
THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF STAGING A HOME TO SELL

*TRANSFORM YOUR HOME INTO WOW AND
GET IT SOLD NOW*

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Introduction

Selling a home can be very stressful and takes time and effort. There are so many things to think about: real estate agent, price, photographs etc. But one thing that needs to be done in order to get the best price for your home is home staging.

Home staging is a process that can take some time. In the simplest form, we are **trying to get a buyer to fall in love with your home to make an offer.**

But how do we do that? We have to make it welcoming and inviting so they can imagine themselves living in it. When the buyer feels at home, they will more likely put an offer in.

“83% of agents say a staged home will sell faster than a non-staged home” (Source: Homelight)

How do you know if you feel welcome in a home? You know it when you walk inside. It feels open and clean. There isn't laundry scattered about and the homeowners take some pride in their home.

A lot of times, staging can be done by the homeowner, but they don't know where to begin. So some will hire a home stager to come in and help them.

“50% of sellers who pay for home staging spend less than \$1000” (Source: Homelight)

This is true for my company, Blue Diamond Staging & Design. We charge for a consultation and work with the items in your home to get it ready for the real estate market. We will move things right then during the consultation so you don't have as much “homework” after we finish talking. Most times we don't need to buy or rent anything to make your home more appealing. During the consultation, we will also prioritize the work that needs to be done and stay within your budget.

Most of my clients have never staged their home before so they have lots of questions. I found that if I can answer them ahead of time, the homeowner will be ready for the home stager and understand why things are done a certain way.

While your home may be **beautifully decorated to YOUR taste, it may not jive well with others** who are looking for a home. A home stager knows how to market your home to appeal to most buyers and your home will not look the same. But this is only temporary and we are **decorating it to sell versus decorating it to live.**

Let me share some Do's and Don'ts when it comes to staging if you do it yourself. Some of it you may already have heard of these things while other tips may be new. Regardless, we are trying to get the home to look its best when buyers come over.

Do this when staging a home

Clean the inside and outside of your house

Starting with curb appeal, you need to make sure everything is clean and tidy in the yard outside as well as clean inside. Curb appeal is the first thing buyers will see and they will make a decision on the house within the first 8-10 seconds.

1. There are many ways you can make your curb appeal stand out. Check out [my video](#) on the top 11 ways you can improve it.
2. Vacuum and clean each room (Especially kitchen and bathrooms).
3. Hire a cleaning crew to do the work for you if needed.

Remove excess/clutter in each room

You may not realize it, but there may be things that don't belong in each room. A bedroom should not have toys and neither should the living room. Take the time to go through each room and decide if it belongs. If it doesn't then donate it, put it in the correct room, sell it, pack it up or throw it out.

Read my [blog](#) about 4 easy decluttering tips you can do now. I walk you through some ways to help you and my all time favorite way to get it all done at once.



Fix broken things around house

There are probably a list of things you've been meaning to get on the "Honey Do List". Now is the time to get it done. If you have to hire out a handyman, do it. Sometimes it is easier for a professional to help you get these things done.

Here are some questions to ask yourself.

1. Does your flooring need to be replaced somewhere?
2. Do you need to steam clean the carpets?
3. Are the tiles cracked in the bathrooms?
4. Maybe you need to recaulk somewhere?
5. How are the window screens?
6. Are the cabinets in working order or are they missing handles?



These are just some of the things you should look around and ask as you walk through the house. **Just because you have been living with something that is broken does not mean the new owner will.** And if the buyers sees these broken items as they walk through the house, they will start their own "To-do list" and start deducting from their offer price. You don't want them to do that so get it fixed now. In most cases, it will cost you less to fix it than what the buyer will want in cash to fix it.

Tidy the garage

Most homeowners don't think of the garage other than another storage space. **It should not be stacked to the brim with boxes and garage items.** A garage is part of the home and needs to reflect all the hard work you put into making your home inviting. While you don't need to paint the garage floor or walls, be sure to sweep it and arrange all the items neatly along the walls. You can store SOME items that you had to remove from your home when staging it, but it should not be a catch all for all of those items. Each time I moved, I always had to get a storage unit just to hold all the extra stuff I removed from the house.

Paint walls if needed

If you have multi-colored walls in your home, now is the time to paint them a neutral color. Or if they are already neutral, check to see if they need to be freshened up with a new coat of paint.

Red walls in any room should be painted a neutral color for 2 reasons:

1. Red is a very difficult color to photograph correctly. It may show up more orange or maroon than red.
2. Red is not a neutral color and was a trend back in the 90s. Stay away from trends when painting wall colors.

Listen to my podcast on why you should [update the wall color](#) when selling your home.



Hang artwork

Make sure you have some kind of artwork on the walls in each room. Keep in mind that it **should not be personal photos** but it can be abstract or landscape paintings or even metal artwork. Use the art to create a focal point. If you come into a bedroom, there should be some art over the headboard. 1-2 art pieces per wall is enough (depending on the length of the wall).

I remember one client who had black living room furniture, grey carpet and a beige fireplace. Artwork brings some interest in an otherwise dull room. Plus artwork completes the look of the room.

Don't do this when staging a home

Empty your home

For whatever reason, homeowners believe their empty house looks better than when it had furniture in it. This is NOT true and in actuality,

Empty homes take longer to sell than staged homes

You are not staging your home by emptying it of all furniture. Staging means you have furniture placed in the correct locations to show off the space but it's not over cluttered or too full.

Many times homeowners empty their home for several reasons:

1. They have to move already
2. They combined furniture into another home
3. They thought old furniture looked too old
4. Didn't want to deal with cleaning it up and keeping it neat for showings
5. Would rather have rental furniture in the house

You may not know this, but empty rooms look smaller. A home flipper called me when he had his home on the market for 2 months and didn't get a single offer. He hired me to bring in rental furniture and stage it. A week later (after pictures were retaken and posted), he got a full price offer! Below are the before and after pictures.



Set out dishes on dining table

Many homeowners think that because they see that on TV shows that they should do the same. In fact, it is the opposite. No one lives with a set dining room table so why show it that way in the MLS photos? It automatically makes people think that you are trying too hard and that it's staged.



The best compliment anyone can give me is that they feel comfortable in the home and don't feel like it's staged (when in fact it is).

The other reason NOT to set out dishes is that you don't know who will be coming around. You don't want your fine china and silverware out. They could be accidentally broken (or worse, stolen) during a showing. And if kids come along with their parents, they may knock something over.

Your best bet is to have a nice runner on the dining table and set a nice centerpiece like fresh flowers or candles on the table.

Leave dirty dishes in kitchen

This should be a given, but sometimes they show up. Please make sure that you empty the kitchen sink after each meal at home. Hide them in the dishwasher if you must, but get into the habit of washing each dish after a meal. You never know when potential buyers are coming to the house.

Leave laundry around

Laundry is a never ending task in my house. I had a friend who washed their clothes every day at the end of each day. That can be a bit excessive, but make sure clean clothes are put away right away or leave them in the washer and dryer. Don't leave baskets around in bedrooms or dirty laundry in the laundry room. If you have to have dirty laundry, put it in a hamper with a lid.

Leave doggy crates/litter boxes in pictures

We love our furry friends, but not everyone does. If you have pets, make sure all traces of them are removed when it comes time for pictures. That means the doggy crates, the litter box, hamster cage etc are moved out of the room.

Notice in the picture there is a large dog crate in the back right corner. That needs to be removed when you stage your home (as well as other items).



You also don't want your pet in the pictures either for several reasons.

1. Just the idea of a pet in a home makes people think the house smells. Even though you may not smell any odors, buyers will automatically think it does.
2. Some people may be allergic or scared of pets. This may turn off some buyers from viewing your home in the first place. Please make sure you can take your pets with you when your home is being shown too. Other than aquariums, I recommend taking your pets with you when you leave the house.

Leave family photos on walls, tables

Don't leave pictures of your family members around the house. Remember, we are trying to let the buyer imagine themselves living in the home, not who currently lives in the home. So that wall of 50 family photos needs to go. That family tree painted on the wall also needs to go. You are moving and all those photos are coming with you. They aren't staying behind so you don't need to worry about that.

Personal items such as diplomas, trophies and I Love Me Walls are included in this topic. Anything with your name on it should be removed. We call this depersonalizing because no one needs to know who exactly lives here. This also includes **mail, prescriptions and checkbooks**. Make sure they are not lying around so others can see your name.



You should leave up artwork on the walls but not personal artwork.

Store moving boxes in rooms

So you took some initiative and started packing, that's great! But don't leave the boxes in the rooms. Remove them when you aren't actively using them and put them in the garage for now. Only take them out when you know you don't have a showing that day. I've seen pictures in the MLS photos of boxes in the room. That is a big no-no! I know you are excited about moving but remove them when the photographer shows up.

Leave shoes lying around front door/garage

Shoes have a tendency to multiply in my house. And even though I put them away in the shoe cabinet or closet, they come right back out again. Corral these in a basket with a lid or in a cabinet. The foyer is most likely the first room buyers will see when they come in. Shoes are not the welcome mat buyers need to see when they come in.

Lock rooms during an open house

When you have a showing or an open house, do not lock any doors. The whole house is for sale so buyers should be able to see everything.

We were visiting a home and found one of the bedroom doors locked. We found out later, the seller's teenage kids locked themselves in there because they didn't realize the house was being shown, and they didn't want to get caught. Another time, the homeowners locked the bathroom because their cat was in there.

Bottomline, all rooms should be available during a showing.

Bake cookies or have scents around house

If you've watched the movie "*Leap Year*", the main character is a home stager and she says that the real estate agent should bake some cookies to get offers. The smell of baked cookies and other smells are a bad idea for 3 reasons:

1. You might burn the cookies because the real estate agent is talking to buyers
2. Buyers may be allergic to perfumes and other smells in the house
3. Buyers may wonder what smell are they trying to cover up?

There should not be any smell in the house. If you wonder if your home has an odor, ask a good friend to come in and take a whiff. You might be surprised that you don't smell it but others do. Find the source of the smell and make it disappear.

I hope you learned a few things of what you SHOULD DO and SHOULD NOT DO when it comes to staging your home to sell. These are just a few common ones that I run into when staging a home.

If you hire a home stager, you can get some of these things done before they come in but it's not necessary. I personally would like to see extra things we can use if there are certain rooms that need some staging help. A home stager can also help you with awkward rooms or corners that you may not be sure how to set up.

Once you staged your home, **scroll down more** to get a free open house checklist you can use.

FREE CHECKLIST

Make your house stand out even more

Get room by room staging tips for your open house



[CLICK HERE FOR YOUR FREE OPEN HOUSE CHECKLIST](#)

Once you stage your home, you don't want all that work to go to waste!

Make sure your home is ready for guests with this quick and easy Open House Checklist.

I designed it where I show last minute things you need to check on in each room before buyers come in either as a private tour or as an open house. Now is the time to make it count and get those offers for your home!