



**Real Estate Staging Association**

Advancing Professionalism and Excellence in Real Estate Staging

**THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO  
REAL ESTATE STAGING™  
Including 2011 Statistics-United States**



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## Real Estate Staging, The Key to Successful Selling

Real Estate Staging is the act of preparing and showcasing residential or commercial property for sale. It is a systematic and coordinated methodology in which knowledge of real estate, home renovations and creative design principles are applied to attract a buyer.

Preparing property involves all or part of cleaning, de-cluttering, updating and repairing, while showcasing is the process of arranging furniture, accessories, art and light. Whether the property is owner-occupied, or vacant, staging is recommended before listing a property. It can be equally effective after a property has been on the market for an extended period unsold.



### Staging Benefits Buyers

Overall, professional stagers agree that staging a property prior to going on the market benefits everyone involved with the sale and purchase of the property.

Professional stagers recommend repairs and upgrades that are needed to get the property in market ready condition. Staging also shows buyers the property's true potential. Buyers often do not have the funds to purchase a home and pay more money to address repairs, painting, etc. Buyers realize and appreciate the benefits of purchasing a professionally staged property.

### Staging Benefits Sellers

Professionally staged homes present and show better than competing houses for sale, including new construction homes and higher-priced houses.

- Staged properties will sell faster when compared with houses that have not been staged. From the date of listing until the day of closing, home staging shortens this time frame, even in a slow real estate market.
- Staged properties can increase the number of offers and selling price in hot markets.
- Buyers view professionally staged listings as "well-maintained".
- Buyers' agents recognize that professionally staged listings are "move-in" ready and are inclined to show staged properties.
- Photos of professionally staged listings look better on the MLS, as well as in print.
- Professionally staged listings "STAND-OUT" in prospective buyers' minds.



## 2011 Vacant and Occupied Homes Previously on the Market In The United States

We studied 174 homes previously on the market on average 156 days before the homeowners gave up trying to sell on their own and called in a professional home stager. Those same homes were staged, relisted and sold on average in 42 days after staging. This is 73% less time on the market. We also studied 410 homes that were staged **before** they went on the market and sold in 42 days on average after staging

### Common Repairs You Should Look For and often Replace/Upgrade:

- ✓ Worn carpets
- ✓ Broken light switches
- ✓ Loose door knobs
- ✓ Leaky faucets
- ✓ Running toilets
- ✓ Sticky locks
- ✓ Slow drains
- ✓ Broken garbage disposal
- ✓ Cracks, holes in walls
- ✓ Broken screen doors
- ✓ Clogged shower heads
- ✓ Ripped window screens
- ✓ Sticky windows
- ✓ Cabinet door knobs

*Properties that have had issues repaired are more attractive to potential buyers than properties that still need repairs!*

### Kitchen & Bathroom Tips:

- ✓ Kitchens and bathrooms must be immaculate.
- ✓ Update appliances if possible.
- ✓ Check all the doors and cabinets to make sure they open smoothly. Repair if needed.
- ✓ Tighten doorknobs.
- ✓ Re-caulk or re-grout showers, tubs and sinks.
- ✓ Touch-up cabinet paint in bathroom and kitchen.
- ✓ Consider upgrading bathroom mirrors.
- ✓ Replace missing or broken tiles.
- ✓ Replace the garbage disposal if needed.

*Kitchens and bathrooms sell homes. Buyers will pay special attention to these areas. It is so important to be sure these rooms are in the best condition possible. This includes being clean and up-to-date.*

## Quick & Easy Tips To Get Your Home Ready For Sale

Some of the most important things you can do to prepare your home for sale are quick and easy. Buyers look at everything! They truly imagine themselves living in your property. Paying special attention to these areas will give your property noticeable results.

- ✓ Update lighting fixtures - Installing new lighting is one of the most economical facelifts you can give your property. Outdated fixtures makes your property feel outdated to buyers.
- ✓ Install new light bulbs. Make sure to use the correct wattage for the light fixture.
- ✓ Install new toilets if the current ones are old & damaged.
- ✓ Clean windows both inside and outside.
- ✓ Repair broken windows.
- ✓ Make sure windows slide on tracks easily.
- ✓ Wash window screens and replace damaged screens.
- ✓ Update blinds if current ones are old & damaged-or remove altogether.
- ✓ Update the garbage disposal if needed.
- ✓ Repair or update the faucets in sinks and bathrooms, including shower heads.

Considering hiring a professional to clean your property. Their fees are reasonable and it frees you up to take care of other matters. Do your cleaning AFTER you have made repairs, upgrades, painting, etc. This will ensure your cleaning is not ruined by the dust of repairs and upgrades.



## Give Your Home a “Paint Lift”

### Exterior Prep Work Tips

- ✓ Remove light fixtures and shutters & make repairs so you can replace them after you have painted.
- ✓ Power wash the house to remove dirt and paint chips. If power washing loosens mortar, repair before painting.
- ✓ For super loose paint, use a paintscraper. (Be sure to wear eye protection)
- ✓ Tape off areas you don't want painted.

### Interior Prep Work Tips

- ✓ Move the furniture to the middle of the room and cover.
- ✓ Remove artwork from walls, Patch holes in the walls and sand them.
- ✓ Remove electrical switch plates and use masking tape or painters tape over the outlet.
- ✓ If painting the ceiling, cover lighting. Clean the walls with TSP. Follow the manufacturers directions.
- ✓ Tape off areas you don't want painted.

***Neutral wall colors are best for selling homes! Color can be used in the accessories you use for staging.***

## CURB APPEAL-the REAL first impression



Curb appeal is the first “drive up” Impression that a buyer will have. Buyers drive by and they will either love it or hate it.

- Maintain regular watering, mowing, edging and weeding schedule, and sprinklers are working.
- Remove any dead plants and replace with seasonal colorful plants when appropriate.
- Add fresh mulch to all beds.
- Remove lawn décor & equipment.
- Make sure front porch/entry way is clean and inviting, repaint front door, if needed.
- Make sure trees or bushes don't touch people as they walk up to the front door.
- Power wash the outside of the house.
- Make sure the porch lighting is working and free of cob webs and spiders.
- Use outdoor furniture to create inviting spaces.

Look at your property from across the street. What is your first impression of the house and yard? Take a photo of your property and look at it on your computer. This will simulate what buyers will see.

## Showing Your Home

### Kitchen

- ✓ Make sure all dishes are put away in the kitchen.
- ✓ Wipe down the kitchen counters.
- ✓ Put away dish rags, towels, and sponges.
- ✓ Put dish soap under the counter.
- ✓ Have counter tops tidy with no clutter.
- ✓ Wipe down appliances so they shine.
- ✓ Empty all trash cans and hide if visible.

### Bathroom

- ✓ Make sure bath and shower are clean. If you have glass doors, make sure they are free from water spots.
- ✓ Make sure towels are clean and tidy. Make sure toilet bowl is clean and install a bowl freshener.
- ✓ Remove or hide medications.
- ✓ Empty trash can.

### Bedrooms

- ✓ Make all beds.
- ✓ Pick-up and put away all clothes.
- ✓ Make sure dresser tops are clean and tidy.
- ✓ Put away jewelry and any personal items.

### Living Room/Family Room/Office

- ✓ Make sure rooms are clean and tidy.
- ✓ Put away magazines and remote controls.
- ✓ Turn off computers.
- ✓ Hide any documents with identifying information.

### Miscellaneous

- ✓ Vacuum carpets & sweep floors.
- ✓ Turn on lights.



## How much money could you save by staging your home before listing?

The Real Estate Staging Association® (RESA®) study shows 174 homeowners had their property on the market on average of 156 days before they decided to stage. 156 days = 5 1/2 months!!! Those same homes were staged and sold in 42 days on average after staging. This is 73% less time on the market.

As an example, using this formula you can determine approximately how much money you will continue to spend while your home is on the market un-staged.

If your mortgage is : \$1800.00

If your expenses are: \$300.00

Total carrying cost per month: \$2,100.00

Our study shows home owners had their property on the market for an average of 5 1/2 months.

Since you can't pay half a months mortgage we will round this up to 6 months \$2,100.00 X 6 months = \$12,600.00 in expenses.

Had those homeowners staged first, their time on market would have been cut by 139 days on average (4 months).

\$2,100.00 x 4 months= \$8,400.00

**Staging their homes first would have saved them \$ 8,400.00.**

These numbers are all relative to individual mortgage and expenses. Use this simple formula to determine how much you will save by staging your home or listing before putting it on the market:

Mortgage + expenses (utilities etc.) = Monthly expenses

Monthly expenses X 6 months (avg. time un-staged) = Cost to list house un-staged

Savings: Expenses x 4 months (average time on market reduced) – staging fee = Savings if you stage your house first!

**\*\* If you have a price reduction you can also add that into the loss you are taking by listing a property un-staged.**

### HomeGain 2011 Top 10 D-I-Y Home Improvements For Sellers (NATIONAL)

D-I-Y Home Improvements	Cost	Benefit	ROI	% Recommended
Clean & De-clutter	\$209	\$1,990	586%	99%
Lighten & Brighten	\$375	\$1,550	313%	97%
Staging	\$550	\$2,194	299%	80%
Landscaping	\$540	\$1,932	258%	93%
Repair Electrical & Plumbing	\$535	\$1,505	181%	92%
Replace or Shampoo Carpets	\$647	\$1,739	169%	98%
Kitchen & Bathroom	\$1,265	\$3,435	172%	75%
Repair Floors	\$931	\$1,924	107%	93%
Paint Interior	\$1,012	\$2,112	109%	96%
Paint Exterior	\$1,467	\$2,222	51%	81%

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[www.homegain.com/sellertools](http://www.homegain.com/sellertools)

HomeGain.

**RESA considers all of the above part of staging.**

## What To Expect When Working with a Professional Stager

A professional stager can make your selling and moving experience LESS stressful. Professional stagers will be able to give you advice on what items need to be addressed in order to properly prepare your home for sale. If you have a budget, then a professional stager will be able to tell you where to invest your dollars for the best return. They will be able to make recommendations on everything from paint choices to knowing when to replace or update items and knowing what stays and what should be packed up.

Professional stagers should never make you feel bad about your personal taste or insult your belongings, style, lifestyle etc.

***Is Your Professional Stager a Member of RESA? They should be!***

## Hiring a Professional Stager vs. Doing it Yourself

Stagers are trained professionals and understand exactly what is needed to get your property prepared for sale. They understand current market conditions and know how to get the job done.

**VS.**

Homeowners do not do this professionally and may not understand market conditions and other important information that dictates how the home should be presented.

Professional stagers develop relationships with industry partners like painters, carpet installers, carpet cleaners, roof repair, etc. These relationships can benefit you because stagers can pass on savings. In addition, you will gain peace of mind knowing you are more likely to get quality service from people they work with on a regular basis.

**VS.**

Homeowners may have to pay retail or rely on friends or family to refer a service provider. Do-it-yourselfers won't have the luxury of a previous working relationship to ensure a job well done.



Professional stagers can “see what the buyer sees”. Buying decisions are made very quickly. Professional stagers know how those decisions are made and create an environment that allows for a favorable decision to be made when buyers look at a property.

**VS.**

Homeowners do not have the ability to “see what the buyer sees”, because they are not trained in this capacity and it is difficult to be objective about their own home. Staging is an art and a science. Without training and experience, the outcome is less sure.



Stagers know their market! 84% of buyers (some estimates are higher) look on the Internet to preview homes before they go to see a home in person. Properties with beautiful photographs will be looked at first. A staged home photographs better and looks better on the MLS.

**VS.**

Anyone can snap a photograph of a room, but will it be of the best angle or have the best lighting to showcase the home? Professional stagers will get the best shots for your agent to use.

Most stagers provide additional website presence through blogging or on-line flyers. Additional web presence means more prospective buyers may see your home.

**VS.**

If you don't work with a professional stager you will lose these benefits. Stagers can give your property more attention by bringing in more buyers.



Photos By: [MaineVirtualHomeTours.com](http://MaineVirtualHomeTours.com)

## Key Things to Consider When Hiring a Professional Stager

by Michelle Minch, Moving Mountains Design

- Have they done work in the seller's area? It is important for stagers to do their homework and understand the market in the neighborhood they are staging. Since staging is marketing they need to be able to effectively stage the property for the types of people or families that are looking to buy in that neighborhood.
- Understand the rates and fees. It is important for home owners to fully understand exactly what they are getting and to be clear about their expectations. Make sure to read and understand the stager's contract. If you don't understand something ask for clarification.
- You get what you pay for. Interview 2 or 3 stagers. BEWARE of stagers that come in with a bid that is much lower than the rest. They may be quoting a low price just to get the job. When they do that the quality of the job may often suffer. They may use less than acceptable furnishings and not do the project justice.
- Does the stager's portfolio display a wide range of styles, or do all the homes look the same? Make sure the stager is capable of, and has access to furnishings and accessories, that present the home in a manner that accentuates its architectural style.
- Ask if the stager rents furniture from another source or owns the furniture he or she will be using. Make sure the furniture the stager uses is appropriate to the style of your home and not just what he or she happens to have in inventory at that time.
- Ask if all the photos in a stager's portfolio are of their own work. All photos should show that stager's work and not be part of a group class project from a training program.
- Ask for references, including phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses. Check those references and ask whether they would hire that stager again.
- Does the stager have business insurance and what does it cover and how does it work?

RESA-PRO is the highest designation available through the Real Estate Staging Association. All members have passed the RESA® Ethics Exam, practice business according to the RESA® Code of Ethics, have minimum of 1 year in business as a professional home stager, provide proof of Home Staging Business Insurance, have no lawsuits pending against their staging business, and are required to complete continuing education courses related to the field. A RESA-PRO stager is a not a hobby home stager.



Vanessa Helmick of Fiore Interiors is a RESA-PRO home stager and practicing Interior Designer. You are invited to contact Fiore Interiors for your staging and design needs.

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