



Top 10 Home Staging Tips!

- 1. Curb Appeal** – The first impression you make is critical. What does it say about your house? Minor details can make a big difference. As a realtor is fumbling with the lock box, your potential buyer is noticing the little details; fresh paint on the door, the condition of the hardware, the decorative touches on the mailbox. Fresh mulch, clean edging and proper lawn maintenance are important details that will provide a positive first impression. To a potential buyer, the exterior of the house is a sneak preview of what's inside.
- 2. Repairs-** Now is the time to take care of the long-neglected “honey do” list. Your home should shine with pride of ownership, because creating the impression that the house is well maintained will bring you a better offer. Overlooking small repairs may lead buyers to assume you haven't taken care of the big things, and this is when they will begin actively looking for problems that they might otherwise not notice. A home inspector recently confessed that he will spend more time in homes that have obvious neglect. How will your home fare under that sort of additional scrutiny?
- 3. Paint** - Step away from the paint brush! If your painting skills aren't top-notch, call a professional. The quality of the job is just as important as the colors you pick, so don't waste your effort and money if you haven't the time—or skill—to do the job right. A home stager can help you pick out colors that will work with existing carpet or cabinetry, and can improve the visual flow of your space with colors that transition gracefully from one area to the next. The right color can also create an environment neutral enough to appeal to a broad range of buyers. Bold colors can be dramatic...or they can be a deal breakers. Why take a chance?
- 4. Wallpaper-** Just say “no!” Ditto with bold colors and “theme” rooms. Your personal style, however tasteful, will most likely not be the taste of the prospective buyer. Décor needs to be neutral enough that it can accommodate any furnishing style without major changes. Further, using a variety of different textures or colors of carpet and flooring can negatively impact the visual flow of the house. New floor coverings can make the difference between receiving an offer and taking a price reduction that will cost you far more than new flooring.
- 5. Furniture-** Tasteful furniture doesn't have to cost a lot. If you need furniture for your new home, buy it now. Furniture mismatches and hand-me-downs make for poor flow and often occupy valuable square footage, both physically and visually. This is a great time to “hand-me-up” to your favorite charity, and get a tax deduction. When it comes to furnishings, keep the best, get rid of the rest. If new furniture isn't an option, you can slipcover classic or transitional upholstered pieces and paint dated wood pieces for a fresh look that won't break the bank.

If you have too many “matchy” pieces in your décor, it may be time to edit a few. Don't purchase an entire set (even if it is a deal) of bedroom or living room furniture if all the pieces do

not fit in the room. A few non-matching accent pieces will complement the space and add interest and dimension.

6. **Clutter**-You CAN take it with you...for a price. Think about the real dollars associated with boxes and storage, plus the time, energy and cost of moving all that “stuff”. Do you really NEED it? Maybe it’s time to redefine “need”. Getting rid of unused or tired items will allow you to move with ease into your new space. Most importantly, your current house will feel more spacious and be easier to maintain while on the market.
7. **Style**- Does your design style need a shrink? Does your home have multiple personalities? Too many design styles leave a room confusing and lacking drama. It can be difficult to make pieces of varying scale and color work together in same room. “Eclectic” is a great look when done tastefully, but pulling it off can be challenging, even for the pros. A few antique pieces make for great accents, but too many pose a challenge and can make a home feel like grandma lives there.

Your home’s architecture should determine style of the furnishings. Stagers and decorators often choose “transitional” pieces because they will work with almost any architectural style or period, and well with existing pieces.

8. **Carpet in Kitchens and Baths** - Yuck! Need I say more?
9. **Odors**- You can’t sell it if you can smell it! Because our olfactory senses quickly become conditioned to smells, the homeowner is probably not in the best position to assess the smell (or preferably the lack there-of) of the home. Get an objective opinion from a fastidious friend, keeping in mind that women have a more highly developed sense of smell than men. Common sources of unpleasant odors are cooking methods (frying and spices), pets, damp basements, smoking, and infants. If you detect a problem, identify the source, and let a stager help you choose the best strategy to eradicate the odor.
10. **Hire it done!** - It is important to be realistic about your skill level. Even if your skills could land you a show on HGTV, keep in mind the amount of time it will take you to do any given task...and then double your estimate. Your best bet is to **get help** from friends and family or “hire it out”. Keep your expectations reasonable and use your time for the things you’re confident doing, or that only you can do.

More Advice.....

What’s outlined above is not part of the cost of selling a home. It is the cost of **living** in a home. I encourage every homeowner to maintain their house while they are living in it. Invest at least \$1000.00 per year for minor updates and repairs. Why not enjoy the updates while living in the home, and be prepared should anything arise that causes a change in housing needs? Not keeping up with updates and repairs will cost more in the long-run. Waiting until the house is up for sale to complete repairs and updates isn’t the cost of selling...it’s the deferred cost of maintenance could have been handled over the years...

In this market, time is money. If it takes six months to get a house ready for market, a seller might lose an additional 5% to 10% (depending on community) in value. So it pays to make a plan and get the jobs done as quickly as possible. A professional stager can help sellers save money and time by identifying the priorities, determining what should stay or go, and assisting with finding contractors

or other professionals, as needed. Today's real estate market means sellers need to hit the ground running with the best possible "product". Remember, since the cost of staging is always less than your first price reduction, a professional stager will save valuable time...and money.

© Darla Rowley, Impactids.com, www.impactids.com