

Staging A Home for Buyers

Home staging is the practice of presenting a property in the best possible light to buyers, and if executed properly can help to sell a home. The goal of home staging, according to *U.S. News and World Report*, is to allow home buyers to imagine themselves as residents rather than guests and envision their own possessions and daily lives inside the home.

In order to make this possible, one expert recommends that home sellers go through each room and separate possessions into those that will be used as part of staging the room, and those that will not. The belongings in the second category should be removed from the room and stored elsewhere. While home sellers may find a room feels bare when staged, clutter makes rooms seem smaller to home buyers and may negatively affect their opinions.

Here are some tips for staging a house:

Inside the house

Removing items from the home

Clearing away unnecessary objects - from tiny knick-knacks to unused furnishings - is vital to improving the aesthetic feel of a home seller's interior, *Realtor Magazine* reports. A "de-cluttered" home can help home buyers better imagine themselves and their belongings in the seller's home, according to *Realtor Magazine*. Baby pictures, family photos and other extremely personal belongings should be packed away. The absence of such personal items may make homeowners more comfortable with allowing prospective buyers to see their home and help home buyers imagine it as their own.

Home sellers may want to rent a storage unit or find someplace else to pack nonessential items for a while. Books, holiday decorations and other belongings that are not needed on a regular basis can all be packed up. When moving out, home sellers will need to do this eventually anyway, so it does not create additional work.

Preparing rooms for visitors

One expert told *U.S. News and World Report* that cleaning, while obvious, may be more important than some home sellers realize. Prospective home buyers may react more pleasantly to imagining themselves living in a home if it is already clean.

When they see a dirty home, on the other hand, they may wonder if it is a sign of neglect. If so, they may be afraid of a home having problems that are not easily visible.

One area home sellers should focus on cleaning prior to open houses is the kitchen. According to *Realtor Magazine*, papers, mail and small items often pile up on countertops and kitchen tables. Removing this clutter by throwing out unimportant items, storing away the remaining articles and wiping the kitchen area clean should make the living space more appealing to home buyers.

Another area home sellers should pay attention to is the bathroom. From the shower and tub to the sink and toilet, home sellers should spend time cleaning up the lavatories. A squalid, grimy restroom could become a big turnoff for some home buyers, according to *Realtor Magazine*. This possible effect on home buyers makes tidying up the bathroom of utmost importance for home sellers.

Another factor to keep in mind is furniture. Room arrangements can be altered to suit a family's lifestyle, such as converting a living room into an office or library. When staging a home, it is recommended to return these rooms to their original purpose and make it clear from the furnishings and remaining decorations what that purpose is.

Outside the house

Once the interior of a home seller's property is completely clean, *Realtor Magazine* reports they should turn their attention to the home's exterior. A premier way to begin this process is to walk around the house's perimeter to gauge what needs fixing and cleaning.

On the ground around a house, home sellers should ensure no wood scraps, branches, building materials, tools, toys or other items are lying about. Just like the inside of one's home, *Realtor Magazine* reports home buyers want to envision what the yard would look like if they were living there. Having possessions scattered across the yard may turn some home buyers away.

Additionally, ensuring plants and flowers look in tip-top shape is essential, according to *Realtor Magazine*. Dead or unsightly plants could be unappealing to home buyers. Also, poor lawn condition may need some tending to before allowing visitors to an open house. A fresh-looking yard could be the key to getting an offer.

Taking the time and putting in the effort to make a home look clean and crisp could substantially improve home sellers' chances of getting a property off the market sooner than competing homes for sale in the area.