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Understand your buyer to maximise your home sale price

Author: Richard Armstrong**Date:** July 9, 2009**Publication:** [Sydney Morning Herald](#) ([subscribe](#))

In tough economic times, spending money to make money is a difficult prospect for many property sellers, who are carefully watching the purse strings.

But experience shows that by focusing on some key improvements to your home, you can make \$3 for every \$1 outlaid, and sell your home in less time, with less stress.

Different categories of buyers can be spooked by a variety of perceived problems with the property – and a glossy brochure and professional photos can't cover over damage to the walls or a garden that has turned to wilderness.

Pick your target market and spend wisely. You'll see the returns.

Romancing the First-Home Buyers

First-home buyers love that "brand-new" feeling, and when they fall in love with a property, they can become competitive enough to drive the price up significantly.

However, they are easily scared off by cosmetic damage, which can cause irreversible heartbreak in their romantic adventure.

If your property appeals to this market, fix any cracks in the ceiling, dripping taps in the bathroom and rust stains on the kitchen bench.

You may know that the ceiling damage is only cosmetic and not symptomatic of any structural problems, but it can enough to kill the love affair.

First-home buyers don't require a glamorous renovation, but something clean, neat and functional.

Spending a little money on replacing light switches, power point covers and door handles can modernise the look of the property, which may be enough to secure the First-Home Buyers' passion, and their desire to bid up on the sale.

Selling a secure haven for families

Families with children are looking for comfort, safety and security. Renovations may be considered further down the track, but for the moment, the family wants to settle in to a comfortable home.

If you target this market, make sure the home has a fence to protect wandering toddlers from the street and install locks on gates.

Create open spaces within the home where the family can gather comfortably.

Borrow or hire a good quality swing set for the yard, include an outdoor dining table, and your buyers will be salivating over the prospect of backyard barbecues with the family in no time.

An easy life for empty-nesters

Couples in their advancing years are looking to downsize, and live in a secure and low-maintenance home.

They require plenty of storage for their lifetime of possessions, and possibly a spare room for the grandkids to stay over.

Ground-floor properties are particularly sought after, but they must not have high maintenance requirements.

Hedges that need regular pruning, expansive lawns and garden beds are going to be a turn-off for this group. Likewise, elaborate light fittings and cornices that attract dust and cobwebs are going to produce more work for couples in their twilight years.

Best to go simple and minimal with your makeover, to reduce the upkeep.

Richard Armstrong is a director of [The Makeover Group](#), and author of [Sell your home for more – an expert's guide to property presentation](#)

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