So, you are planning to list your property on the market, and you want to get as much return on investment as possible, but you don't know how to go about it.

The secret lies in the type of renovations you do in the house. Note however that some renovations may make the house look fancy, but they do not, in any way, increase its property value. For instance, a backyard pool in an area that is generally cold will do very little to persuade a potential buyer to purchase the property. You should therefore, focus on upgrading areas that are likely to capture a buyer's attention like the kitchen, bar and bathroom. This will save you both money and time to capitalizing on a booming market. So, how do you increase your property value in a year

## Remodeling the kitchen

According to Michael Deane, editor of Qeedle, a small business magazine, "the kitchen is the heart of the home and is the place the buyer is likely to pay attention to the most. To remodel the kitchen, start with painting its walls."

This may seem straightforward, but do not underestimate the power of the paint. A good paint job can convert an old kitchen to a brand new one, while a poor job can do the opposite. Also, you need to replace old appliances with new ones or even add more, if your kitchen has a shortage of appliances. Go for stainless steel appliances as they are more durable and have a stylish and alluring look that can blend in with any decor. You can also replace worn out cabinets and countertops, replace old flooring with more modern options like tiles and vinyl and even include a backsplash in the new design.

For safety purposes, care to install a fire duct or a range hood. A fire duct removes smokes and nasty odors from the kitchen and also reduces fire risks by expelling grease vapor from the kitchen. Grease buildup in the kitchen may act as a fuel source for the fire. Lighting is also equally important. You can get rid of too much overhead lighting in favor of wall mounted light sources to give the kitchen a tranquil feeling. There are also many kitchen layouts you can choose from depending on the size and shape of your kitchen. However, an island layout is the most popular and you can take advantage of it, if it is not already in place.

## Remodeling the bathroom

In all areas of the house, the kitchen and the bathroom have the highest traffic. However, the bathroom takes the most beating and is the area that is most likely to gross out the

buyer, if it is not renovated well. Luckily, the bathroom does not require as much work as the kitchen. The first step is to replace those rundown faucets and clogged shower-heads with new sleek ones. You can install under-mount sinks, instead of drop-in sinks or even include marble or granite for countertops to make it more interesting and modern.

The bath area is where the action takes place. Therefore, you need to make it as special as possible. A good way to start is to install a shower with body sprays or even surround the bath area with beautiful tiles or decorative stones. As for the floor, you can revive it with new grout to cover up dirt and grime that could have accumulated over the years. You may even surprise the buyer with heated floors – trust us, it will blow their mind. Nothing attracts buyers to a house like heated flooring. Also, replace overhead lighting with wall lighting, as it adds warmth and serenity to the bathroom. You should also replace worn out curtains and rugs and ensure the bathroom is spotlessly clean.

## Ensure there is curb appeal

Keep in mind that first impressions last. In this case, your curb will give out the first impression of your house. Give the buyer a reason to go into the house by making the front your home look attractive. If it has a curvy walkway, you can make it more alluring by accentuating it with colorful flowers, nicely mown lawn, beautiful grass and even light lanterns. You can also install a new mailbox, shutters, and a deck or even build a new driveway. Also, make sure to plant native trees both at the front and the back, as trees have been found to increase property value considerably.

## Install security fixtures

In the US, a house is broken into every 15 seconds. As a result, security is the number one consideration for buyers when looking for a house. You need to proof your house against unlawful entry by installing a security alarm system that goes off when there is a breach. Also, include external lighting and install sturdy wooden doors and window locks. Aside from unlawful entry, you can also disaster-proof your house from fire hazards by installing a fire alarm system and a fire duct. As mentioned earlier, a fire duct system can help reduce fire hazards and keep the house free from nasty odors and smoke. Check out our article on ways of disaster-proofing your house.

Renovating your house is the only way of increasing its value. We would like to caution however not to go overboard with the renovation, as this will likely increase the value of the house beyond what the buyers are willing to pay. For instance, adding luxury fittings and

custom features may not work in a middle-class neighborhood, as the house will be beyond their pay grade. Therefore, you should consider the immediate surroundings when doing the renovations. If your property is old (built before the ‘70s), then it probably has an outdated plumbing system, lead paint and asbestos fittings. Ensure the plumbing system is updated and the lead paint and asbestos fittings are completely removed from the house, as required by law. You can check out our tips on how to upgrade an old home here to increase its market value.