Are you tired of listing properties that you know won’t get enough traffic because of how it looks? Are you afraid to address staging for fear of losing the listing? Learn how to win the listing by suggesting staging to merchandise your client’s number one asset: their home.

The average homeowner’s number one asset is the equity in their home. When a homeowner decides to sell their home their goal is to sell it for as much money as possible and to sell quickly.

This session will teach agents about how staging will help their clients reach their goals of selling quickly and sometimes, for more money. This session is fun, entertaining and educational.
The Real Estate Staging Association® (RESA®, the trade association for professional real estate stagers defines staging as, 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.

Many people think that staging is decorating. There is a significant difference between the two. Decorating is about your personal style. If you love purple and gold and want that in your bedroom then you may decorate your bedroom in purple and gold. However, if you have a purple and gold bedroom then you must change that when you are selling your home. The way you have decorated your home for your own enjoyment and the way you market your home for sale are very different.

Staging is not about your personal style, displaying your collections, etc. The way we function in our homes in our day-to-day lives is perfect for our day-to-day lives. However, when you decide to list your home for sale, you must think about how to properly merchandise that home so it is appealing to others.
Hiring a Professional Stager vs. Doing it Yourself

Stagers are trained professionals who 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. VS Homeowners do not do this professionally and may not understand market conditions and other important information that dictate how the home should be presented.

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. 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.

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. 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.

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. Photographs of properties that have been staged look better and the MLS than photos of non-staged properties. VS Professional stagers work with professional photographers and the REALTOR to ensure the best possible photographs are taken. This will provide perceived value, additional showings and, commonly, more potential buyers.

Many stagers provide additional website presence through blogging or on-line flyers. Additional web presence means more prospective buyers may see your home. 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.
How to Hire Professional Stager

Interview 2-3 stagers

When choosing a professional stager it is crucial to do your research. You should always interview 2-3 stagers when possible. This is NOT to price shop. Do not base your decision on price as you frequently get what you pay for. If you receive a bid for services that is significantly lower, this is a red flag. A lower fee supports lower quality. If a stager is the “low price leader”, do you think they command the confidence needed to effectively stage your home? Interviewing 2-3 stagers will give you a clear indication of what you get for your money and who will be behind it. Choose the stager you think will give you the best results.

View their portfolio

Look at the stager’s portfolio. Are their staging examples professionally photographed? If they were not professionally photographed, wouldn’t you wonder why not? If you see a portfolio with photos that are poor quality and the bid for services are the lowest out of the 2-3 bids you received, this is a red flag. Professionals invest in professional photography to showcase their work.

Confirm that the examples in their portfolio are the work of the staging company. New companies may use stock photos on their website, however stagers should ever use stock photos in their portfolio. Established, quality, professional stagers will ONLY use their own work in all aspects of their website. If you are unsure, copy the photo from their website and search it in Google images.

Inquire about their resources and Insurance

Do you see a range of furniture of the homes they are staging or does everything look the same? If you see the same living room setting in every photo, it may be an indication they are limited in their resources and/or are not staging very many homes.

Inquire if the stager owns their own furniture or if they rent furniture. If your home is vacant it is important to understand if you will be entering into an agreement for rental with the stager or a third party. Are all the parties properly insured?

Check references

Don’t be afraid to ask for references and check them out. A professional stager understands the importance of great references and they should have them available. Consider asking them for their personal statistics on projects they complete.

Contracts

Be sure you understand their contract. Written contracts provide you with a legal document outlining the scope of the work and expectations. This will ensure that no one can claim any misunderstandings later. Should a dispute arise, you can simply refer to your contract for a resolution. If you don’t understand something, ask for an explanation. If your stager does not offer a contract, this is a red flag.
20 Tips To Prepare Your Home For Sale

1. Hire a professional home stager. Homeowners will never be able to accomplish the same quality. Quality matters.

2. Remove excess furniture throughout your home.

3. Make your home look organized – even if you aren’t.

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 of the 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.

11. Make your master bathroom look and feel spa-like.

12. Minimize what is on your countertops to make them feel more spacious.

13. Remove all household appliances that are not used on a daily basis.

14. Make sure beds are made every day.

15. Hide dirty laundry.

16. Ensure sink is clear of any dishes.

17. If selling in the summer remove all winter clothes.

18. If selling in the winter remove all summer clothes.

19. Place all hygiene items under the sinks in the bathrooms.

20. Remove trash cans from view.
Don’t Forget Professional Photography

Real Estate has changed with the introduction of the Internet. According to the National Association of REALTORS, 90% of home-buyers searched online during their home buying process. Buyers will perform an average of 11 searches prior to taking action on a real estate site. This means that 90% of buyers will see your listing along with 10 others, prior to contacting you to view the listings. Without staging, your property (product) will be generic. Staging is what translates a generic product into a desirable and marketable product that drives sales.

When you invest in staging your home, do not skimp on the use of a professional photographer. Staged properties should be professionally photographed so they have the best chance of being memorable to a potential buyer who views it online. Remember that saying, “You only have one chance to make a first impression?”
Curb Appeal & Backyard Tips

Maintain regular watering, mowing, edging and weeding schedule.

Add fresh mulch to all beds.

Repaint front door, if needed.

Power wash the outside of the house.

Remove lawn décor & equipment.

Make sure front porch/entry way is clean and inviting.

Make sure the porch lighting is working and free of cob webs and spiders.

Use outdoor furniture to create inviting spaces.

Make sure trees or bushes don’t touch people as they walk up to the front door.

Make sure sprinklers are working.

Same rules apply to backyard.

Remove any dead plants and replace with seasonal colorful plants when appropriate.

Don’t Forget a Night Shot

Be sure to include a nighttime photo to your MLS photo gallery.
In a recent RESA study of 634 homes, un-staged homes spent an average of 107 DOM (Days On Market) before staging. After staging, these homes sold on average in 25 days. Homes that were staged prior to going on the market sold on average in 18 days.

Staged First
86% Less Time On The Market
Shell is the Chief Executive Officer of the Real Estate Staging Association®, (RESA®). RESA is a 501 (c) (6) tax-exempt non-profit trade association for professional real estate stagers. Shell is the go-to resource for major media outlets including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and CBS News. As a global visionary, author, and business strategist, Shell is one of the real estate industries' most influential people.

For more information on Real Estate Staging or to find a professional real estate stager visit RealEstateStagingAssociation.com 888-201-8687