

Home Staging Tips

Studies have shown that most buyers make a decision about a house within 15 seconds of walking in the door. Many other buyers make a decision without ever getting out of their car. The message here is that first impressions are very, very important when selling a home.

Home Staging Tips for the Outside of Your Home.

The feeling that people get about the house from the street is called "curb appeal" and there are many home staging tips to improve it.

- 1)** Eliminate any and all clutter. Trim back overgrown bushes, and generally do a thorough clean-up.
- 2)** A fresh coat of paint goes a long, long way to making a house look good. Be careful not to pick too strong of a color. The idea is to appeal to the greatest number of buyers as possible.
- 3)** Fresh sod or landscaping can make a major difference.
- 4)** Eliminate any other negatives like oil stains on the driveway, an old T.V. antennae on the roof, etc.
- 5)** Putting out some some simple flowers in a pot on the front porch, and a new doormat can create an inviting feeling to buyers.

Home staging tips to improve the inside of the home also:

- 1)** Eliminate all clutter. Homes look bigger and more stylish without any clutter. Many stagers have the clients move out entirely, and the stagers bring in their own items. Take all of the pictures off of the refrigerator, remove any stacks of paper on your desk, etc. Also, having a professional house cleaning service come in and do a thorough once-over is almost always well worth the cost.
- 2)** Fresh paint can make a real difference. It is the frosting on the cake. Use colors that will appeal to the greatest number of people. You may prefer something bolder or outrageous for yourself, but when selling a house, neutral-colored interior paints work best. Also, replace any worn carpets or other flooring. If you have hardwood floors that are in rough shape, having them refinished can often return many times the cost of the refinishing, and sell the home much faster.

3) In many parts of the country homes are shown with no window coverings at all. This creates an open and airy feeling.

4) Make sure there are no unpleasant pet or cooking odors. Some sellers now bake cookies for the open house, creating a warm feeling in they buyer's mind.

5) Use size-appropriate furniture. If you have a small bedroom, don't put a king-sized bed in there. Conversely, if you have a huge master suite, putting a single bed in there would look unbalanced.

6) Leave the lights on even during the day to make the home as bright as possible.

All of these home staging tips are really geared towards making the whole package seem as pleasant and comfortable as possible. One would think that buyers buy with their heads, but it's often their hearts that make the decision!

Staging can range from a simple consultation with the sellers about how to reduce clutter, to completely running a project, including painting, landscaping, flooring and, of course, staging the interior of the home with furniture, plants, artwork accessories.

Artwork and Staging

Certainly everyone knows the importance of de-personalizing your house when it's on the market. And that means removing the family photos you have hanging on the walls and sitting on shelves and tabletops. But what do you put in its place? And is that the only art you should remove?

Let's answer the last question first. If you have anything hanging on your walls that is personal, tells the potential buyer too much about you and your family or may be controversial, remove it. That includes diplomas, certificates, awards - anything with the name of a family member. It's also a good idea to remove religious items you may have hanging. I realize this may be difficult, so do what feels right for you and

your family. Just keep in mind you are giving potential buyers personal information that may or may not impact them emotionally.

If you have an amazing art collection, you probably want to pare it down. You don't want buyers to become so focused on what you have on your walls that they stop seeing the house. Choose a few appropriate pieces and hang them where they will draw the potential buyers' eyes to the features of the house. That may mean a lovely piece above the fireplace. Or perhaps one over the sofa to draw them into the space. Then pack the rest away in preparation for the move.

And certainly if you have any artwork that might be considered controversial by some people, remove it. While it may be beautiful and have a great deal of meaning for you, if it distracts the potential buyers in any way, it takes the emphasis from the house - which is what you are selling.

So what about those blank places left when the artwork has been removed? It's not always necessary to replace everything you removed when preparing your house for sale. If the space feels okay blank, then leave it. The room will have a more open feeling and perhaps even feel larger. But if it's in a place that's important to highlight (such as above the fireplace), you definitely want to replace whatever was there. Just keep in mind that wherever and whatever you hang should generally highlight the features of the house or draw the potential buyers' eyes to those features. Be sure not to over decorate - let the buyer envision their things hanging on your walls!

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