



by Catherine Fantauzzi  
First Impressions Décor

## Selling old to buy new

### Tips to make your home look like a model

**Y**ou've just explored the model home of a new development and you're in awe! It's so beautiful, clean, bright and uncluttered. Sort of makes you re-think your current living space, doesn't it? But don't worry. There are ways to make your present house look similar to that model so you can sell it easily and move into a brand new, beautiful, clean, bright and uncluttered home!

The real estate industry stresses that the very first impression created is the key to selling a house. A potential buyer has made up their mind within seconds after stepping into the house whether it could become a home for them.

'Promoting', 'staging', or 'propping' a home is a process that results in a faster sale and usually at or very close to the asking price. Staging can be as simple as removing unnecessary items or as multifaceted as repainting, rearranging furniture or repairing obvious damage.

Home staging is not a new trend. What is new is that there are professionals who home vendors and real estate agencies now hire to do this instead of relying solely on the advice given by real estate agents. The real estate industry reports the average return on investment can be as high as four dollars for every dollar spent on fees for home staging services. Many professional interior decorators offer home staging as part of their services. Fees for service factors in the condition of the house, the market conditions, location, and asking price of the house. The cost balances with the expected benefit

of a higher selling price.

Professional interior decorators are seasoned in the art of creating flow, enhancing aesthetics, eliminating clutter and arranging furniture to create a notable first impression.



Your bathroom should be spotless with fresh, new towels on display

Consider how many homebuilders offer model homes or suites to view their product. A well-appointed model obviously is the best marketing tool a builder has. Models have been 'staged' to show buyers the features of the home, the spaciousness of the floor plan and the ample supply of storage. The eye moves easily from room to room reflecting on the best features. The goal is to bring out the strengths of the property by turning the house or condo into an impressive living space.

Here are some simple ways to get your house ready for the market:

- ◆ Clean the home beyond a regular house cleaning routine including windows and the exterior of the home. The first thing people notice is the front door,

# design



porch area and entrance

- ◆ Ensure that bathrooms are spotless, scrub grout lines and remove all personal items from countertops. Replace old towels with fresh new ones. Same principle stands for kitchens. In today's market these are the rooms that count and where many house deals are made or lost. Clear and clean all counter space, sinks, cabinets and appliances

- ◆ Steam clean carpeting, drapery and upholstery
- ◆ Repair any small damage such as nail pops and leaky faucets

- ◆ All storage areas including any shelving units and bookcases should be organized, clean and clutter free. Personal items such as photographs, keepsakes, trophies, or award plaques should be removed and stored. Potential buyers want to envision themselves in the space and not be distracted with someone else's personal touches

- ◆ Scale back on accessories in every room. Less is more

- ◆ Remove or re-arrange furniture to promote a better traffic flow throughout the house and visually create a feeling of "more space". On the other hand, if furnishings are too sparse, a professional interior decorator can arrange to have some pieces brought in

- ◆ Keep the home well illuminated by opening window shades, increasing light bulb wattage, and adding lighting where necessary. Lighting creates an ambience and should be carefully positioned to evoke an emotional response from potential buyers

- ◆ Keep houseplants dust-free and placed in attractive containers. Add fresh flowers to certain rooms as a non-offending fragrance and to introduce colour.

Certain homes require major overhauls. This is the time when hiring a professional to help should be considered since they will be able to determine which are the most cost-effective to be considered ready for the market. These tasks are more difficult to accomplish and not usually considered do-it-yourself. This may include replacing or repairing

flooring, repainting in more appropriate colours, major editing of furnishings, kitchen and bathroom upgrading, repairing water damage, electrical repairs, updating window treatments, exterior landscaping and more. These enhancements put the home in the best light and are considered improvements that amplify the practical aspects and aesthetics of the house. Large and expensive construction projects such as additions or complete renovations should be left to the prospective buyer, as they may not see those improvements fitting into their lifestyle.



The kitchen is one of the showpieces of a home, so take care of it!

Where would you get the most bang for your buck? The latest reports by the kitchen and bath industry indicate that homeowners consider the kitchen and bath to be the home's style showpieces over other spaces in the home. Homeowners desire large, functional, and sleek kitchens and baths outfitted with high-end finishes and the latest designs in appliances and fixtures. Much of this can be accomplished through home staging techniques.

So get moving! Get your current home up to snuff so you can go out in hunt for the new home of your dreams.

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