



Staging a Home for Sale

The old adage “don’t judge a book by its cover” doesn’t apply to real estate. In real estate first impressions matter. Qualified Buyers initially screen a prospective house for sale based on a “drive-by” inspection. If a house for sale has no curb appeal most buyers will eliminate it from consideration without even looking inside. For this reason, the first phase of staging a home for sale is an exterior makeover.

Exterior Staging

- o Mow lawn and edge walkways weekly.
- o Clean all window and door glass panes.
- o Power wash siding and/or fencing.
- o Clean up debris.
- o Pull dead plants or shrubs
- o Spruce up front porch/back porch: add table, rocking chairs and greenery.
- o Nighttime lighting- add exterior solar powered lights for after dark curb appeal.
- o Remove offensive overgrown trees or bushes.
- o Trim remaining greenery, especially anything blocking a window.
- o Add decorative lawn ornaments or landscaping center or side yard design.
- o Paint front of home or refresh paint on garage door, front door, shutters & trim.
- o Buy a new mailbox, doormat and address placard.
- o Eliminate planters, barbecue grills or toys from deck (restain and/or repair deck).
- o Recoat blacktop driveway with sealer.
- o Replace damaged soffits, gutters and/or leaders.
- o Replace, repaint or re-stain fence.
- o Repair chimney, roof or porch area.
- o Clean up rust spots or streaks on down spouts.
- o Cesspool covers should not be visible

The second phase of staging a home is the interior. Staging a home’s interior is all about making it inviting to the largest number of potential buyers. Staging won’t make a home sell for more than it’s worth, but it can set your listing apart and boost the sale price to the top of the range for comparables.

Since nearly 90% of buyers start their search on the Internet, staging is a great way to make sure online photos or video tours stand out from the crowd. This cuts the time your listing is on the market and gets you paid quicker.



Interior Staging

Clean:

- o Make house spic and span from top to bottom.
- o Discard any unwanted trash in or on property (especially attic and garage), steam the carpets, shine the fixtures and windows, vacuum the basement and sweep the garage.

Appliances:

- o Confirm all appliances and hood ranges are clean and in working order.
- o If you have a self-cleaning stove, a microwave, dishwasher, washer or dryer, they should be empty and cleaned prior to any showings.

Appliances can make or break a sale. Inferior quality appliances can kill a sale deal, while top quality appliances can cement a deal.

Repair:

- o Fix holes in walls and any leak stains on ceiling.
- o Confirm the doorbell and garage door opener are properly working.

Painting:

- o Paint all rooms in a light, un-offensive neutral color. Using one neutral color throughout makes the house appear bigger especially where adjacent rooms meet. Different colors in bedrooms chop up space and make the house less appealing to tenants.
- o Garage: paint all walls and seal garage floor with a concrete sealer.
- o Oil tank: paint and seal (gray color works best)

Lighting:

- o Confirm that all permanent light fixtures work properly and have fresh light bulbs.
- o Make sure all rooms are properly illuminated. As a general rule you should aim for a total of 100 watts per 50 square feet of living space.
- o Make sure you check all three types of lighting: ambient (general or overhead), task (under cabinet or reading) and accent (table and wall).

Declutter:

Less is more when it comes to selling a house. A decluttered home looks bigger and sells quicker. You want buyers imagining themselves living there without all of your furniture, or taste getting in the way of their buying decision.

- o Remove large bulky furniture (rent a storage unit).
- o Remove countertop appliances and cutting boards in kitchen
- o Remove cosmetics and grooming supplies in bathroom
- o Replace family photos with wall décor
- o Remove toys in bedrooms or basement
- o Clean out garage and/or sheds



Flooring:

- o Fix damaged hard wood floors and/or restain
- o Replace worn out or stained carpet or steam clean carpet
- o Re-grout and seal ceramic tile floors

Bathroom:

- o Add fresh grout in tub/shower, new towels and mats
- o Install new toilet guts in all toilets
- o Exhaust fan should be clean and in working order
- o Clean toilet, P-Trap, sink, mirror, shower door
- o Declutter bathroom cabinet

Kitchen:

- o Reface cabinets and/or appliances
- o Clean sink, P-Trap, counters, backsplash
- o Buy new faucet and/or strainer for sink
- o Declutter all draws and cabinets

Aroma:

Bad odors kill deals, especially smoke, pets and musky water. A house that smells good attracts quality buyers and sells quicker .

- o Add fresh flowers or use deodorizers like Renuzit or Febreze plug-ins.
- o To eliminate smoke and animal odors, you must paint the walls.
- o To eliminate musky water smell in an unfinished basement area you should paint and seal exposed walls and floors with Kilz or Zinsser mold killing primer and use a dehumidifier to filter air. This will help make the space look bigger and eliminate water smell.

Decorate:

Your goal should be to appeal to the masses. A properly staged house should appeal to as many buyers as possible. You should avoid themes that distract and alienate buyers, like western or eclectic motifs.

- o Place a few elements of décor in strategic spots around the house.
Example: Arrange fresh flowers in the kitchen and place crisp towels in the bathrooms.
- o Leave custom window treatments in place if they are stylish and in good condition.

Staging is by far the most cost effective way to maximize first impressions, find qualified buyers and attract multiple offers. To sell a house for maximum market value it is vital to effectively stage the home to enhance the buyer's perception of a home's worth.

