

Tips for Home Sellers

Seller Guide: 10 Hardcore Staging Tactics

Today, homes don't sell themselves. To win the battle for buyer attention and bring in the best offers, you have to play an active role in marketing your home. If you're serious about selling for top-dollar and in record time, follow these sure-fire tips for staging successfully:

1. Check out the competition.

The first step to selling success is to find out what you're up against. Before and during the selling process, visit other property open houses to see how your home measures up.

When you're out, here are a few things to note

- Property condition
- Highlighted features
- Move-in readiness
- Staging tactics that will work for you

2. Create a staging plan.

Great staging requires that you cover your bases like a pro every time. Whether you hire a professional stager or work with your agent to do-it-yourself, put together a staging plan complete with a checklist and photos of what your home looks like when it's ready to show.

Follow the plan before every showing to make sure you put your best foot forward.

3. Get (and follow) professional advice.

If you're serious about selling you need to enlist objective professional help. Ask your agent about his or her staging experience or if he or she has a professional stager or designer to recommend.



Data has shown that homes prepared by professional stagers sell for more. Getting an unbiased review from someone who sees your property "as a product" can be invaluable.

4. Eliminate the excess.

Before you head out to buy new accessories to "spruce up your home," focus first on items you can remove that will enhance a buyer's experience.

The best signs of things you should eliminate are the things that you aren't using and those you're planning to get rid of before you move.

5. Pre-pack personal items.

Depersonalizing and decluttering are the most critical steps of staging, but they can be a challenge. To make it easier, start by pre-packing and storing away the items you won't need until after the move and anything personal (like family photos) that might prevent buyers from envisioning the home as their own.



Quick Tip

When it comes to eliminating excess, check for major eyesores that may have buyer value beneath the surface.

For example: Are your old carpets covering up beautiful wood floors?

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6. Clear off the counter space.

When it comes to the tops of your tables and counters, less is more. Clear off your counter spaces except for the occasional decorative or functional pieces (clocks or vases of flowers).

Remember, your goal is to help buyers see themselves in a home and they can't do that with your stuff in the way.

7. Clean inside and out.

Everyone thinks they know what "clean" means when it comes to their own home. Here's where an agent or professional stager can be super helpful. Invite them in to get an outsiders opinion on how to make the nooks and crannies you've forgotten about glisten.

Also remember, the best selling homes tend to have garages, basements, side yards, and other outdoor spaces that are just as immaculate as their kitchens, bathrooms and master bedrooms.

8. Dive into the trim and details early.

It's tempting, when staging, to do the big jobs - painting walls, polishing floors, moving furniture - and to run out of steam and cash before the little details get handled.

Some of the least expensive home staging projects can carry the most powerful buyer-impressing payload. Here are few details to tackle to make your listing standout

- Clean or paint baseboards and other trim
- Ensure locks, doors, and drawers work properly
- Paint or replace outdoor accents like house numbers or mailboxes



9. Shoot sample photos

The first contact most house hunters have with your property is from a computer or mobile phone. Making sure your property presents well there is a big step toward sold.

Before you show off your home to the public, take a look at it from their view. Use your camera or Smartphone to take sample photos and view them on your computer.

10. Be brutally honest with yourself.

When you think you're done preparing your home, think again. It's not overkill to go out on a Sunday afternoon, walk through a few Open Houses, get back in the car and drive home to walk through it like a buyer would. Ask yourself: What can you edit or declutter? What is distracting? What stops a buyer from seeing the possibilities for their own family here?

If all else fails, take your agent with you. Arm him or her with a packet of post-it notes and give them free rein to stick one on anything that should be removed before showing the home. Then get that stuff out of there!

11. Congratulate yourself on a job well done!