

Marcia Smart's:



Guide on why you need to Stage to Sell

WHAT IS HOME STAGING?

a. The process of preparing your house to sell, with the goal of getting the most money in the shortest amount of time possible, by making it a stand-out in the real estate marketplace.

b. In interior design and redesign, the goal is to create an environment that reflects the style and taste of the home's owner. The focus of staging is to make the house more marketable by creating the most appealing home to the greatest number of prospective buyers. Instead of reflecting a unique style, a staged home should be just impersonal enough as to not infringe on a *buyer's* own sense of style.



WHAT TYPES OF HOME STAGING ARE THERE?

a. "Finishing Touch or Fluffing" – Is usually accomplished after the house has completed any major repairs, painting or de-cluttering objectives. Decorative techniques, such as adding plants, minor furniture arranging, accenting with accessories, are accomplished in a minimal amount of time to give the home a finished, pulled-together look. This should also be done right before an Open House or home viewing.

b. "Redesign Staging" – This home preparation process may encompass the full range of staging services from de-cluttering, furniture editing and re-arranging, art and accessory placement and creating a "model home" environment, using the homeowners existing items. Enhancement of client's furnishings can also be provided by the staging professional through purchase or rental.

c. "Empty Home-Staging" - In this scenario, all furnishings must be brought in and decoratively arranged to give the appearance of a lived-in atmosphere.

WHY IS HOME STAGING SO IMPORTANT?

a. You are competing with new construction homes.

1. Buyers are usually looking for a home that does not require any repairs prior to move-in.
2. Buyers are looking for a house that is “updated” in all aspects; including paint, flooring, appliances, kitchens and bathrooms.
3. Buyers do not want patch-work or extensive clean-up landscaping on the outside of the house in an established neighborhood.

b. Today's buyer is savvy.

1. They have usually purchased before.
2. They are busy, usually two-incomes, needing to quickly get on with their lives.
3. They will ask to see a staged home first, knowing that it will show best, saving time and effort.

C. Top dollar is all about first impressions

1. You prepare other things to make a good first impression; yourself for a job interview or class reunion, your car detailed to sell for top dollar. But when it comes to "detailing" the house, preparation falls short ... and yet, the home is your most valuable asset!
2. First impressions most often start online. 90% of potential buyers check the internet before previewing a home “in-person”. If they don't like what they see, they will often just scroll-down to the next listing and not even bother to ask their agent for an in-home visit.
3. It's also important to remember that first impressions start at the curb. You want the potential buyer to come in, not drive on. Any realtor will tell you there are times when a potential buyer will not even get out of the car just because of the poor initial impression made by the outside of the house.

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d. Home selling is an emotional experience for both the buyer and the seller.

1. As a seller, you may be sad about leaving, tied in to family history, like your neighborhood or be overwhelmed by the entire moving experience.
2. Pricing your home is also emotional. Many sellers want the price to reflect personal memories and sentimental values. Unfortunately, memories don't qualify as a bargaining feature in the real estate game. But appealing to a *buyer's* emotions is what will make a difference.
3. The buyer is looking for a home that is emotionally "them". They want to connect immediately with a home. They want to walk in and say "This is it!"
4. Buyers feel more comfortable inside a prepared home that invites them to stay longer. The longer the buyer is inside your home, the better your chances of getting an offer.

SMART TIP: Although sometimes difficult, when a house is for sale, it must be thought of as a "product" being sold in a market; in this case, the Real Estate "market". Once a homeowner recognizes and accepts the house is now a commodity, the anxiety is taken out of thorough home preparation.

Remember: ***Home ---- house ----product.***

*"Typically, a potential buyer has made up their mind ten seconds after they step in the front door. They were already forming an opinion as they pulled into your driveway! That really doesn't leave too much room for fault. The real estate industry often stresses, **the first impression is the key factor in selling your home.**"*

*~ Jan Van Horne of Coldwell Banker Burnet Realty
in Eden Prairie, Minnesota ~*

AS A SELLER, WHY STAGE A HOME?

a. To create a sense of urgency. The best looking home on the block tells the buyer "this one won't last long; better make an offer quick!"

b. To give the buyer that emotional connection. When selling a home, you are also selling a lifestyle...but not *your* lifestyle. The buyer wants to picture *themselves* living in the home. So, **de-personalizing** the home is one of the first steps in successful home preparation. The house needs to tell a story. The essence of the story is:
"I (the potential home buyer) can easily see myself and my family living here!"

C. To sell your home more quickly. The better the condition of your home, the faster it will sell. Period. A typical buyer only knows what they see, not the way it *could possibly* be.

d. To make you more money!

1. Appraisers are more likely to appraise a staged home at full market value.
2. Spend-a-little to make-a-lot.
 - Costs for hiring a professional to actually carry out staging recommendations can range from \$500 to \$15,000 depending on the extent of the work to be done.
 - Returns on investment can be huge. **Stats have proven for every \$100 spent, as much as \$1,000 can be returned.** *That translates into ten thousand dollars profit on a \$1,000 home staging make-over.*
3. Homeowners who are willing to do some of the staging themselves can make the option more viable for mid-range sellers.
 - Another way to make home styling less costly is for homeowners to purchase items to stage the old home that can be reused in the new one. That way, they get the desired temporary effect without wasting money.

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Ask yourself these simple questions:

If all listings looked like model homes, do you think agents would have an easier time selling them?

And do you think they might command a higher selling price?

Statistics show this to be true. According to the Denver Post "National Association of REALTORS®" findings show that staged homes sell 50 percent faster than non-staged homes."

"Staging speeds up sales in a sluggish market, and can **bump up prices 2% to 10%** in a moderate market. The biggest advantage occurs with luxury homes or in a market with bidding wars over properties, where effective staging can boost prices by 30% to 50%."

~ Wall Street Journal~

*"The real estate industry's statistics are convincing: **home staging reduces listings' average days on the market by half...and yields nearly four times as much in selling price over list price.**"*

~ Mountain View Voice ~

For some sellers, the concept of paying a professional for these services seems incomprehensible at first. After all, they have never enlisted the services of a home stager before, and they have been able to sell their homes without any trouble. While this maybe true, unless it was a seller's market they probably accepted much less then they would have been able to command had the home been staged. There is an old adage which goes, "money begets money." This means that if you spend \$100 you can anticipate getting a *minimum* of \$150-\$200 in return.

*Bill Barrett, a Keynote Speaker at REALTOR® Rally, suggests spending one-half to three-quarters of a percent of the asking price for staging. Depending on the stager, it can cost even less than that and instead of cutting into profits, staging dollars can actually multiply themselves. **Conservative estimates show a \$2 to \$3 return for every dollar invested in staging***

Say What?

Consider this scenario: You list your house for \$550,000. It stays on the market for 3 months with no offers. You now have to reduce your selling price by **THOUSANDS** in order to get Realtors to bring their clients through again because it's now considered an "old listing".

Had you spent just a several **HUNDRED DOLLARS** from the start, you could have shown your home at its very best and you would have received the top dollar offer you were looking for in just a fraction of the time.

Note: in today's California market, drastic price reductions can begin much earlier than the three month time frame. Most agents are reluctant to spend a lot of their marketing time or dollars on homes that do not show well and won't get top dollar.

CREATE A HOME SALES "TEAM"

SELLER, AGENT & STAGER

What does each "team member" do in preparing the home to sell?

a. What the AGENT can do:

- Educate the homeowner on the benefits of staging their house prior to listing.
- Offer a professional staging evaluation as part of your listing services.
- Offer to pay all or part of the professional staging aspect of the project as part of your listing services.
- Set a timetable for your clients; marketing begins when staging is completed. *(don't forget, this saves you marketing dollars if home is in tip-top condition before caravans.)*

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b. What the HOMEOWNER can do:

- Have a professional staging evaluation prior to listing with an agent.
- Diligently comply with the suggestions presented by the professional stager and/or agent.
- Work within the timetable you have created with your stager and agent (*Remember, the three of you are a **team**.*)
- Let each *team member* do their job. Enlist the help of a professional to stage your home and add the finishing touches prior to showing and give your Realtor the ability to market your home effectively.
- Do not hold a single open house or showing or post photos on the internet until ALL preparation tasks have been completed. Get it right the first time!

c. What the PROFESSIONAL STAGER can do:

- Offer an objective, unbiased, thorough evaluation of your property, both inside and out.
- Advise and assist you with all or some of the home preparation tasks such as: de-cluttering and organizing items to pack, donate or sell.
- Rearrange the furnishings to improve traffic flow and increase visual spaciousness throughout the house.
- Rearrange artwork and accessories to skillfully create balance and decorative appeal.
- Showcase the home's positive features by creating a model home atmosphere.

Five **SMART** staging TIPS to remember

S *See your property as a prospective buyer would*

- Be as critical and objective as you can
- Be sure it's spotless, clean and de-cluttered
- Be aware: the buyer only knows what they see, not the way it *could possibly* be

M *Make a Plan*

- Move from outdoors to indoors when creating your preparation overview plan
- Move from room to room inside the home
- Make a general list of what needs to be done in each area/room
- Make a list of items that need repairing or replacing
- Make a list of items you need to buy to execute your plan
- Make a list of things you need to remove, then determine where they will go: sell, pack, donate or throw away

A *Activate the Plan*

- Set a realistic timetable to prepare your home before listing
- Enlist help from friends and relatives
- Begin by de-cluttering *everything* inside & outside the home
- Hire those who will provide their professional services: such as *Home stager, plumber, electrician, gardener, painter, etc.*
- Hold a garage sale and donate any un-sold items

T *Timing Is Everything*

- Plan ahead for your home preparation
- Complete the majority of your home preparations **BEFORE** you list it with a Realtor
- Complete the remainder of the preparations **BEFORE** you post photos on the internet or hold *any* open houses—broker or public
- Take time for final "tweaking" before the open house; "set-the-stage" right before you open the doors

**If you really think about it....there are only
three reasons a house won't sell:
PRICE...LOCATION...CONDITION**

When it comes time to put your home on the market to sell

REMEMBER

**“There are no second chances to make a good first
impression”**

**Use this simple formula to determine how much you will save by staging
your home or listing before putting it on the market:**

Mortgage + expenses (utilities etc.) = Monthly expenses

Monthly expenses X 3-6 months (avg. time un-staged) = Cost to list house un-staged

**Savings: Expenses x 1-2 months (average time on market reduced)
-staging fee =Savings if you stage your house first!**

**Take the time to prepare your home properly and you will
reap the \$\$\$ rewards of your efforts.
Now go out there and ...**

STAGE SMART!!

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Meet Marcia Smart...

Thanks for letting me introduce myself to you. With over 15 years of experience in the design/redesign/staging industry, I've learned that most people just need some information and inspiration to help them move forward with their decorating and staging projects.



Broadcast News: Considered a leading interior redesign expert, I've been a featured guest on Radio programs around the country, including Martha Stewart Living SIRIUS 112, KRLA talk Radio and Blog Talk Radio, to name a few. You'll also find my work highlighted in Sunset, Entrepreneur Startups and Decorating Spaces magazines.



I've done a stint on HGTV, Channel 7 News "Consumer's Reports", created set design for a KTLA and acted as spokesperson for Linens 'N Things' East Coast "Get Inspired" grand opening campaign.

Industry Recognition: A pioneer in the Interior Redesign and Home Staging industry, I was one of the founding members and served as Executive Director of the former International Redesign organization, *Interior Redesign Industry Specialists (I.R.I.S.)*.



My training and experience as an Accredited Home Staging® Professional™ and I.R.I.S. Certified Instructor, gives homeowners the best Home Staging and Interior Redesign services possible to help prepare their home to "Love It" or "List It".



Having achieved the designation of Certified Seminar Leader, I have the privilege of conducting professional training seminars and decorating workshops throughout the country. Locally, I've been a featured speaker for many businesses, clubs and organizations and regularly conduct workshops for the Ventura County Adult Education system.

My business has won the **Star Award for 2015**, based on the independent research of The Pulse of the City News, for excellent customer focus, and also been recognized in the **Honors Edition** of the Manchester Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women 2007 registry.



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Author, Author: Writing is my other passion, and I have penned "Decorating By Instinct", "Accessorizing With style, and "150+ SMART Seasonal Decorating Tips ". In addition, I'm a contributing author to several industry related books. One of my crowning achievements is my DVD & Workbook set, "Redesign-Like-A-Pro", the only step-by-step redesign instructional video in the industry.

Design Philosophy: I embrace the fact that each one of us is unique, and I believe that your home should be a reflection of who YOU are, what YOU like and where YOU have been in life. No matter what your style, budget, or where you live, YOU deserve to have that well-decorated look for your home. Ultimately, my design goal is:

"To give your home a SMART new look through education, validation and imagination.