

# Staging Checklist:

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When you get ready to place a home on the market for sale it becomes a product. And just like any product on the shelves at your local store it has features and benefits, pluses and minuses. And there are other products to compete with. To gain an edge in your marketplace you must be priced right and look better than the competition.

When you sell your home you're going to have to move. When you move you're going to have to pack. Most of the principles of staging just mean you're going to have to pack up some of your things early. It's a little bit of work, but you're going to have to do it anyway. So do it now so that you can get top dollar for your property in your marketplace.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- Buyer's only know what they see, not how it's going to be.
- You can't sell it if you can't see it.
- You can't sell it if you can smell it.
- The way you live in your home and the way you market and sell your house are two different things.

## GENERAL COMMENTS:

- In every room, stand in the doorway and look at the room through the eyes of a buyer. What do you see? Be tough on yourself: What can you do without while your home is on the market?
- Most carpets need to be cleaned. Have them professionally cleaned before coming on the market. If they are in terrible condition, consider having them replaced if you are asking for top dollar.
- Check all light fixtures. Are they working properly? Replace all burned out light bulbs. Look for dark hallways and corners and increase the wattage of bulbs in those areas. Make sure there are lamps with adequate bulbs in dark corners and turned on for showings.
- Repair and repaint cracks on all walls and ceilings.
- Repair or replace broken light switches and switch plates. Clean any dirty areas around them.
- Keep all curtains and blinds open during the day to let in all light and views. The extra cost of heating or air conditioning is a necessary cost of selling.
- Pack up all valuables to protect them. If necessary, take them to a safe deposit box.

- Take a hard look at those beloved house plants. In most cases they need to be pruned and/or the number of plants reduced to create more space. If plants don't look healthy and are barely clinging to life, let them go.
- Fireplaces need to be cleaned out. Glass doors should be cleaned. Mantels and hearths need to be cleared off except for a very few necessary items.
- To create more space you may want to remove some furnishings.
- Pack up all collections (you need to pack them sooner or later anyway). They distract buyers from the desired focal point...your home.
- Reduce the number of books on bookshelves. Pack up the books early!
- Reduce the number of family photos on shelves, pianos and tables.
- Reduce the number of wall hung photos and paintings in every room to one large piece on a wall or a small group.
- Be sensitive to odors because buyers are!
- Wash all windows inside and out and make sure they operate freely.
- Repair small items that are broken. This will show that your home is well taken care of. In most cases, buyers will ask for them to be repaired anyway, so do it now.
- Rearrange furnishings or move furnishings from room to room as needed to create more space.
- In general, pack up the little things. Little things create clutter and they need to be packed up anyway, so pack them up now.

## INSIDE OF THE HOME:

### Living Room, Family Room, Den:

- Clear off all coffee tables and end tables. Keep decorative objects on the furniture restricted to groups of 1, 3, or 5 items.
- Remove all ashtrays.

### Dining Room:

- Clear off dining table except for a nice centerpiece and table settings.
- Remove extra leaves from tables to make the room look bigger (if there is an over excess of leaves being used).
- Remove extra chairs from table if they crowd the table or fill up corners of the room. Six chairs are enough, unless you are trying to showcase that the dining room can fit 10 really comfortably.

### Kitchen:

- Clear all unnecessary objects from the kitchen countertops leaving only a very few items you use on a daily basis.
- Clear refrigerators of magnets, pictures, messages, etc.
- Clean tile grout.
- Repair broken tile or loose corners on Formica counters.
- Clean the stovetop and oven. Replace burner pans if they are badly stained.
- Clean all exhaust fans, filters and hoods.
- Keep the kitchen sink clean and empty on a daily basis.
- Keep all soaps, sponges and cleaning supplies out of sight under the sink.
- Empty the garbage regularly to reduce odors.
- Move cat and dog dishes so they don't interfere with the buyer's walk around the room.

### Bedrooms:

- Make beds daily.
- Invest in a new bedspread if necessary. Ideally, you should choose a solid, natural color.
- Clear off bedside tables, dressers, etc. except for a very few necessary items.
- Store extra books and magazines underneath the bed.
- Keep closet doors closed. If you have a walk-in closet keep the floor clean and free of laundry and clutter.
- Remove all posters tacked on walls and repair holes in walls.

### Laundry Rooms:

- Put soaps and supplies in cupboards.
- Keep counters and sink clean and empty.
- Make sure that light bulbs are working and have adequate wattage. Most laundry rooms are too dark.

### Bathrooms:

- Clear off all surfaces. Put toiletries in drawers or cabinets and only keep a few necessary items out in baskets or a tray.
- Make sure you have a bottle of hand soap or a clean bar of soap.
- Coordinate towels in one or two colors. Fold in thirds on towel racks daily.
- Purchase new towels if you need to.
- Clear all items out of shower stalls and tubs except for necessities.
- Clean or replace the shower curtain.
- Repair any cracking or peeling areas and clean any moldy areas. Paint if necessary.
- Many tubs and showers need a fresh new bead of silicone caulking around the edges to make them look neat and clean.
- Take all cloth toilet lid covers off and keep toilet lids closed.
- Hide garbage can and cleaning supplies out of sight.

### Closets:

- Make sure you can open the door freely without any thing falling on potential buyers.
- Clear off the top shelf and the floor. The buyer will see if you fill up the closet fully and believe they have too much to fit into the closet.

## **OUTSIDE OF THE HOME:**

The first impression when a buyer drives up to your home is critical. Walk across the street and look at it through a buyer's eyes. Be tough on yourself. What do you see?

### Trim and House Paint:

- Take a hard look at the front door and trim. Give special attention to this because this is where buyers will get their first opportunity to make a close inspection of your home. Does it need repainting or staining? Repainting the doors and trim to help make the house look crisp and in good condition is one of the least expensive things you can do to dress up a home.

### Decks, Porches and Patios:

- Sweep all walkways and patios, porches or decks.
- Decks should be pressure-washed, stained or painted if needed.
- Clear patios or decks of small items such as little plants, flower pots, charcoal, barbecues, toys, etc.
- If you have outdoor furniture create one simple room setting of clean furniture so buyers see how they can use the space.

### Roofs:

- Check gutters and roof for dry rot. Make sure they are swept and cleaned.

### Fences:

- Repair broken fences and gates and paint if necessary.

### Landscaping:

- Look at all plants. Plants are like children...they grow so fast. Prune bushes and trees. Keep plants from blocking all windows.
- Remove any dead plants, weed all planting areas and put down fresh mulching material.
- Keep your lawn freshly cut, edged and fertilized during the growing season.

### General:

- Go around the perimeter of the house and remove all garbage cans, discarded wood scraps, extra building materials, etc., to the garage or, if applicable, take them to the dump.
- Remove all plastic storage containers, children's toys and any unnecessary objects.

### Garages:

- Sweep out and organize. Keep storage in garage neat.
- Rule of thumb: If you have a 2 car garage, you should be able to show that you can park 1 large vehicle. If you have a 3 car garage, you should be able to show that you can park 2 vehicles and so on.

## DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Paint:

- Walls should be painted a soft neutral color and the trim should be white.
- Avoid bright colored paint colors and colors that are very specific to your tastes.
- Avoid accent walls and sponge or texture painted walls and stick to one color throughout the home if you are choosing to repaint the home.

### Furniture:

- Make sure your pieces are not too large or small for the space.
- You may need to remove pieces that are too oversized for the room.
- Choose pieces that are more neutral in color and use pattern minimally.
- Use an area rug to anchor the space and create a seating area in living rooms and family rooms.
- Use pieces that are more transitional in style to appeal to the most buyers.