peace of mind that comes with knowing a house and its contents are adequately covered in the event of a loss. A transferable home-warranty protection plan can provide added security to the homeowner and buyer in this regard.

**4. Furnish the house to sell.** Give buyers the option to procure the property with or without furnishings, and have a pre-established sale price set for either scenario.

**5. Upgrade front-yard landscaping.** Curb appeal plays a bigger role than people realize. Potential buyers driving the neighborhood may never call on the "For Sale" sign if your house doesn't look appealing from the outside. And potential buyers waiting for their real estate agent to show up will often spend a good amount of time critiquing the landscaping while waiting. In addition to purposeful foliage, add landscape lighting and a weather and soil moisture-based landscape irrigation scheduling device.

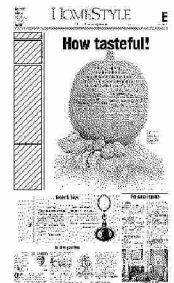
**6. Create a quick kitchen makeover.** Kitchens are where you'll get the most bang for your remodeling buck. Countertops and appliances are the quickest fix, as are faucets, fixtures, doorknobs and other easily changed items that can have a large impact on the space.

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**7. Think spa, not bathroom.** The master bath is an important factor in a house's worth. Consider creating a private sanctuary where the master bath is concerned — a space meant to be relaxing and rejuvenating. Give buyers something to be excited about with upgraded faucets, fixtures, lighting, cabinetry, mirrors and the like. Then dress it up with plants, candles and other inexpensive high-impact decor.

**8. Install soft and hard window treatments.** There's nothing more boring than a plain window. Take advantage of this easy opportunity to give the house's interior design more impact. In addition to hard treatments such as blinds and shutters that offer privacy, add soft treatments hung from decorative fixtures, which can alter the appeal of a room entirely. Look to a professional to ensure the best outcome.

**9. Replace carpet.** Rather than steam-cleaning old, used carpet, replace it with fresh, neutral-tone carpet with an upgraded pad for an extra-luxurious feel. Spending the extra money on new carpet will really make



your house stand out from the crowd in sight, feel and smell.

10. **Don't overlook closets.** The better-organized a closet, the larger it appears and the better it reflects on a house overall. Now is the time to box up unwanted clothes and shoes and donate them to charity. Then invest in a closet organization system — either by a professional or self-installed — which will positively affect an appraisal.