

Setting the Stage for a Home Sale

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Photo courtesy Sarah Kellar, Dana Green Team



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Ironically, Norris moved to an area where she said staging was considered unnecessary. Stagers will tell you the unstaged homes are the ones that boost the sales price of homes that have been staged.

Barbara Schwarz, founder of the International Association of Home Staging Professionals, likens transforming your home into something potential buyers see as their home to theater design. The project includes a director or professional stager, producers (the seller and listing agent), and an audience composed of potential buyers. There even may be critics (other agents) eager to point out the listing shortfalls.

Schwarz says home staging works in a variety of locales with homes either vacant or occupied, with new construction and resale residences.

Schwarz emphasizes the “three C’s” of home staging – cleaning at a top-to-bottom, white-glove level, decluttering, and assessing the color of walls and furnishings. Too much color may overwhelm potential buyers, too little will brand the spaces dull and drab. Schwarz suggests the stager and homeowner strive for neutral background colors then add punch in small doses with pillows, curtains or area rugs. A neutral gray wall color is currently in vogue.

Green says there are five steps sellers should take during the staging process. They should remove personal items, including family photos and children’s art, remove items of value, clear floors of clutter, organize closets and repaint and clean or replace carpets.

Nothing beats flowers when it comes to freshness, and both Green and Howell say they include a combination of quality artificial and real flowers in their staged homes. Howell cautions that real flowers must be changed out weekly, a chore she usually leaves to the professional stager.

Howell suggests adding a complete landscape “haircut” and fresh paint to the to-do list if timing allows; she’d also recommend a complete flooring update before a house goes on the market.

“If a client wants an ‘as is’ sale, they will take less of a price hit if at least those elements are covered,” she said. Kitchens and bathrooms sell houses, Howell continues. When staging and remodeling are combined, the result “can often make more than a \$100,000 or greater difference in the net (price),” she says. It may also trigger over-list-price offers.

A 2015 Profile of Home Staging by the National Association of Realtors says the median dollar cost to stage a home is \$675. It lists the most common rooms to be staged in order of importance as living room, kitchen, master bedroom, dining room, bathroom, children’s bedroom and guest bedroom. A house can be staged either using the homeowner’s furniture or with items brought in from a stager’s inventory of furnishings.

“We can do as little or as much as the client needs,” Norris says.

For more information on staging, visit: <http://blog.pacificunion.com/spring-staging-tips> or <http://www.iahsp.com>.

