

Marketing Tip of the Week



Staging a Home

By Steve Turgeon

Value of Staging a Home

In 2015, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) did a first-ever *Profile of Home Staging*. It provides some insight into the use and effectiveness of staging a home. Overall, 96 percent of the realtors surveyed believed that staging "usually" or at least "sometimes" has a positive impact on the buyer's view of the home.

Impact of Staging

Staging helps buyers visualize the home as their own and nearly half of those surveyed believed that it makes prospective buyers more willing to walk through a home they saw on line. Most importantly, realtors surveyed believed staging a home increases its value. Thirty-seven percent of realtors representing sellers said staging increased the value 1 to 5 percent, while 22 percent said it was between 6 and 10 percent. The percentages were slightly lower (32, 16) for those representing buyers.

The HGTV effect

HGTV's House Hunters and its multitude of spinoffs have impacted buyers expectations when they tour homes. The 13-year-old show, which aired a whopping 447 new episodes in 2015, draws more than 25 million views a month. Many perspective home buyers expect homes to mirror what they see on TV. Staging can help meet these expectations with many experts suggesting that homes be staged as if they were on the popular TV show.

What to Do

The NAR survey said that the living room, kitchen, and master bedroom were the top three areas to stage. The median cost of staging a home was \$675 but there are many low budget items that can be tackled for a fraction of the cost. De-cluttering a home is a minimum requirement. Potential home buyers often open cabinets and closets so those should be de-cluttered as well. Homeowners should consider an off-site storage unit if they don't have an out of the way place for all the clutter.

Other low-cost staging ideas include, improving lighting and sprucing up doors, windows and trim with a fresh coat of paint. Re-painting rooms in neutral colors

can also add to a home's appeal. Try grouping furniture within a room, creating an intimate seating area and take spare rooms and other unutilized space and stage it for a practical purpose, like an office or study nook.