



Staging Tips to Prepare the Home for Market

Disassociate Yourself with Your Home

One of the biggest challenges for every homeowner is to look at your home, which you have invested many years and wonderful times in, as a house to be sold, versus your home. A house is a product, and should be marketed and sold like any other product which has competition in the marketplace. Make the mental decision to "let go" of your emotions and focus on the fact that the new buyers for your home will change most of it to fit their tastes and needs. So, let's make it as easy as possible for the new buyer to envision themselves in their new home. Pack up appliance warranties and info and put them into a large envelope marked "Give to the new owners". Stand in each room and decide what you will do differently in your new home. For example, you might turn the kids' room into an office. By planning the new look for your current rooms you can begin to disassociate yourself with your home.

De-Personalize

Everyone wants to keep all those personal treasures and photographs in our home, but when it comes time to sell, this can keep the buyer from being able to envision their own treasures. You want buyers to imagine their own photos on the walls, and they can't do that if yours are there! In fact, when in doubt, less is always better when it comes to selling your home. So, pack up 90% of the personal photographs and family heirlooms.



Inside Your Home...

General

- Determine if there are hardwood floors under the carpet. Many of today's buyers will buy a home with hardwood floors before a similar home without hardwood floors, or even pay more for a home with hardwood floors.
- Remove pieces of furniture that block or hamper paths and walkways and put them in storage.
- Remove extra books from bookcases. The bookcases should not be crammed with books. You can add flowers or other items to the bookcase to make it look attractive.
- Remove extra leaves from your dining room table to make the room appear larger.
- Rearrange or remove some of the furniture if necessary. As owners, many times we have too much furniture in a room. This is wonderful for our own personal enjoyment, but when it comes to selling we need to thin out as much as possible to make rooms appear larger.
- Pack everything that you will not have to use. About 50% of everything can be packed. 50% of linens, clothes, toys, extra stuff, extra kitchen stuff. Pack up those knickknacks.
- Store stuff in garage or rent storage unit. An 8 X 8 unit might cost \$50-\$70 a month.
- Take down or rearrange certain pictures or objects on walls. Patch and paint if necessary. Or purchase some new pictures and enjoy them now as well as in your new home.
- Review the inside of the house room by room to determine which rooms need painting.
- Replace burnt out bulbs throughout home.



General, continued

- Rent a pressure washer and spray down sidewalks and exterior of home. Especially the front door and front porch area. The first impression is very important.
- Clean out cobwebs throughout home.
- Re-caulk tubs, showers and sinks if needed.
- Polish chrome faucets and mirrors each week.
- Vacuum daily or at least one time every three days.
- Dust furniture, mini blinds, ceiling fan blades and light fixtures.
- Bleach dingy grout.
- Linger in the doorway of every single room and imagine how your house will look to a buyer.

Buyers love to snoop and will open closet and cabinet doors. We don't want everything to fall out when they open the doors. Plus, for many buyers, they associate how organized you are with how well the home is maintained. So, organized closets say that you probably take good care of the rest of the house as well.

De-Clutter!

People collect an amazing quantity of junk. Consider this: if you haven't used it in over a year, you probably don't need it. If you don't need it, why not donate it or throw it away?

Put essential items used daily in a small box that can be stored in a closet when not in use. This is an easy way to keep those items off of the vanity each day, but allows you to easy access the things that you need each morning and night.



Remove/Replace Favorite Items.

If you want to take window coverings, built-in appliances or fixtures with you, remove them now. If the chandelier in the dining room once belonged to your great grandmother, take it down. Buyers don't want what they don't see, but once you tell a buyer that they can not have something they want, it can cost you the sale of the home. Pack those items or replace them, if necessary.

Kitchen

- Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops. If it hasn't been used for three months... put it away! Remove large appliances that are not used daily.
- Clean refrigerator and stove, as well as under them.
- Clean and clear refrigerator fronts of messages, pictures, etc. (A sparse kitchen helps the buyer mentally move their own things into your kitchen.)
- Neatly stack dishes in cabinets, and again, remove extra dishes that you do not use each day.
- Apply orange oil to cabinets that appear dry, which will renew their original luster.
- Put out a large bowl of fruit such as polished apples, bright oranges, luscious grapes. They are healthy for you but also add color to the room.
- Display a colorful and fun cookbook on the counter.



Bathrooms

In the bathroom, remove any unnecessary items from countertops, tubs, shower stalls and commode tops. Keep only your most needed cosmetics, brushes, perfumes etc., in one small group on the counter, or place them in a box or container which you can pull out at night and in the morning when you are getting ready. Coordinate towels to one or two colors only.

- Hang up fresh towels. Bathroom towels look great fastened with ribbon and bows.

- Keep a room freshener in the bathroom. Odors are a no-no.

Bedrooms

- Organize your clothes. Hang shirts together, buttoned and facing the same direction. Pants together, dresses, etc. Pack all clothes that you do not need for the next 6 months to make the closet appear larger. Line up shoes.

- Splurge and buy a new bedspread or comforter and matching pillows and curtains in your master bedroom. Pick the colors that you would like to have in your new home. Paint the room, buy a few nice photos. The master bedroom is the most important of the bedrooms with regard to looks.

- Keep beds made each day.



Outside Your Home...

- Go outside and look at the front of your home. Does it look appealing? Do you want to go inside? Does the house welcome you? This is the first thing that the buyer sees and it is very important to make the entry of your home warm and appealing. Check paint condition of the house — especially the front door and trim. “CURB APPEAL REALLY WORKS!”

- Go around the perimeter of the house and move all clutter, garbage, and items that are not being used.

- Check gutters. Make sure they are swept and cleaned.

- Look at all plants... prune bushes and trees. Weed and then mulch all planting areas. Keep lawn freshly cut and fertilized. Remove any dead plants or shrubs. You can hire someone to do a lawn clean up in most areas for less than \$100. Plant lots of annuals in warm weather, and put up bird feeders in the yard.

- Clear patios or decks of all small items. such as small planters, flower pots, charcoal, barbecues, toys. etc. (Put them in the garage or a storage unit.)

- Plant yellow flowers or group flower pots together. Yellow evokes a buying emotion. Marigolds are inexpensive.

- Make sure visitors can clearly read your house number, or buy some nice new house numbers and have them installed on your home or garage.

- Clean out the garage as well! Store everything neatly and on shelves or in cabinets. Invest in shelving and storage units for the garage if needed.



Staging Tips to Engage the Senses

Buying a home is an emotional decision.

If you engage all the senses, your home will sell faster!

First, let's engage the visual senses:

- Garden seat, bird bath, or arched trellis with clinging flowers in yard.

- Set up dining room table with placemats, cloth napkins, nice china and crystal glasses. Get ideas from home decorating magazines. Have fun! Buy something new and take it with you to your new home.

- Set up serving trays with bud vase and crystal on the beds in bedrooms that are not used daily.

- Leave on certain lights during the day. During “showings” turn on all lights and lamps.

- Make all beds everyday. Give children an incentive to keep their rooms clean.

- Keep all toilet seats down.

- Make sure towels are hung properly.

- Make sure all crumbs are cleaned from counter tops after meals.

- Don't leave dirty clothes on the floor and put all your belongings away.



Next, engage the sense of smell

- Burn candles in home during showing. But only if you are home.
- Use air fresheners throughout the home.
- Put fresh flowers in a vase in the kitchen.
- Keep pre-made cookie dough in the refrigerator and put cookies in the oven for showings.
- Burn a fire in the fireplace for showings.

Now, let's engage the sense of sound

- Play classical music all day on the stereo. Turn TV off for showings.
- Put music on in the main rooms for showings. Keep it low, so the buyers and their Realtor can talk without shouting. Invest in portable CD players for the bedrooms and play classical music or something relaxing for showings. Enjoy the music at night when you are going to sleep. Let children play their favorite music at night as well.



Tips Designed to Help you Keep Your Sanity While Selling Your Home

- Carpets professionally cleaned the first week it is on the market.
- Home professionally cleaned every two weeks on Fridays.
- Hire yard crew for cleanup - \$100.
- Hire professional window cleaners to clean all windows (Usually \$75-\$125 for most homes).
- Hire a professional Home Stager for \$500- \$3,500 in most areas. That includes many of the items that they use to stage the home for sale.
- Hire someone to cut and bag grass each week, as well as pull weeds and trim.
- Empower children to get involved in keeping the house clean. Get them excited about their new room, or the new yard. Perhaps let them buy items for their new room now, and decorate their room to be what they want in their new room. Children are like adults. When it is new and they like it, they are more likely to take care of it. Buy a new basketball hoop and tell them that it will go up at the new home.



Staging Tips to Engage the Buyer While They Are in Your Home

- Do not follow the agents or offer comments during the showing. Realtors are trained professionals who know what is important to the buyers. But let the Realtor know where you will be if they have any questions.

- Purchase a nice new door mat for the front porch.

- Purchase a new wreath for the front door. Hang a wreath on the inside of the front door as well as the outside of the front door.

- Purchase new sofa pillows if needed. Use a contrasting color to make a bold statement.

- Purchase new rugs for all doors.

- Purchase new silk floral arrangements for the home.

- Purchase a few new pictures for your home if needed.

- New glasses, dishes, place mats, napkins, etc. for the dining room table to setup and keep up!



- Have each member of the family write what they will miss most about their home. Have those comments displayed throughout the home in the appropriate rooms. You can print them out on the computer in color and a fancy font. You can then frame and mat the comments.

- Think of a friend who has a beautiful home. Always looks comfortable but well kept. Great accessories, nice colors, very trendy. They might even have impeccable taste in their clothes. They have a knack for accessorizing. We all have one of those friends who can “put it all together”. Call that friend and ask them for their help. Ask if they will spend the day shopping with you to add the necessary items to your home to “stage it for a quick sale”. Most friends love to shop with someone else’s money. You can choose the stores that are in your budget. Offer to buy them lunch for their time and help.

- If you do not have a friend who has that flair for decorating, then you can hire a professional stager or as part of my full marketing package, I will provide someone to get your home “staged” for the market.

- Homes that are properly staged for sale, sell at an average of 7% higher than homes that are not staged. They also sell in almost ½ the time as homes that are not staged.

- This is the secret of getting your home sold fast, and for a better price than other homes!



Home Enhancement Tips for the Handy Seller

If you are handy, here are some things that you can do to enhance the sale of the home. If you are not handy, but these repairs are needed, you should hire someone to do them.

- Put dimmer switches on the main rooms.
- Paint over dark or dated wallpaper using primer paint, and then painting over it. Of course, stripping the wallpaper is preferred, but with the right tools you can paint over it and it looks great.
- Paint cheap molding with white enamel paint. It looks great and lightens up the room.
- Replace cracked floor or counter tiles.
- Patch holes in walls and repaint the walls.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Fix doors that don't close properly and kitchen drawers that jam.
- Paint the garage floor with special paint for concrete floors.
- Consider painting your walls neutral colors. Light colors make the room look larger, but you can accessorize with dark bold colors such as burgundy, deep green, brown or crimson.