

# How Staging Your Home Can Help You Make a Sale

As a homeowner, you know that there are certain aspects of a home that can't be changed, like its location. You also know that some upgrades, like adding a deck or renovating a bathroom, don't come without major costs. When you're selling your home, though, there are some low-cost or even free tweaks that will give buyers a positive first impression.

## Get an objective opinion

Don't skip the basics that will make your home more attractive to would-be buyers. Keep the yard mowed and trimmed and put a fresh coat of paint on the front door, and you'll be on your way to boosting the curb appeal of your property. Cleaning the inside of your home and putting clutter away will ensure your house looks its best whenever a buyer shows up.

You can take the presentation of your home one step further—possibly resulting in it selling quickly and for the highest possible price—with home staging. Staging helps you make a property more appealing.

Staging works best when a professional evaluates your home to give you tips to make it more attractive to a wide variety of buyers. While it may seem like something you can do on your own, many people have a hard time seeing their own home with the detachment necessary to make good staging decisions. You may think your wall filled with family photos shows the nice personal touch of a loving home. However, a home stager can objectively point out that such a display makes it that much harder for prospective buyers to picture themselves living in the property.

## Where do you find an expert?

Your REALTOR® may have experience staging homes or may have some suggestions to get you started. Or, they may provide a list of staging professionals for you to consider hiring. As with hiring other professionals, you can ask friends for referrals, and you should inquire about the stager's references to find out if those people were happy with the service. Also, make sure to ask the home stager about fees, what services will be provided and if you will receive a free estimate.

## Staging is not the same as decorating

Home staging may involve removing some of your furnishings, making changes to the décor or moving some furniture around. Some stagers may bring in new furniture or suggest accessories that can make a difference. You might also get advice about painting a room a different color.

But remember this: Staging your home is not the same as decorating it. When you hire someone to help decorate your home, that person should take into account your preferences and lifestyle.

When it comes to staging a home, though, it's all about helping potential buyers focus on the property's best features while minimizing the less attractive ones. Knowing that, don't be offended if the home stager recommends changes to the master bedroom that you spent so long decorating to your own tastes. When you put your house on the market, it's time to think about the people who will consider buying your home. The better the impression your house makes on buyers, the closer you will be to making a sale.