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## 7 Steps to Preparing for an Open House

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1. Hire a cleaning service. A spotlessly clean home is essential; dirt will turn off a prospective buyer faster than anything.
2. Mow your lawn, and be sure toys and yard equipment are put away.
3. Serve cookies, coffee, and soft drinks. It creates a welcoming touch. But be sure the kitchen has been cleaned up; use disposable cups so the sink doesn't fill up.
4. Lock up your valuables, jewelry, and money. Although the real estate salesperson will be on site during the open house, it's impossible to watch everyone all the time.
5. Turn on all the lights. Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle.
6. Send your pets to a neighbor or take them outside. If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room (a basement or bath), and let the salesperson know where to find them.
7. Leave. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and express their opinions of your home with you there.

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### **Blue Pacific Realty**

www.blupac.com | info@blupac.com  
16289 Hwy 101 South, Suite A, Brookings, OR 97415  
Toll Free 888.412.8424 | Local 541.412.8424 | Fax 541.412.0334