



STAGING YOUR HOME  
FOR **SUCCESS**

# WHAT IS HOME STAGING?

Home staging is the act of preparing a home (and the contents of the home) for sale, with a special emphasis on presentation and appearance.

It's important to realize that *getting* a home for sale and *staging* a home is not always the same thing. For example, as part of your pre-sale preparations, you might go through the home to make small repairs where needed. This is an essential step in preparing your home for the market, but it's not the same as home staging.

Staging a home for sale normally involves things of an aesthetic nature, such as design, organization and overall appearance (as opposed to mechanical or functional improvements).



# WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The goal of home staging then is to improve the home's appearance in the eyes of potential buyers, with the ultimate goal of selling the home more quickly and for the highest possible price.

If you are selling a home, then you've obviously been on the other side of the process as a home buyer. Think back to your home buying experience. Try to recall the difference between the homes you thought were "just okay" and the homes that made you say "wow!" Professional home staging can help you turn your "okay" house into a "wow" house.

You can think of home staging as presenting your house in a way that appeals to the largest possible audience, in order to ensure a quick sale for the best possible price.



# BENEFITS OF STAGING YOUR HOME

Staging forces you to think like a buyer. When you set out to stage your home for the market, you will be looking at the home as if you were a buyer. Adopting this perspective early on will help you in many ways when preparing your home for the market.

Staging forces you to organize and de-clutter. Clearing away shelves, closets and cabinets is a big part of the home staging process. It also helps with moving, because you'll have to pack things away at some point anyway. So when you stage your home, you will also get a head start on packing to move. Staging increases likelihood of a sale. When selling your home, you must do everything within your power to increase your chances of selling — and I mean everything. These techniques can give you an extra edge in selling the home quickly.

Staging reduces the home's time on market. When you put in the extra effort to stage your home effectively, you will move closer to a quick sale. Anyone who has sold a home before can attest to the fact that the least time the home is on the market, the better. This is especially important if you will be paying two mortgages until the home sells (as is the case when you buy a new home before selling the old one).

Staging helps justify the asking price. If you are in a seller's market and you price your home correctly, you probably won't have to haggle over the asking price. But in a market that leans toward the buyer, you need everything in your favor to justify the asking price. Proper home staging can help you justify the asking price by positioning the home more favorably in the buyer's mind.

Staging can be fun! It may sound like all work and no play at first. Granted, you will certainly be putting some elbow grease into the process. But staging a home can be a creative process as well, and many people find they enjoy it once they've begun.



# STAGING THE EXTERIOR

## MAKE A LIST

Start by creating a list of items needing attention. Go out to the curb in front of your house with a notepad and pen. Jot down anything that "leaps" out at you.

## STICK WITH A COLOR

If the door and shutters are different colors, you may want to make them the same color. Choose the color that's the more neutral of the two and standardize the color scheme.

## UPDATE FLOWER BEDS

Mulch is your best friend when trying to boost your curb appeal. Adding fresh mulch to your existing flower / plant beds can make a big difference in appearance. Best of all, it cheap and readily available at your local garden store, Home Depot, etc.

## RENT A POWERWASHER

You might want to rent a power washer if you have a lot of dirt and grime. It's an easy way to clean everything at once — the siding, sidewalks, doors and shutters, etc.

## UPDATE THE PAINT

If the home's paint is chipped or faded, give it a fresh coat. Pay particular attention to shutters, doors and trim.

## HAVE A GREENTHUMB

Weather and season permitting, plant or pot some fresh flowers outside the front door. Bright plants or flowers do a lot to enhance the entry.

## PULL UNWANTED WEEDS

Check your flower beds and lawn for weeds every day while your house is on the market. Remove any weeds you find. It's important to check daily, because weeds can literally sprout up overnight.

## CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE

Do you have a large porch that's ideal for sitting? Add a nice bench, or a pair of chairs, to help people see themselves relaxing on the porch.

## LANDSCAPING

Keep the lawn mowed and neatly edged. A nicely mowed lawn does wonders for curb appeal, so you might have to mow every few days while the home is on the market (depending on where you live, season, etc.).

## TRIM SOME TREES

Trim bushes and trees as needed to give a tidy appearance. In particular, make sure they are not blocking windows or doors.



# STAGING THE ENTRY

The "entry" includes those areas people see when they first open the front door. This picks up where curb appeal leaves off. It's a critical area, because it represents the potential buyer's first impression upon walking into the house.

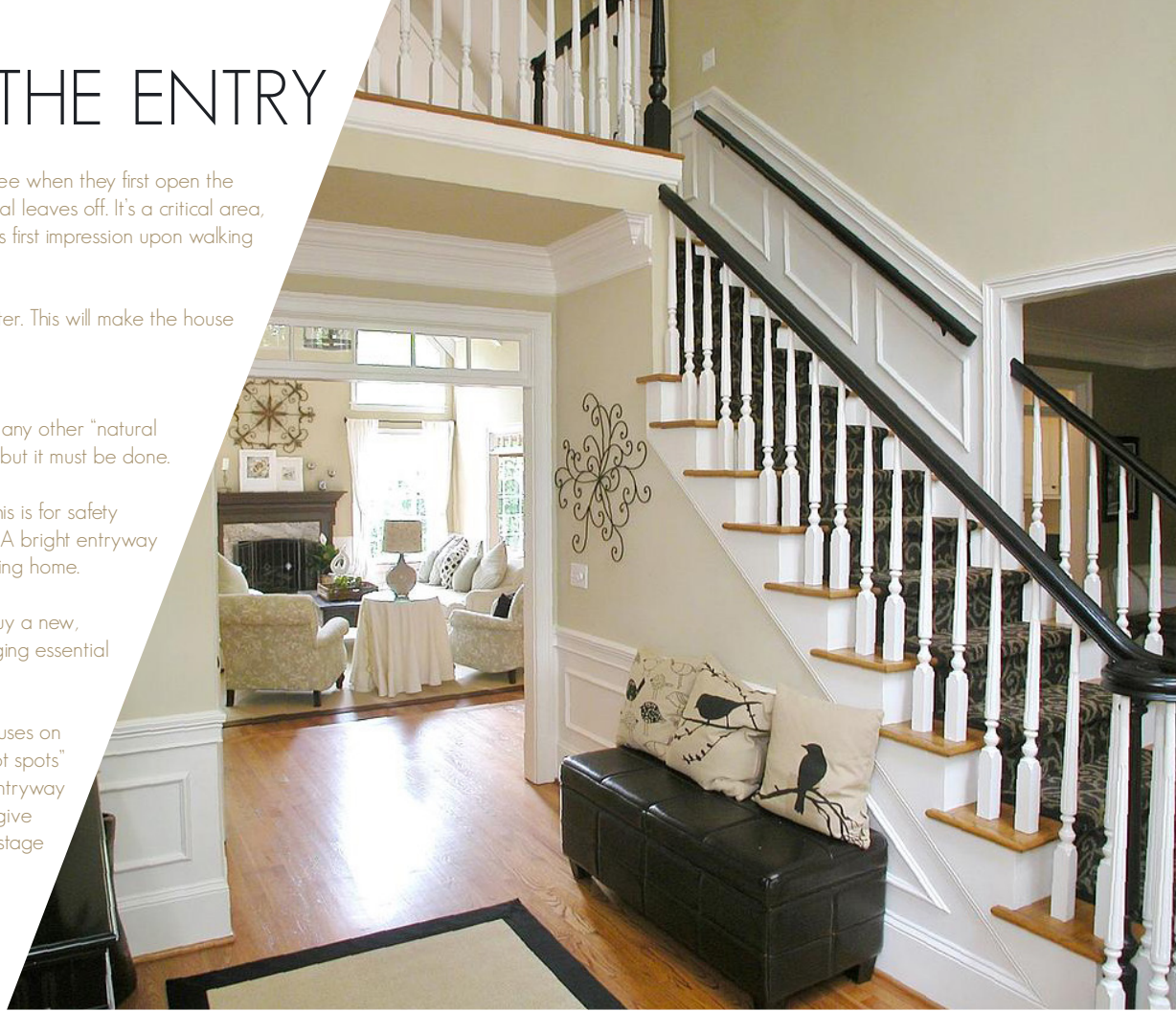
Keep the entryway open and free of clutter. This will make the house seem larger, right from the get-go.

Clear away all of those spider webs and any other "natural touches" to the entry area. It's a dirty job, but it must be done.

Make sure the entry has plenty of light. This is for safety reasons as well as general appearances. A bright entryway gives the initial impression of a warm, inviting home.

Get rid of that worn welcome mat and buy a new, high-quality welcome mat. It's a home staging essential ... and well worth the \$20 you'll spend.

Remember, professional home staging focuses on the house as a whole, but also on key "hot spots" that have a bigger impact. Your home's entryway is a natural magnet for people's eyes, so give the entry some extra attention when you stage your home for sale.



# STAGING THE LIVING ROOM

The living room is also an entertainment area of the home. So when buyers walk through the living room or family room area of your home, they will want to envision these two activities — spending time as a family and entertaining guests. Stage the living room area with this in mind. Make it warm and inviting, with good use of space and a conversational arrangement. Here are some specific tips to help you stage this key area of your home.

## TAKE DOWN PORTRAITS

Clear the room of family portraits and other items that say "you don't live here" to buyers.

## DE-CLUTTER THE MANTLE

If you have a mantle, make sure it's not overloaded with knick knacks. A couple of well-placed items (like a vase or flower arrangement) are all you need.

## NEUTRAL COLORS

"Neutral" does not have to be boring. You can liven up a neutral color scheme with colorful accent items, such as pillows and rugs.

Color-coordinate these items for a professional and "put together" appearance.

## OPEN UP THE ROOM

Let the room breathe. If it's crowded or hard to walk through due to having too much furniture, remove some items and place them in storage.

## MOVE IT AROUND

Arrange the room in a conversational way, if it's not that way already. Try different furniture arrangements until you get the best fit.

## RENT SOME FURNITURE

Consider renting furniture for staging purposes. If your family room ensemble consists of that old couch from college days and a cheap table with wobbly legs, replace them with some nice rental pieces.



# STAGING THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is a key area of the home for many reasons. Kitchens have a lot to do with resale value, so the buyers will want to be impressed with this area of the home. People also spend a lot of time in their kitchens, so a nicely staged kitchen will help them see themselves in the home.

All of these things will help you increase the likelihood of a sale, and that's the whole point of home staging in the first place.

With that in mind, here are some ways to stage your home's kitchen in order to wow buyers.



Spend some extra time de-cluttering. Kitchens are notorious for being full of clutter. So when you stage this area of your home, be ruthless about removing unnecessary items. This includes countertop appliances, utensils, the coffee pot, etc.

Clean like the sale of your home depended on it ... because it does. Pay particular attention to the sink, counters, stove, etc. "Clean and bright" should be your motto for kitchen staging.

Try updating your kitchen faucets, lights and other fixtures. You can make the entire space more modern just by updating these items.

Consider making upgrades. If you're in a buyer's market, it might be wise to go beyond cleaning and actually upgrade some of your kitchen features. Cabinets and counters is the rule of thumb here. If your cabinets and counters are outdated or ugly, an upgrade can make a huge difference in resale.

Give the walls a fresh coat of paint, following the paint tips mentioned previously. If the kitchen is connected to the family / living room, use the same color paint -- or one shade lighter or darker. This will make the eye flow from one room to the next, making the entire place seem more spacious.

Do you have an eat-in kitchen? If so, accentuate it by setting a small table. This will showcase the fact that the space serves double duty. Don't leave it up to the buyers to envision the eat-in kitchen — show it to them!



## STAGING THE BATHROOM

"Kitchens and baths" ... that's the expression used by real estate folks to indicate the areas of a home that carry the most resale value. Kitchens and baths. We already talked about staging your kitchen. But what about those bathrooms? How do you carry your home staging efforts in there?

I can sum up your bathroom plan-of-attack with two simple words – cleaning and updating. If you remember, "clean and bright" was our motto for staging the kitchen area. That same motto applies to the bathrooms. Bathrooms should be sparkling clean and well-lit (but not overly bright).

If you add "luxurious" onto that motto, you'll score extra points with home buyers. Clean, bright and luxurious. Those are the keys to staging a bathroom.

Here are some specific tips for carrying your home-staging efforts into the bathrooms of your house.



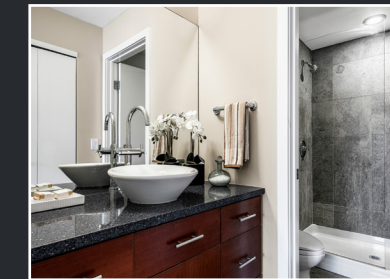
If your bathroom fixtures (handles, spigots, etc.) are outdated, replace them with sleek and modern fixtures. Stay away from brass fixtures – they bring the 1980's to mind.

If you have the budget and you really want to increase your home's appeal, consider installing a pedestal sink. They are very popular with buyers right now, and they make the bathroom seem larger by freeing up space.

Fresh Before showing the home, clean those bathrooms until they look like they're in a model home. Signs of use, such as soap scum and recently used sinks, will turn buyers off. flower arrangements do a lot for a bathroom, both in appearance and aroma.

Remember, when potential buyers tour your home their agents will probably be whispering "kitchens and baths" in their ears. So when staging your home to sell put some extra effort into those bathrooms. Your motto is clean, bright and luxurious.

Glass shower door a little gross? Remove it and take it outside for cleaning. Use a solution of one part muriatic acid to 10 parts water (wear goggles when mixing). Scrub it with steel wool, rinse it clean, and replace the door.



Put some high-quality plush towels on the towel rack. Color-coordinate them with the bathroom's color scheme (matching them to the rug, flower arrangement, etc.).

# STAGING THE BEDROOM

When potential buyers enter the bedrooms of your home, they want to see one thing about all else ... comfort. Bedrooms do not have appliances or fixtures. Not usually, anyway. So home staging in a bedroom usually consists of painting, furniture arrangement and some light decor.

Think "neutral, comfortable and spacious" when you stage your bedrooms for buyers. Keep those words in mind during your staging process, and you will be in good shape.

Here are some specific home staging tips for the bedrooms.



## NEUTRAL COLORS

Use soft, neutral colors with paints and color schemes. Earth tones are always a safe color that will appeal to the majority.

## LIMIT FURNITURE USE

Make bedrooms appear larger by limiting furniture to a bed, dresser and a couple of small items. Too much furniture makes a bedroom seem cramped.

## CLEAN OUT CLOSETS

Remove the bulk of your clothes from closets and pack them away in storage. You will have to pack them soon anyway, and doing it early will make your closets appear larger.

## INVEST IN NEW BEDDING

Invest in some new and luxurious bedding (comforter, sheets, accent pillows). You can take them with you when you move, and they will improve the look of the current bedrooms while it's on the market.

# THE END PRODUCT



By displaying an attention to detail and knowledge of the buyer's need to make an emotional connection to the home, you can drastically increase the sale price, as well as lowering the time spent on the market.

Here at Greene Realty Group, we are both willing and happy to help you with our expertise and experience in preparing your home for sale. We will help you get the most money for your home in the least amount of time.



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