

Exit *Stage Left*: Help sell your house through the art of staging.

-By *your* Staff Writer for the Property Network, Matt Giles

To Stage or not to Stage that is the question, and I'm telling you right now, Staging is the answer. Staging transforms your home into a house and then takes it from a house to a home for the potential buyer. Confused??? Read on...

When you first make the decision to sell your home, more times than not you start with a good cleaning. You work your way from top to bottom. Anywhere from the basement to the garage, it all has to be spotless. Don't get me wrong, a good cleaning is necessary, but you have to do more than just clean out the cob webs and dust balls under the couch. You have to clean the walls, patch nail holes, and start to set the stage.

Begin cleaning off the walls by taking down all of your family photos and touching up the holes with some spackle and paint. This leaves the potential buyer with a blank canvas effect. One or two neutral pictures on the wall will never hurt, but having all of the pictures from last year's family reunion leaves your stamp. You don't want that, you want the buyer to walk in and see themselves in the space. You want them to feel like they are at home. Their home, not yours!

Location, location, location! You must relocate any clutter. If your house has clutter in any rooms, clean it out! You want to maximize your room space. Clutter gives off the feeling that a room is smaller than it really is. It also leads the buyer to believe that the house lacks storage space. If you can't bear to part with the items that are causing the clutter, then organize it. Buy bins and find a nice neat place to store your personal belongings for now, like a corner in the basement or the garage.

There are plenty of high traffic areas in your house and you want these clear too. Extra furniture and furnishings fill up a room quickly. You have to find your center and think Feng Shui. You want your rooms to flow and extra furniture and knick knacks can block that flow. You want to give the feel of open space in these high traffic areas. Otherwise, it can cut off your room and make it feel like the room is small and closed off.

We all have "good sides" and so does each room in your house. You want to show off all the "good sides" and highlight any special features. If there is a corner in your living room that is a cozy spot for reading, set it up for just that. Stage the space with a comfortable chair, a side table with a lamp and a place book on it as well. Make the buyer believe that is where you read every night. If you have a play room in the basement, set it up as an organized play area, with games and a few toys out. It's all about showing off the potential of your home to buyers.

If you follow these few steps, you'll transform your home (with your pictures, memories and clutter) to a house (full of potential for a new buyer). This in turn will open up your house to become the future home of someone else. Sounds simple, right???

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