

# The Business Monthly

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## WHY ARE YOU MOVING, ANYWAY?

By Robert Wood



Once upon a time, you bought the house in which you are living because you liked it ... or maybe even “loved” it. Yet for some reason, you

are thinking about selling it and are worrying about the unstable real estate market.

Perhaps you feel your house is too big or too small to accommodate your growing family. But rather than stressing about moving, why not think of ways you can improve your house to enhance its function or appeal to you?

Channel your energy toward brainstorming and creating solutions that will make your home feel and function better for you. Who knows ... after you do some redecorating and renovating, you may even decide that you are already in your dream home after all.

### FIRST STEPS

Start this process by asking yourself, “What would it take to make this house more appealing and functional to me?”

If you say the house is just too big, work with a contractor to help you convert the kids’ old bedrooms into space that is better suited to your current and future lifestyle. Many empty nesters are converting bedrooms into craft rooms, exercise rooms, computer rooms, home offices and entertainment rooms. Or you may also think about converting your extra space into income

by opening a bed and breakfast or taking on a boarder.

Or why not hire a contractor to knock out a wall (or two), enlarge your bedroom to a master suite with a luxurious bath and walk-in closet, and replace your windows with doors onto a new deck/balcony so you can enjoy starry nights in your pajamas?

### MAKE IT BIG

In contrast, if too little square-footage is your issue, other options exist.

An experienced renovation contractor can knock out walls to give you more open space (which is in keeping with the trend toward great rooms). And he can recommend ways to add space to the house, whether that means going up or out.

You can also expand your living room into the great outdoors with the addition of all-season sunrooms/solariums, as well as an eat-in kitchen that opens onto a deck.

More dramatic window treatments, upgrades to your lighting and flooring and a new paint job can go a long way to making your space look bigger and fresher.

If you live in an older dwelling that does not have air conditioning and avoiding another dreadful Maryland summer is part of why you want to move, consider a relatively new technology that makes it possible to put heating and air conditioning in the walls without unsightly bulkheads being added to conceal the ductwork. These high-velocity

heating and cooling systems can be a bit noisy if not installed properly, but a good contractor will know some simple quieting options.

You may also want to consult a specialist in accessibility issues, so the changes you make can increase potential accessibility/aging-in-place concerns.

### ADDING VALUE

In the event that you still want to consider the potential resale value after making changes to your home, you should know that Remodeling Magazine reports that a bathroom remodel can return up to 84% return in eastern states.

The magazine goes on to say that even a minor kitchen “facelift” can return at least 81% (based on national averages) and adding a bathroom is the next best resale investment, returning 72%. Replacing siding, windows and a home office all represent a 60%-plus return on investment.

Of course, these figures on the average return-on-investment do not factor in the personal side of allowing you to enjoy your house more, the value of making it more functional, or the value of peace of mind - rather than stressing about why your house has not yet sold.

So, before you feel depressed by the local real estate market, think renovation and redecoration, and remember all the memories from within those walls.

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