



14500 N. Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd.
Scottsdale, Arizona 85260
480-767-9800 www.sierrapointe.com

Staging Your Home for Sale

Want to sell your home quickly? Even in today's challenging market? Staging can help. Staging is presenting your home in its best and most appealing light to the majority of home-buyers. In theory, staging isn't hard or costly, but in reality, many homeowners find it difficult because it's often hard to see something objectively when we love it. An easy way to see effectively staged homes is to visit decorated models. Decorating a model is expensive, but builders are willing to invest the cost because they understand just how well a staged home sells. You too can profit from this knowledge.

Basic Staging Rules

#1 - Clean

Your home must sparkle! To achieve this level is usually only feasible by hiring a cleaning crew. In fact, having a cleaning service return weekly while your house is for sale is probably a pretty good investment. Get your windows professionally cleaned inside and out too.

#2 - Fix

Got a dripping faucet or a cracked tile? These will send the wrong message to potential buyers. Getting them fixed before you put your house on the market is a smart idea.

#3 - Eliminate Clutter

The "50% Rule" requires that you eliminate the clutter in your home by at least half. This may be the hardest rule of all! We love our clutter - it reflects our memories, hobbies, and values. But it doesn't sell homes! The 5" Tower of Pisa you picked up in Italy 18 years ago should be packed away until you unpack it in your new home. Your charm is the buyer's clutter! Clutter makes homes seem smaller and disorganized. Have you ever noticed that the really expensive stores seem to have an expansive, clutter-free layout, while "cheap" stores are often a jumble of merchandise? Even the ancient practice of Feng Shui has as a central focus the elimination of clutter. Your home may look empty or devoid of personality to you, but your buyer has visions of *their* things on your sparse shelves.

#4 - Executive Neutral

Neutral colors sell. It's a fact. Try to convey an image of quality and neutrality. Potential buyers walking through your home want to imagine themselves as the owners. If you use styles or colors they would never select, you've just turned them off. Staying high-quality, but neutral is safest.

#5 - De-personalize

Besides clutter, remove objects that your potential buyers won't be able to identify with. For example, political and religious items may turn off whole groups of buyers, because they cannot imagine your home as their home. Buying a home is an emotional decision, and you want potential buyers to make an emotional connection with your home by being able to see themselves in it. Remember you are competing with hundreds of other home sellers and it would be a shame to lose a sale because the buyers didn't like the guy you voted for! Your personal life is your personal life.

The Test

Wondering if something is acceptable staging? Visit a model home to see if they do it. For example, can you leave your high-end, designer toaster out on your kitchen counter? Nope! You won't find a single

toaster in the kitchens of model homes. Can you display an artsy topiary tree on your kitchen counter? Yes. Model homes do!

Some Specifics

Curb appeal

They say you can only make one "first impression," and people usually form their first impression within 30 seconds. What potential buyers see when they drive up to your house will be their first impression. This is a good place to spend a little extra time and money. Plant flowers, trim bushes, weed, pick up leaves, repaint your front door, replace tarnished house numbers or a dented mailbox, get a brand-new neutral doormat, park your old car somewhere else.

The entrance

The first glimpse inside your home should give potential buyers positive, uplifting feelings. Make your entryway as light and bright as possible. Leave all the lights in the house on. (Have you noticed that model homes do this?) Get rid of all area rugs. (Even authentic, high-quality carpets should normally be removed since they break up the expanse of floor space, making rooms look smaller.) Limit your cooking to very plain foods so odors don't linger. (No cabbage, garlic, or onions!) On the other hand, freshly baked chocolate chip cookie smells are just fine! (They evoke a homey feeling for almost everyone.)

Kitchen

Kitchens sell homes, so the importance of making your kitchen appealing can't be underestimated. Clean and de-clutter! Anything taking up counter or floor space must go (the only exception would be the types of designer touches seen in model homes). Anything displayed on the refrigerator must go. If your cabinets are old, consider resurfacing them. If your counter knobs are old or out-of-date, replacing them can be a relatively inexpensive "facelift." Get a woodtone touchup stick from your home supply store and fill in any nicks and scratches. Shelves and pantries must appear orderly and very spacious. Put those extra items in your newly rented storage unit or give them away!

Bathrooms

Again, clean and de-clutter! You absolutely must get rid of any mildew/mold. If you have a glass shower door, squeegee it after every shower. A mold-and-mildew remover and a soap scum remover can work wonders. Glass cleaning products do a good job of cleaning windows and mirrors (but be careful if you have brass fixtures since ammonia will cause these to pit). Do not display any personal toiletry items! Remove all deodorant, mouthwash, electric toothbrushes, etc. and put them in your cabinet. (Model homes never, ever display such items!) Pick up all bath mats/rugs. Keep your soap dishes pristine. If you have bars of hand soap, they should look new. Get a new set of high-quality, neutral, fluffy towels and display them. (Model homes always do this!)

Rest of the House

Clean, repair, de-clutter, and de-personalize!

Remove those knickknacks!

Remove enough items from your closet so you can hang a garment without touching the garment next to it; this could be difficult but you want to give the impression that your home has "enough" closet space.

Remove area rugs, throw pillows and throw blankets

Remove anemic houseplants and replace with high-quality silk or healthy plants in quality containers.

Take a hard look at your carpets. Are they stained or worn? Replacing carpets is often an excellent investment because it gives your home that "new" look that everyone wants. (Buyers have notoriously poor imaginations, so replacing existing carpet with neutral carpet is usually a much better idea than offering a "carpet allowance.")

Tips

Leave all the lights on. (No burned-out lightbulbs!)

Keep wastebaskets empty.

If possible, send your pets to stay with family or friends.

As much as we love our pets, they can be a major negative distraction to potential buyers.

Leave your home before potential buyers arrive

Summary

Once you accept the challenge that you're turning your home into a "model home" to sell at top dollar and in record time, you've won half the battle. You'll be well rewarded for your efforts!