



How Can "Home Staging" Help Sell My House?

Home Staging

Home staging involves the same commonsense advice that real estate agents have been giving home sellers for decades, but with some fresh additions. The process takes preparations for getting a house ready to sell a bit further, showcasing a house so that home buyers can visualize living there.

Professional home stagers are available for hire in many areas. Some home stagers work with your own furnishings to create a new look, while stagers in larger cities often have a warehouse of furniture and accessories to draw from. Some home stagers might expect you to purchase new items.

Will home staging help you sell your home? Most definitely yes, but if you're not ready to hire a professional, there are some things you can do to stage the home yourself.

Basic Preparations for Home Staging

- *Clean and spotless* are still musts for everything from floors to windows. Remember to clean the oven and other major appliances. Skylights should be crystal-clear.
- *No offensive odors*. They're the first thing buyers notice, and often a permanent turnoff.
- *Reduce clutter*. Put away small kitchen appliances and other items that are sitting on countertops and tables.
- *Move outside*. Clean the drain gutters. Buyers nearly always comment if gutters are full of leaves and it makes them question other maintenance issues. Store or organize items that make the yard look messy.

Vacant Homes - Get Ready for Home Staging

- Vacant homes often greet agents and buyers with a blast of stale or mildew-laden air. As soon as buyers smell mildew, they are out the door.

Have you ever noticed that during cold months the interior of a house without heat always feels colder than it is outside? Leaving the heat or air conditioning running while a home is on the market reduces odors and makes the house more inviting.

- Keep the lawn and landscaping tidy, even if you have to hire someone to do it.



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Home Staging - Don't Take It Personally

Separate yourself from the personal feelings you have about the house—it's not your home now, it's a commodity you intend to market.

Home staging can be accomplished in many ways, so trust your instincts. Try to evaluate the house as if you are seeing it for the first time. If you were a buyer, what would you think about the house?

- What changes would make immediate improvements?
- What are the house's best features and how can you show them off?
- Some home stagers like to create the look of 'comfort.' Others choose a popular decorating theme, such as the vintage, casual look of Shabby Chic.
- Pack away most of your family photos. Buyers should imagine *their* possessions in the home. (Some home staging experts do bring in vintage photos to help create a mood.)
- Pack up the bulk of large, personal collections, so that buyers don't get so interested in looking at them that they forget to look at the house.
- Remove excess furniture to make rooms more spacious. Clean and organize the closets. Store boxes in an out of the way location or rent a temporary storage unit so you can de-clutter every part of the house.
- Remove area rugs if they expose nice hardwood floors.
- Plants go hand-in-hand with nearly any home staging theme—living plants, not artificial versions.
- How about fresh paint. Are walls in the house dingy? Are the colors dated?
- Use home staging to create a mood:
 - Bake bread during showings
 - Classical music playing softly in the background is nice
 - Don't forget about curb appeal. I mentioned keeping the lawn nicely trimmed, but how about adding other elements to grab a buyer's attention before they walk in the door? The door itself can be a buyer-winner if it's adorned nicely.

Every house is different, and no one expects you to be a professional home stager. But taking the time to prepare the house may put extra dollars in your pocket, and in less than average time. Plus, a great overall impression is often enough to make a buyer more lenient about minor repairs that may be required. You want them to fall in love with the house as soon as they step inside.

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