

THE 4-WEEK SELLER PREPARATION PLAN

A Strategic Guide to Preparing Your Central Ohio Home for Market

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The Panhuis | Belcher 4-Week Launch Strategy™

Before We Ever Go Live...

Selling a home is not just about putting it on the market.

It's about positioning it strategically so that buyers feel confident, emotionally connected, and ready to write strong offers.

Over the years, we've learned something important:

The weeks before a home goes live are where the real value is created.

- Decluttering
- Neutralizing
- Repairing
- Cleaning
- Staging with intention

These steps are not about perfection. They are about removing distractions, eliminating objections, and allowing buyers to focus on the home itself.

When a property feels clean, cared for, and move-in ready, buyers negotiate differently.

Preparation directly impacts your leverage — and your net proceeds.

This 4-week preparation plan is the same framework we walk our sellers through before we ever launch a home on the market.

Let's begin.

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Why Preparation Directly Impacts Your Bottom Line

Buyers form an opinion within seconds of walking through the front door. In today's market, that opinion often forms even earlier — online, through professional photography.

When a home feels:

Bright.

Neutral.

Clean.

Organized.

Well maintained.

Buyers feel confident.

Confidence leads to stronger offers and fewer repair negotiations.

On the other hand, clutter, deferred maintenance, and overly personal décor create hesitation. Hesitation creates leverage for the buyer.

Our goal is simple:

Spend strategically where it matters and avoid spending where it doesn't.

We don't want you spending a dollar to make fifty cents. We want you investing thoughtfully to maximize your net proceeds.

Buyers form an opinion within the first 15 seconds.

The 4-Week Preparation Timeline

A strategic approach to preparing your home for a strong market launch.

01
Declutter

Remove distractions.
Create space so buyers can focus on the home — not your belongings.

02
Repair &
Neutralize

Eliminate objections before they arise.
Address maintenance and create a clean, neutral backdrop.

03
Deep Clean

A spotless home signals care.
Clean homes inspire confidence and feel move-in ready.

04
Stage &
Launch

Create the model-home effect.
Prepare intentionally for photography and buyer showings.

Each week builds on the one before it.

By launch day, your home will feel intentional, prepared, and market-ready.

Week One: Declutter

Remove distractions.

Create space so buyers can focus on the home — not your belongings.

Exterior & Curb Appeal

- Remove old yard equipment, toys, worn furniture, and unused items
- Clear patios and decks of faded or damaged pieces
- Remove yard art that is worn or distracting

Entry

- Clear shoes, coats, backpacks, and excess items
- Organize coat closets and remove off-season items

Kitchen

- Remove excess dishes, cookware, and small appliances
- Clear countertops as much as possible
- Remove magnets, papers, and personal items from refrigerator

Living Spaces

- Remove excess furniture
- Clear coffee tables and end tables
- Remove most personal photos (a few are fine)
- Organize bookshelves

Bedrooms

- Organize closets and remove off-season clothing
- Clear nightstands and dressers of personal items
- Remove non-bedroom furniture (office equipment, workout equipment)

Bathrooms

- Clear counters
- Organize vanities and linen closets

Garage & Basement

- Remove unused lumber and tools
- Minimize floor clutter
- Store recreational vehicles off-site if possible

Rooms may feel empty to you — that's good.

Week Two: Repair & Neutralize

Eliminate objections before they arise.

Buyers don't just see a home — they assess it.

Loose handles, chipped paint, stained grout, dated fixtures — even small maintenance issues can create doubt. And doubt reduces buyer confidence.

Week Two is about addressing visible maintenance items and creating a neutral backdrop so buyers focus on the home itself — not the work they think they'll need to do.

This is not about renovating.

It's about being strategic.

Not every improvement creates a return.

If you're unsure whether something is worth addressing, we will walk through it together and prioritize wisely.

Our goal is simple: remove objections before buyers ever have a chance to use them in negotiation.

Exterior & Interior Maintenance

Exterior & Curb Appeal

- Repair cracks in walkways, steps, retaining walls, or patios
- Power wash siding, trim, decks, and patios if needed
- Scrape and repaint peeling exterior paint
- Clean and secure gutters and downspouts
- Repair damaged window seals or broken screens
- Ensure fences and gates are stable and freshly painted or stained
- Update worn mailbox, house numbers, or light fixtures if needed

Interior Walls & Ceilings

- Patch nail holes, cracks, or damaged drywall
- Address water stains and repair the source before repainting
- Clean scuff marks from walls and doors
- Repaint bold or heavily personalized walls in neutral tones
- Consider removing dated wallpaper

Lighting & Fixtures

- Replace outdated or damaged light fixtures
- Install bright, warm-toned bulbs throughout the home
- Replace worn light switch and outlet covers

Kitchen

- Repair dripping faucets
- Replace worn cabinet hardware if dated
- Re-caulk countertops and backsplash seams
- Ensure all appliances are fully functional
- Evaluate whether cabinet repainting or minor cosmetic updates would add value

Bathrooms

- Repair running toilets or plumbing leaks
- Replace stained or moldy caulking
- Clean or re-grout tile if needed
- Replace outdated light fixtures
- Consider refinishing a stained tub instead of replacing it

Flooring

- Replace heavily stained or damaged carpet
- Professionally clean tile grout if needed
- Consider neutralizing mismatched flooring for consistency

Mechanical Systems

- Service HVAC if overdue
- Repair visible pipe leaks
- Ensure garage doors and windows function properly

Not every repair creates a return. Before investing in larger updates, we'll evaluate what will truly impact your sale price and what will not.

Week Three: Deep Clean for Confidence

Deep cleaning is about more than appearance.

A spotless home signals care.

When buyers see sparkling surfaces, clean grout lines, fresh-smelling rooms, and dust-free spaces, they assume the home has been well maintained.

Clean homes feel move-in ready.

This week is about elevating the details — the kind buyers may not consciously notice, but absolutely feel.

Unlike Weeks One and Two, this step is ongoing. Once your home is on the market, it must be maintained at this standard.

A professional cleaning service can be a smart investment during this phase.

The goal: make your home feel fresh, bright, and effortless.

Deep Cleaning Checklist — Interior

Interior – General

- Vacuum and mop all flooring
- Dust baseboards, light fixtures, and ceiling fans
- Clean interior doors, trim, and vents
- Remove cobwebs in corners and ceilings

Kitchen

- Deep clean appliances (inside and out)
- Wipe down cabinets and drawers
- Polish sink and faucet
- Keep countertops crumb-free
- Empty trash daily

Bathrooms

- Scrub tile and grout
- Polish mirrors and hardware
- Replace stained or worn caulking if needed
- Keep trash emptied
- Use fresh, neutral hand soap

Bedrooms & Living Areas

- Wash bedding and refresh linens
- Remove pet hair from furniture
- Keep surfaces clutter-free
- Maximize natural light

Deep Cleaning Checklist — Exterior & Details

Exterior

- Wash windows (inside and out)
- Sweep walkways, patios, and decks
- Remove cobwebs and weeds
- Refresh mulch and trim landscaping
- Keep lawn edged and maintained

Garage & Basement

- Sweep floors
- Remove cobwebs
- Run dehumidifier if needed
- Eliminate odors

Smell Matters

Avoid overpowering air fresheners or plug-ins.

Fresh air and light, clean scents are best.

Heavy fragrances can make buyers wonder what is being covered up.

Week Four: Stage & Launch

Create the Model-Home Effect

This is where preparation turns into presentation.

By now, your home is decluttered, repaired, and deeply cleaned.

Week Four is about creating an emotional connection.

Buyers don't just evaluate square footage and finishes — they imagine their life unfolding inside the space.

Staging is not about decorating.

It's about highlighting your home's strengths, defining each room's purpose, and creating a calm, inviting atmosphere.

Small adjustments make a big difference:

- Proper furniture placement
- Balanced lighting
- Fresh linens
- Thoughtful finishing touches

Before professional photography and showings begin, we'll walk through your home together and fine-tune the details.

Staging Checklist

Exterior

- Add fresh seasonal planters near the entry
- Ensure front door is clean and freshly painted if needed
- Turn on exterior lights for evening showings
- Keep porch simple and welcoming

Entry

- Add a simple rug or runner if appropriate
- Keep surfaces clear
- Add subtle décor (small plant, neutral artwork)

Living Spaces

- Arrange furniture to create clear walking paths
- Add fresh throw pillows or neutral accents
- Keep surfaces minimally styled
- Remove excess décor

Kitchen

- Add a simple bowl of fresh fruit - green apples work great and last
- Set out fresh hand towels
- Keep appliances off countertops when possible

Bedrooms

- Use crisp, neutral bedding
- Keep nightstands minimally styled
- Ensure lamps are working and balanced

Bathrooms

- Use fresh white or neutral towels
- Remove personal products
- Add a simple plant or small decorative touch

Lighting

- Open all blinds and curtains
- Turn on all lights before showings
- Replace any dim or burnt-out bulbs

The goal: create a space that feels effortless, bright, and move-in ready.

Showtime Master Checklist

Before Every Showing

Inside

- Make beds
- Wipe down kitchen and bathroom surfaces
- Empty trash
- Hide pet items (bowls, litter boxes, crates)
- Secure valuables
- Open blinds and turn on lights
- Adjust thermostat to a comfortable temperature

Outside

- Move trash cans out of sight
- Sweep entry and porch
- Remove vehicles from driveway if possible

Final Touch

Open a few windows briefly before showings to allow fresh air in.
Avoid strong scents or plug-ins.

Your home should feel clean, calm, and welcoming the moment buyers walk in.

Ready for a Personalized Strategy?

Every home is different.

Every neighborhood behaves differently.

And every price point requires a slightly different approach.

This guide provides a strong framework — but before investing in updates or preparing to list, we recommend creating a customized strategy specific to your home, your timeline, and your goals.

Small decisions can have a meaningful impact on:

- Pricing strategy
- Marketing presentation
- Buyer perception
- Negotiation leverage

And ultimately - Your final net proceeds

Before you go live, let's make sure every step is intentional. Clear vision sells homes.

Schedule a Preparation Consultation

We will walk through your home together and create a personalized plan that prioritizes:

- What to do
- What not to do
- Where to invest
- Where to save

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