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12 Rules of Home Staging

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From InmanWiki

Have you ever walked into a home for sale and thought, “Oh my goodness, does this place need work!” If you’re like most people, we all have the open house horror stories to tell, especially Realtors. I’ll never forget shopping for my first house and being shown a beautiful home (on the outside) with “blood red” wall to wall carpeting on the inside and pink walls to boot! Now that I’m older and wiser, I can see past the cosmetic horrors but am one of the few (only 10%) who do. So how do you quickly and easily prepare a home to sell without breaking the bank? Let’s jump in...

1. Remember the Masses - Rule # 1 and # 2, I consider the Golden Rules of home staging because this is what separates “home staging” from interior decorating. Interior decorating takes into consideration the personal tastes, personality and preferences of the home owner whereas “home staging” focuses on creating a valuable marketing commodity so that it appeals to the general home buyer who is trying to visualize themselves in the home. Unlike the home seller who is emotionally invested in the home, a Professional Home Stager is trained to see the home is an objective and critical buyer would so that they can position it to the best of it’s ability by focusing on rule #2

2. Keep to the Cosmetic - Only improving those things in the home that will add to the bottom line. Stagers keep to the cosmetic so that it makes financial sense in the sale price of the home. By focusing on the most dramatic transformations on the cheap a professional home stager gets equally dramatic results in the resale of the home. Home Staging in essence is an investment in future home sales earnings by the home seller and sometimes even the Realtor involved.

3. Consider the homes integrity when you prepare it to sell - In other words, it is what it is, what it is. Don’t try and make a Tuscan style home into a craftsman...it just won’t

feel right to buyers or anyone else for that matter. A successful home staging works with the personality of the home rather than against it in order to get best results. Create Warm Lived In Spaces. Yet No One Lives There - When you walk into a home, you can usually tell exactly what age, style and personality individual lives there? If there are baby toys in the family room, a dog bed in the corner and a dozen family pictures on the mantle that gives you a clue as to who lives there which is as it should be for a home NOT for sale. In order to create broad appeal to buyers however we need to strip the home of the seller's specific personality and quirks while still giving it warmth and style. There is a definite "fine line" between "lived in" and sterile looking. Shoot for the model home look and if you don't know what that looks like visit some in your area.

5. Find the Focal Point and Make It Fabulous! - The basis for any good design lies in finding the focal point of a room and making sure it really shines. The focal point is the first place someone looks when they walk into a room. In the home staging sense we want to make sure the eyes are drawn to the best part of the room while conversely playing down any negative aspects of the room. Walk into a room and take note of what you notice immediately...is it positive or negative? Remember, buyers are looking for reason NOT to buy the house...make sure those focal points don't give them any.

6. Clean is Critical! - This really goes without saying but unfortunately needs to be said and emphasized because many times home sellers cannot objectively clean their own home. Their noses have adjusted to any strange odors that buyer's notice and that rusty sink drain goes completely unnoticed by the seller who has lived there for ten years now while the buyers are repulsed. How do you combat this lack of objectivity by the sellers without offending them? Quick tip, cleaning windows, walls and reflective surfaces helps to add light and space to a room. I'm dating myself when I say, "be a Felix not an Oscar".

7. Create the Illusion of Space - This is a standard maxim of home staging. It states that by removing extraneous furnishings you can create the illusion of space within a room. Everything in a room must earn it's place so it's usually safe to say that 50% of what's in a room can be packed away now in order to stage the room effectively and create space WITHOUT stripping it of it's personality.

8. "Up Down" to Update - The best thing a home seller can usually do to update their home is to remove those purchases over 10 years old. I call this "up down" to update. Take down the old flowery prints, old pink swag drapes and brass chandeliers. It's usually cheaper and easier just to remove or camouflage those distracting out dated furnishings rather than buy new ones. Every accessory's sole purpose should be to update or modernize the existing space so given today's trends the accessory left out should be large and less of them.

9. Let There Be Light! Brainstorm lighting of all types within every room. Whenever

you show a home make sure every light is on in the house...no exceptions. Buyers respond to "light and bright" so make sure your rooms have lots of natural light (trim plants and shrubs around windows) as well as artificial in the form of general, task and accent lighting. Kitchens especially need to be sunny and bright so use inexpensive under cabinet light as well as hanging lights over your islands and bars. Make sure every corner of your rooms are well lit by using simple up lights behind trees and tables. Use candles liberally as an emotional connection as well as form of lighting. Rule 10, 11, and 12 are particularly why using a professional home stager makes such a difference in the end result...successful staging is not easy, natural or automatic.

10. Remember It's Calling, Balance Like A Rowboat, Scale Like a Dinner Plate and Be a Traffic Cop - Make sure each room has a clear purpose by remembering its original true calling. Most Buyers cannot use their imagination so don't confuse them by having an office dining area or pool table in the front living room. Balance your rooms by evenly placing each piece on the sides of the room (like a rowboat). If you have a large entertainment center in one corner with nothing in the opposite corner to balance it, your room will feel tipped or off balanced and turn buyers away. Your professional home stager knows how to create equilibrium in a room. Make sure each piece in the room is in scale with one another. Like a properly balanced meal, don't have a gigantic sofa with a tiny coffee table...it doesn't work. A home stager borrows from other rooms to scale each one effectively. Finally, organize the traffic and flow in a room by making sure your furniture is not placed like wall flowers. It's uncomfortable for anyone to have to walk through a conversation area to get to another room so make the traffic go around the conversation by pulling your furniture in. Believe it or not it makes the room appear larger rather than smaller as so many believe.

11. Color is Always King and Beige is Boring - I think we've all made some color mistakes in the past but Rule #11 can be a particularly fatal mistake many Realtors will make trying to play it safe with the home sellers by telling them to paint the house a neutral color. What you get is a bunch of black holes (furniture) in a white or vanilla setting...not good for those Internet photos. The reason why a Realtor would do this is very sound...most people cannot pick out color very well and use it to their advantage. If you don't feel comfortable with this tricky skill then play it safe but remember, paint is the easiest and least expensive way to drastically improve interiors. If nothing else, have an experienced professional home stager give you a simple consultation and suggest colors. Decorators and Stagers will have the tools and rules to know when to play it safe and when to use color to highlight or downplay a particular feature.

12. Create "Emotional Connection Points" - Well you made it, point number 12 is like icing on a cake (and what would a cake be like without icing?). Like any great marketer, strive for "buyers envy" when they view your home by creating points throughout each

room that speak to buyers emotionally about a lifestyle they can aspire to. This subconscious conversation gives buyers fuel for their imagination and multiple reasons to purchase this “emotionally” staged home. You want a buyer to walk into a house and say, “this is it, this is the one, this is where we FEEL HOME”. There are simple ways to do this: set out a tray on your master bed with a newspaper and cup of coffee, drape a throw and soft pillow over your favorite chair, set out plates, napkins, wine goblets and wine on an outside patio set and stack fluffy towels on your bathroom counter as well as several pillars of lit candles.

I hope these 12 rules have helped you in your efforts to prepare you home to sell. It takes a bit of work but is a small investment in a much bigger reward of selling your home fast and for more money. Good luck!

To watch a video of what a Staging Day looks like, go to: [1] Click on "Free Trainings" on the right hand bar.

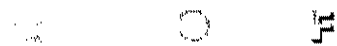
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