



Real Estate Staging Association

Advancing Professionalism and Excellence in Real Estate Staging

# THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO REAL ESTATE STAGING™



Epic Empire Designs Home Staging

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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.



by Michelle Lynne

# 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.



Peachtree Home Staging

## 2010 Vacant and Occupied Homes Previously on the Market

97 Vacant and Occupied Homes	Listed Un-Staged Not Sold	Those same homes were Staged, Listed, SOLD	SOLD
2010 Study 01-10 to 12-10	181 Average DOM	60 Average DOM	67% Less time on market

We studied 97 homes previously on the market on average 181 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 60 days after staging. **This is 67% less time on the market.**



Eubank Staging

# 2010 Vacant and Occupied Homes Staged Before They Went On The Market

184  
Vacant and Occupied Homes

2010 Study  
01-10 to 12-10

SOLD on average in 35  
days

We also studied 184 homes that were **staged before they went on the market and sold in 35 days** on average after staging.



# Staging Works!

Our 2010 study found that homes, not staged, were on the market 181 days, before the home owners decided to have them professionally staged. After staging, homes, on average, sold in 60 days. This equates to a total of 241 days.



When staged first (prior to listing), homes averaged 35 days on the market.

Our study proves it does not benefit the homeowner to list their property first to see if it will sell. When they invest in staging before listing, they sell 85% faster.



# Common Repairs You Should Look For



Repair	Item	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.

# Kitchens and Bathrooms

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.

## 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.
- ❑ Air out and clean inside of cabinets and under sinks.



Consider giving mirrors in your bathroom a facelift by using MirrorMate.

[www.MirrorMate.com](http://www.MirrorMate.com)

## 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.



### Fixtures

- ❑ 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.
- ❑ 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 to light fixtures and shutters so you can replace them after you have painted.
- Power wash the house to remove dirt and paint chips.
- For super loose paint, use a paint scraper. (Be sure to wear eye protection)
- If power washing loosens mortar, repair this before you paint.
- 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.



### Color Choices

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



Room Solutions

# 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.

## Curb Appeal and Backyard Tips

- Maintain regular watering, mowing, edging and weeding schedule.
- 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.
- Make sure trees or bushes don't touch people as they walk up to the front door.
- Make sure sprinklers are working.
- Repaint front door, if needed.
- 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.
- Same rules apply to back yard.



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.



## 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?

If they are, they have access to discounts to help you in your moving process. Ask them for information on the following services.

- CABLE/SATELLITE
- TELEPHONE
- LONG DISTANCE
- INTERNET
- ELECTRICITY
- GAS
- WATER
- NEWSPAPER

# 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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



StageRight

# 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 furnishing 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?

# 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.
- Hide any personal items.

## Living Room/Family Room/Office

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



## Miscellaneous

- Vacuum carpets.
- Sweep floors.
- Turn on lights.
- Play soft music.

# Your Personal Moving Checklist

## Six Weeks before Moving:

- ❑ Start talking to your children about the move so they are not anxious
- ❑ If you are an active service member, decide whether you want to make a DIY move, or have the government handle everything for you.
- ❑ If using a moving company call and get estimates and choose a company
- ❑ If you are moving yourself and need moving trucks, call now to book the truck. If you wait you will risk not having an available truck.
- ❑ Pick an afternoon or evening for everyone in the family to go through their clothes. Make piles of clothes to toss, to give to charity, and keep
- ❑ Remember moving is an excellent time to purge!! Really take a look at items that you have stored in the garage, basement, etc. Chances are if you have not used it in 6 months you most likely no longer need it. Many items you once felt you had an emotional attachment to, you may now find that you don't. You still have the memory but you may not necessarily need the macaroni pen holder you made in grammar school!
- ❑ Create an inventory of everything to be moved
- ❑ Collect everything that is not to be moved and have a garage sale or donate to charity (charitable donations are tax deductible so save the receipts)
- ❑ Get boxes and start packing



## Moving Companies

## Estimates


## Notes:

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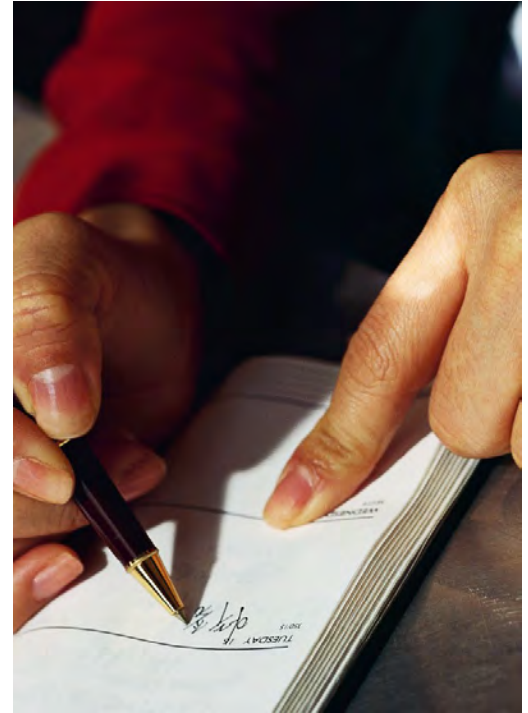
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## Four Weeks before Moving:

- Notify any mail subscriptions of a change of address
- Check out your new community if you are not familiar with it; use the Internet to locate all of the stores and places you use in your current community
- Get children's school records
- Find the schools your children will go to and make arrangements for them
- Look into new daycare, should you require it
- Collect everything from neighbors or friends that you have lent out and return everything you have borrowed
- Check with your veterinarian for pet records. If your pets are micro chipped, notify the chip company of new address and phone numbers. If you are traveling to your new location, give them cell numbers and have them post notes that you are in transit incase the pets escape during the move.
- Set up a disconnect date with the utility companies; make sure they have your new address so they can send you a final statement or deposit refund if its due
- Stop shopping online so you don't have packages delivered that won't make it before you move
- Service power mowers, boats etc., Drain all gas/oil to prevent spills and/or fires when moving
- Check with doctors and dentists for all family records and prescriptions
- Check freezer and use all the food you can use until you move
- Check your pantry for expired canned items or items almost empty. Toss what you don't want to take with you.
- If you have a safe deposit box and are moving out of the area, remove your contents so you can take them with you
- If you have house plants consider giving them to friends or neighbors as they may not survive the move



Use [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and search Chamber of Commerce + your new city name.

They are a great resource in getting familiar with your new community.

## Important Numbers

Current School \_\_\_\_\_

New School \_\_\_\_\_

Current Day Care \_\_\_\_\_

New Day Care \_\_\_\_\_

## Important Numbers

Veterinarian \_\_\_\_\_

Utility Company \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Dentist \_\_\_\_\_

## Important Numbers

### One Week before Moving

- Handle your banking needs, close accounts if needed etc.
- If moving long distance have your car serviced and fill all fluids
- Request a change of address from the post office
- Dispose of combustibles and spray cans as they can explode, especially if moving in the heat
- Finish packing and don't forget to mark the boxes
- Create one large room in your house for the packers/movers to be able to use so they can work freely
- Cancel newspaper and garden services
- Don't forget your pets; make any arrangements to ensure their safety in the move
- Review the entire list to make sure you have not overlooked anything

Veterinarian \_\_\_\_\_

REALTOR \_\_\_\_\_

Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_

Bank \_\_\_\_\_

Movers \_\_\_\_\_



You can change your address online at [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com)

### Moving Day

- If you are moving locally, have one person go to the new house when delivering the first load and one person stay behind to keep the process going
- Have small children stay with friends or family as children will slow the process and get bored
- Tell packers/mover about fragile or precious items
- Make a final check of the entire house including closets, shelves, attic, garage, every room
- Make sure the movers have your correct new address and they know how to get there
- Exchange cell phone #'s with the driver
- Lock all doors and windows and advise your REALTOR® you have left



Moving does take a lot of time and energy and can be a stressful experience for everyone in the family. Be sure to plan ahead and remember that moving affects everyone in the family so everyone needs to be considerate and mindful of each other's feelings.

1. Make your home look organized – even if you aren't.
2. Remove excess furniture throughout your home.
3. Hang mirrors to widen a narrow room.
4. Remove half the contents of your closets to show buyers there's plenty of room.
5. Add light inside closets to make them look bigger.
6. Take everything off closet floor.
7. Color coordinate and organize clothing in closets.
8. Make your master bedroom look and feel like a private retreat.
9. Buy new bedding in neutral tones to dress up bedrooms.
10. Showcase bedrooms as bedrooms.

For the rest of the tips visit [www.EnergizedSeller.com](http://www.EnergizedSeller.com)

[www.EnergizedSeller.com](http://www.EnergizedSeller.com), is a free online networking community website that provides home selling and home staging tips to home sellers, real estate agents, home stagers and home improvement professionals. The website offers practical advice and solutions for home sellers who want to increase their home value and sell as quickly as possible. For more information visit the EnergizedSeller™ website at [www.EnergizedSeller.com](http://www.EnergizedSeller.com)



**energizedseller**™  
for home selling and home staging tips.

**The Official Consumer Site of the Real Estate Staging Association®**

## Staging Return on Investment

### 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

The average cost of home staging in the HomeGain® study is reflective of what REALTORS® said they think it will cost a seller to stage on their own. Prices may vary from region.

Note from RESA: All of the above improvements are considered part of home staging.



Sold With Style





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# Real Estate Staging Association

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Find a Professional Stager  
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