

Selling 101: Necessary paper work

A home buyer's first impression is based on aesthetics, but providing them with information on the investments you have made in the property can demonstrate its overall value. The simple solution is to keep a file of important materials documenting the updates, maintenance and renovation dollars you have invested before your home goes on the market.

"Being able to provide a buyer with your history of improvements, warranties and utility bills, helps to validate the asking price. It can be used as a very effective selling point," said Jim Dohr, president of Coldwell Banker Gundaker. "Furthermore, some of the money invested in home improvements is tax deductible, so this paper trail can work to your advantage in more ways than one."

Here are a few examples

of what to file away:

- **Capital improvements.** Keep every single receipt from capital improvements. A capital improvement is a change you make to your home that increases its value – for example, upgrading your kitchen or adding a bathroom.

- **Energy audit.** Order an energy audit to evaluate the amount of energy your home consumes. Follow the recommendations given for improving energy efficiency, and keep all receipts associated with the project.

- **Warranties.** File away warranties from major purchases or upgrades such as hot water heaters and air conditioners, and keep them organized by the date they expire.

- **Utility bills.** Buyers are factoring monthly utility bills into their budget prior to purchasing. Ease

this process for them by providing them with a year's worth of bills.

- **Neighborhood kudos.** Clip and save any positive articles published about the neighborhood (for example, recognition of local school systems) and awards given for community achievement and/or improvement.

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