

Stage for Success!

By

Kitty Schwartz

Accredited Staging Professional

Member of the International Association of Home Staging Professionals

Deciding to sell your home can be stressful, especially under the current market conditions. How do you begin to get your home ready to sell quickly and for the most money possible? Stage it!

Home staging is the process of merchandising your home in order to emphasize the best features of the space. An integral part of the real estate business in California for over 25 years, staging has in recent years become much more popular in this area as well. Presentation is everything when marketing a home and national statistics prove that staged homes sell faster and for more money than their competition.

Over 84% of home buyers now preview houses on line and great photos are now the first line of offense in marketing real estate. By eliminating excess furniture, removing dated wallpaper, painting the walls in neutral, warm colors and doing minor updates such as new light fixtures, hardware and faucets, homeowners can give their homes the “staged home” advantage when selling.

Five key staging concepts that can be applied to any home include:

- **S**implify the space: de-clutter, organize, neutralize.
Take down personal photos and choose colors that are soothing. Eliminate odors and downsize the “stuff” – find temporary storage for extra furniture, files and pantry items. Donate or sell unused items to make the space feel bigger.
- **T**arget the buyer: know the audience and deliver what they want to see.
Buyers know within the first 45 seconds if they are interested in your home – first impressions really do count! Trim landscape bushes, paint the front door and turn “drive by” viewings into actual showings. Welcome buyers into the home with a new door mat and seasonal flowers. Stock water in the refrigerator with a note to help themselves – be hospitable, even though you are not there in person!
- **A**ccentuate the positive: highlight the best features of the home.
Why did you buy the house? Was it the view, the fireplace or the award winning schools? Think about the features that you love about the home. Move the furniture so the buyers can access the view or paint an accent wall behind the gorgeous fireplace so that attention is immediately drawn to it. Find a focal point for every room. Put together a brief booklet about all of the accomplishments of the school district and the best features of the neighborhood.

- **G**rab their attention: great photos sell.

Neutralize the décor and wall paper so the photos show the potential of the space and not the furnishings. Buyers are not purchasing those beautiful window treatments; they are buying the space and location of the home.

- **E**arn maximum equity: preparation pays off in today's tough market.

The cost of staging, whether done by the homeowner or a professional, is always less than the first price reduction.

For more information on home staging, please visit classichomestaging.com.