

10 Easy Steps to "Stage" your Home for Selling

"Staging" is the latest buzzword in real estate, but it simply means to present your home in its best and most appealing light. If you are preparing your home to sell, it is to setup your home to appeal to prospective buyers and showcase the property in a way that makes buyers eager to purchase! In theory, "staging" isn't hard or costly, but in reality, many homeowners find it difficult because it's often hard to see something objectively when we love it. An easy way to see effectively "staged" homes is to visit decorated models. Decorating a model is expensive, but builders are willing to invest the cost because they understand just how well a "staged" home sells.

IF YOU ARE SELLING, REMEMBER THE INVESTMENT OF STAGING MAY VERY WELL BE LESS THAN YOUR FIRST PRICE REDUCTION

What Are the Benefits of Home Staging?

- A staged home sells faster and for more money in most markets
- Inspectors view a staged home as a home that has been well cared for
- Appraisers are more likely to appraise a staged home at full value
- You can't sell what is covered up in clutter
- Homes that are staged, clean, and free of clutter have an immediate advantage in any market

WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF STAGING?

TO SELL YOUR HOME FASTER AT TOP DOLLAR!



After a thorough cleaning and de-cluttering even the garage and side yards, how do you broaden the appeal of your house and “STAGE” it for selling?

Get the SPARKLE back . . .

Here are our top 10 staging tips for selling your home:

1. **Keep it clean**

Look at your home as though you're seeing it for the first time. Is every room neat, spotlessly clean, dusted and uncluttered? Steam clean carpets and wax floors. Wash walls, heating and A/C vents and light fixtures. Pay special attention to your bathroom and kitchen - make sure that tile grout is mildew free and baseboards scrubbed. Clean the refrigerator and stove as well as the washer and dryer (inside and out).

2. **Lose the clutter**

Have a yard sale or take old furniture, clothing and knick-knacks to Goodwill. Organize shelves, put away items and purge your home of unnecessary items. Make sure that your kitchen and bathroom counters are free of small appliances and personal effects.

3. **De-personalize your home**

Make your home "anonymous," so that buyers can envision it as their potential home. Put away any family photos, sports trophies, collectibles, knick-knacks and souvenirs. This will also help to remove clutter and create more space.

4. **Freshen-up**

Adding a fresh coat of paint and laying new carpet will clean and brighten up your home. Choose neutral colors and make it consistent throughout the home. If you choose to wallpaper, make sure that the paper is properly applied, your color choice is neutral and patterns are kept to a minimum.

5. **First impressions count**

Like a first date or job interview, the first impression of your home is the most important. Walking into a home with fingerprinted screen door windows or cluttered entranceways, can influence the potential homebuyer's decisions. Likewise, strong odours can ruin a sale, so pay close attention to pet, cooking and cigarette smells in your home. Light delicately scented candles or have cookies baking when showing.

6. **Curb appeal**

Homebuyers decide whether or not to look inside a house by the appearance of your home's exterior. Paint or wash the outside of your home. Check your gutters and chimney and make necessary repairs. Keep your lawns trimmed and flower beds weeded. Use urns to define walk spaces and ensure that window boxes are full of healthy all-season plants.

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7. **Create the illusion of space**

To make your home seem more spacious, it is key to de-clutter and re-organize. Start by removing excess furniture to make rooms feel more open and replacing any items that are not appropriately sized for the room. Clean and organize your closets and remove excess clutter from all areas of your home. Strategically placed mirrors can also help to create the illusion of more space.

8. **Modern choices**

Ensure that the décor of your home is modern and tasteful. Use neutral tones on your walls and floors and add colour with removable items such as throw pillows or bedding. Steer away from too many personal touches to create a minimalist and contemporary space.

9. **Doggie No-No's**

“Love me, love my pets,” doesn't apply when selling your home. Take your pets with you when your house is being shown, or at least keep them outside. Pets under foot will quickly put a damper on an otherwise positive showing. While making sure that your house is odor-free and spotless applies to everyone, pet owners need to take special care.

10. **Beautify your backyard**

Don't forget about your backyard. A house showing doesn't always end at the backdoor. Beyond size and layout, potential buyers can also be influenced by the state of your yard. Keep the lawn, hedges and flowerbeds manicured. Buy exterior storage containers to hide gardening tools, kids toys and pool supplies. Lastly, interested buyers may decide to look inside your shed, so make sure that it is organized and clean.

Potential buyers make their decision to purchase your home in the first 30 seconds. First impression is the key to selling your home fast and for top dollar.

Basic Staging Rules

Clean - put the sparkle back!

Fix – anything broken, cracked or dripping

De-Clutter – get rid of 50%

Go Neutral – Neutral colors sell

De-Personalize – Remove objects your buyer can't identify with

Just before a showing:

- When the agent arrives with the prospects, have the drapes and window shades open to let in as much daylight as possible. If it happens to be night, be sure that all of your outdoor lights are on, especially landscape and pool lights.
- Open all the doors between rooms to give an inviting feeling. Turn on the radio to some quiet, "elevator-style" music.
- Pick up any newspapers or magazines that may be lying around. See that the counters are free of unnecessary items and that any dirty dishes are put in the dishwasher. Take out the trash.

IN SUMMARY:



Curb appeal. They say you can only make one "first impression," and people usually form their first impression within 30 seconds. What potential buyers see when they drive up to your house will be their first impression. Plant flowers, trim bushes, weed, pick up leaves, repaint your front door, replace tarnished house numbers or a dented mailbox, get a brand-new neutral doormat, park your old car somewhere else.

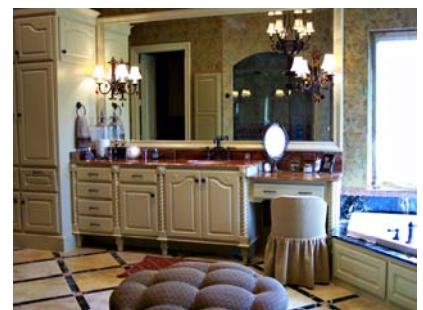
The entrance. The first glimpse inside your home should give potential buyers positive, uplifting feelings. Make your entryway as light and bright as possible. Leave all the lights in the house on. Get rid of all area rugs. (Even authentic, high-quality carpets should normally be removed since they break up the expanse of floor space, making rooms look smaller.) Limit your cooking to very plain foods so odors don't linger. (No cabbage, garlic, or onions!) On the other hand, freshly baked chocolate chip cookie smells are just fine!



Kitchen. Kitchens sell homes, so the importance of making your kitchen appealing can't be underestimated. Clean and de-clutter! Anything taking up counter or floor space must go, with the exception of tasteful designer touches. Anything displayed on the refrigerator must go. If your cabinets are old, consider resurfacing them. If your counter knobs are old or out-of-date, replacing them can be a relatively inexpensive "facelift." Get a woodtone touchup stick from your home supply store and fill in any nicks and scratches. Shelves and pantries must appear orderly and very spacious.

Bathrooms. Again, clean and de-clutter!

You absolutely must get rid of any mildew/mold. If you have a glass shower door, squeegee it after every shower. A mold-and-mildew remover and soap scum remover can work wonders. Glass cleaning products do a good job of cleaning windows and mirrors. Do not display any personal toiletry items! Remove all deodorant, mouthwash, electric toothbrushes, etc. and put them in your cabinet. Pick up all bath mats/rugs. Keep your soap dishes pristine. If you have bars of hand soap, they should look new. Get a new set of high-quality, neutral, fluffy towels and display them.



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Rest of the House. Clean, repair, de-clutter, and de-personalize! You're going for that Executive but neutral look, since almost everyone can "see themselves" in a home like that.



- Remove those knickknacks!
- “Weed” out your closet so it has ample space
- Remove area rugs
- Remove throw blankets
- Remove throw pillows (or replace with "designer" pillows)
- If your houseplants are anemic, remove them. Replace with high-quality silk plants or healthy houseplants in brass, wicker, or plain ceramic containers.



- Take a hard look at your carpets. Are they stained or worn? Replacing carpets is often an excellent investment because it gives your home that "new" look that everyone wants. (Buyers have notoriously poor imaginations; so replacing existing carpet with neutral carpet is usually a much better idea than offering a "carpet allowance.")
- Leave all the lights on (No burned-out lightbulbs!)
- Keep wastebaskets empty
- If possible, send your pets to stay with family or friends. As much as we love our pets, they can be a major negative distraction to potential buyers.
- Leave your home before potential buyers arrive



SPARKLE AND SHINE!

HOMEOWNER CLEANING BASICS

Basic Cleaning

- Spring cleaning means EVERYTHING, paying special attention to floors, counters, windows and window sills.
- Get rid of any and all odors.
- Make bathrooms shine. Consider putting some paste wax on the tile. RegROUT, repaint where necessary, update worn out facets and “squeegee” the shower glass.
- Anything not in working order, replace or fix.

Declutter, Declutter, Declutter

- Thin out closets and put away seasonal clothes.
- Remove photographs and other small items from tabletops. Give your home a fresh look by changing things around, reducing all your bric-a-brac and letting more furniture surface show!
- Sort through and find a convenient place to store all personal items especially jewelry, bills, and any personal and financial information.
- Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops. If it hasn't been used for three months... put it away!

Grounds and Gardens

- Check gutters for roof moss and dry rot. Make sure they are swept and cleaned.
- Store or organize items that make the yard look messy.
- Make your front entry inviting. Decorate it, add potted plants and flowers, paint the door, or buy a new door. It's the first look at your house, so make it a good one.
- Place an entry mat at the front door so visitors may clean their feet before entering.
- Keep the front porch clean and free from dirt and debris.

TURN YOUR HOME INTO A MODEL HOME!