Home Staging Checklist

When it comes to selling your home, there’s one thing to keep in mind: people don’t buy houses, they buy homes. Your goal is to make it easy for potential buyers to picture themselves living in your home. The act of grooming and decorating a house to properly showcase its features and make it more attractive is referred to by industry experts as home staging. Here’s a list of house staging tips to help you make the right impression on potential buyers.

Repairs, home improvements and décor

- Walk through your home with a friend and scrutinize every room from a buyer’s perspective. Renovate or fix any problems.
- Repair cracks, holes and chipped paint.
- Tighten loose knobs, towel racks, switch plates and outlet covers.
- Fix tight doors and windows, squeaky floorboards and loose stair banisters.
- Repair caulking, clean around tubs and sinks, and fix leaky faucets. Remove water stains.
- Paint walls with light, neutral colours.
- Improve security by adding window locks and motion-sensor lights outside to boost the attractiveness of your property.
- Add blinds and shutters for privacy.

Cleaning, organizing and furnishing

- Wash floors, walls, windows, ceilings, trim and blinds. Steam-clean drapes, shampoo carpets, and wax floors.
- Scrub kitchen and bathroom tiles.
- Make sure all appliances and countertops are cleared and spotless.
- Spray for bugs, if applicable.
- Throw out or give away anything you don’t need.
- Tidy up cabinets and closets, and neatly stow away toys, books and knick-knacks. Limit items stored on the floor or overhead in closets.
- Clean and organize the basement, attic, garage and shed.
- Pull up old carpets and remove area rugs if they’re covering hardwood floors.
- Pack away some belongings to maximize storage space for buyers. Consider moving some furniture and items into a temporary storage unit while you show your home.
Remove and avoid displaying personal items.

Secure valuables or store them in a safety deposit box.

Remove items you're taking to your future home, like chandeliers and mirrors.

Furnish empty rooms. Arrange furniture so that rooms appear as spacious as possible.

**Exterior prep – curb appeal**

Have the lawn, porch or entryway looking perfect. Plant flowers.

Patch dead lawn areas with sod or seed. Pull out weeds. Rake leaves or shovel snow.

Cut and trim shrubs, and remove yard debris.

Paint doors, shutters, fences and siding.

Replace broken window panes, and fix torn screens.

Fix damaged roof shingles. Clean gutters and downspouts.

Wash the driveway and sidewalk. Patch cracks or holes.

Make sure outside lights and doorbell work, and your house number can be seen from the road.

**Last-minute open-house preparation**

Open drapes and blinds. If there are no windows in the room, make sure lighting is adequate.

Turn on all the lights, even during the day, including outside entrance, closet, basement and attic lights.

Clean windows and mirrors.

Create ambiance by setting up for a formal dinner, lighting the fireplace on a cold day, displaying lightly scented candles for aroma, and adding fresh flowers to your décor.

Turn off the television, stereo and radio (easy-listening music is OK).

Put pets in a fenced yard, or drop them off with friends.

Put out refreshments to keep visitors longer.

Clear any pet or cigarette odours.

If possible, leave. If you must remain, be courteous and avoid conversation.