

## Staging your home for a faster sale & a higher price!

There are many television shows today that focus on home staging. If you have not watched any, do yourself a favour and tune in. They all say the same thing: do not even consider putting your house on the market until you have taken a close look at its condition. Experienced agents know that you only have one shot at impressing potential buyers, so take some time to prepare for showings. You will be rewarded with a faster sale and a higher offer.

### Start with the Basics

- Everything from floors to windows must be spotless. Remember to clean the oven and other major appliances.
- Skylights should be crystal-clear, too.
- Kill the offensive odours. They're the first thing buyer's notice, and often a permanent turnoff.
- Eliminate clutter.
- Put away small kitchen appliances and other items that are sitting on countertops and tables.
- Remove photographs from tabletops.
- Organize the closets.

### Outside Tasks

- Clean the drain gutters. Buyers almost 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.
- Make your front entry inviting. Decorate it, paint the door or buy a new door. It's the first look at your house, so make it a good one.

### Tips for Vacant Homes

Vacant homes often greet agents and homebuyer's with a blast of stale or mildew-laden air. As soon as buyers smell mildew, they are out the door. Deal with the mildew before you list the house. Have you ever noticed that during colder 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 odours and makes the house more inviting. Keep the lawn and landscaping tidy, even if you have to hire someone to do it.

### Don't Take it Personally

Sellers your first step is to separate yourselves from any personal feelings you may have about your house: it's not your home now; it's a commodity you intend to market." As a seller, you must trust your own instincts. Try to evaluate the house as if you are seeing it for the first time.

- If you were a homebuyer, 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?

How about a look that says 'comfort or a popular decorating theme, such as the vintage, casual look of Shabby Chic.

### Create a Mood

Is there a mood that you'd like to create? If you're near water, how about breezy fabrics and blue-green colors that remind us of the beach? If you're in the mountains, perhaps you could go rustic. Help your clients study the house, brainstorm with them and ask them to speak to friends or family members about possible ideas.

### Pack It Up

Pack away most of your family photos. Buyers should be able to imagine their own possessions in the home. When homebuyers start deciding how their furniture will fit into your rooms, you're on your way to a contract. Pack up the bulk of large, personal collections, so that buyers don't get so distracted by them that they forget to look at the house.

### Make It More Spacious

- Remove excess furniture to make rooms appear 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.

### **Expose Desirable Features**

- Remove rugs if they're covering up nice hardwood floors.
- Remove heavy drapes that keep out natural light, especially if there's a great view out the windows.

### **Add Some Life**

Living (not artificial) plants go hand-in-hand with nearly any home staging theme.

### **Freshen Up**

How about a coat of fresh paint? Are walls in the house dingy? Are the colors dated? Should you clean curtains or other window ornaments?

### **Create a Mood**

- Bake bread during showings, or place a fresh loaf in a basket on the counter to create a warm and homey atmosphere.
- Classical music playing softly in the background is nice, but choose something that enhances the mood you are trying to create. For example, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, locals and out of town buyers react positively to Appalachian folk music playing softly in the background.

### **Essential Curb Appeal**

In addition to keeping the lawn nicely trimmed, there are other elements you can add to grab a buyer's attention before they walk in the door:

- Use outdoor lighting. It does wonders in the evenings when many homebuyers do drive-bys of properties.
- Buy an attractive doorknob set.
- Sweep the driveway; pressure wash the house or sidewalks if necessary.
- Enhance landscaping.

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 see it from the street.

Every house is different, and no one expects you to be a professional home stager--but taking the time to prepare will help put extra dollars in your pocket.

**For assistance in selling your home, contact:**

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