

- ❑ New paint goes a long way. It makes your home seem fresh and inviting, and also delivers the most bang for your home staging buck. Buyers will be relieved to know they won't need to repaint before they move in. Neutral colors make rooms appear not only fresher, but larger as well. Consider painting the ceilings the same color as the walls for a calming effect and to enhance flow.

The Finishing Touches

- ❑ Keep your toilet lids down, make sure hand towels are clean, and ideally coordinate one or two colors of towels only. Replace used bars of soap with fresh bars or liquid soap. Store personal care products under the sink or in the cabinets, and keep the tub surround, window ledges, and counters clutter free.
- ❑ When you list your house, buy fresh flowers and display them prominently. Take a couple of flowers from the arrangement and place them in an elegant vase on your nightstand for some extra pizzazz.
- ❑ Lighten everything up to make the rooms seem warm and welcoming as well as larger. Open curtains during the day, and turn on all lights in the evening to entice potential home buyers who happen to drive by.
- ❑ Plants add warmth to a home, but avoid groups of small pots. Plants should be in proportion to the furniture in each room.
- ❑ Play a pleasing selection of music such as light jazz or soft classical during showings.
- ❑ A fresh, clean but light scent can be obtained with a carpet spray, lightly scented candle, or aromatherapy spray. Avoid heavy scents as it may turn some buyers off.

Remember Exterior Staging

- ❑ The outside of your home is important to stage as well. Trim bushes and trees so the home can actually be seen. Keep shrubbery trimmed beneath the windows to allow the maximum amount of light into the house.
- ❑ Remove toys, bikes, trash cans, and cars from the yard or driveway. If putting them in the garage makes that look cluttered, then send them off to a storage unit.
- ❑ Weed, mulch, mow, fertilize and water the yard. Remove dead plants as well as empty planters and flower pots with dead greenery.
- ❑ Check the paint condition of the exterior. If the things buyers can see are in disrepair, they will assume the things they can't see are in disrepair as well.
- ❑ Check your property from side streets, neighbor's yards, etc., to make certain you've covered all the angles a prospective buyer may view from.

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STAGING YOUR HOME TO SELL

WHAT THE PROS KNOW ABOUT SETTING THE STAGE FOR A FAST HOME SALE

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Telling Stories in a Blink of a Moment



You may have seen the popular A&E television show “Sell This House” where homeowners with properties that just won't sell talk to home staging experts about what they can do to remedy the situation.

Home staging is becoming an important aspect in the selling of homes today. In many areas of the country, there is a large supply of homes available that makes it a very competitive market. If you want to make your home the most sellable one in the neighborhood, you'll undoubtedly will have to perform some home staging.

Home staging is cleaning, organizing, rearranging, updating, and preparing your home for sale. A large factor of why people buy homes is emotional. This is one of the reasons why home staging is so effective – you create an atmosphere that projects pleasant times to come in a well-cared for, fresh, bright, and uncluttered home.

Setting the “Stage”

- ❑ Stand at your entryway, just outside your door. The homebuyers are sure to spend some time here while their real estate agent searches for the key. Does it look clean, well-kept, and welcoming? As the door is opened, does the house look inviting and clean?
- ❑ Experts recommend that you walk through your home with a notebook – taking on one room at a time – and noting every spot and chip as well as every area that needs cleaning, de-cluttering, sanding, repainting, and so on. Complete the tasks on your list one at a time and you may find yourself less overwhelmed by what needs to be done.

- ❑ If you're unsure as to how something looks (or smells), have a neighbor come in and look at the home as if they were the potential buyer. Don't take their suggestions personally, but do take them seriously. Keep in mind that it's not a personal attack on your housekeeping skills – after all, everybody has hectic schedules these days. It's just an honest assessment that will help you sell your faster and for top dollar!

Clearing the “Stage”

- ❑ Remove unnecessary furniture from the house. Many times, owners have too much furniture in a room. If it doesn't enhance the room, either 'trash it' or 'stash it.' Thinning out your furniture will make the rooms appear larger. Under-furnished is better than over-furnished.
- ❑ Rearrange furniture so the you create the most pleasing display possible. This includes pictures, artwork, or objects on the wall as well.
- ❑ De-clutter every room. Don't leave anything on the countertops in the bathroom or the kitchen. Remove everything but decorative objects (in tasteful arrangements of 1, 3, or 5) from tables in the living areas.
- ❑ Clear the outside of your refrigerator as well. Take down all those pictures of your grand-kids as well as the coupons and the finger paintings your children made 20 years ago. It will help make the kitchen look clean and neat.
- ❑ Don't neglect your closets. Keep the closet floor and shelf space as clear as possible. Remove 1/3 - 1/2 of the hanging clothes to give the feeling of spaciousness. Containerize what needs to remain. Paint the insides of closets and pantries.
- ❑ Numerous small rugs make rooms look smaller. Remove some if not all of them.
- ❑ Professional home stagers suggest removing anything personal that could distract or elicit strong negative feelings from potential buyers – especially religious, political and sexual objects. Pre-pack your personal items and the extra furniture into a portable storage unit that can be delivered directly to your new home.
- ❑ Consider traffic flow when staging your home. Prospective buyers should be able to move easily through every room in the house without needing to navigate around a piece of furniture.

Make it Look New

- ❑ One of the most important and least costly things you can do to stage your home is keep it clean. Not just “picked up,” but absolutely spotless. That means toothbrush or Q-Tip clean. This includes carpets, floors, drapes, windows, counter tops, bathrooms floors, sinks, faucets, walls, curtains, refrigerator – everything! While you're cleaning, make sure you reduce clutter as well. Clutter only makes the rooms look smaller.