



# DIY Do It Yourself

Home Staging Action Kit



# HOW TO

## Set The **Stage Outside** So You Make **A Great First Impression!**

As a homeowner, you want potential buyers who drive up to your house to get excited about going inside. For that to happen, you need to make an immediate “good first impression.” In today’s market where buyers have lots of choice, it’s important to take a few simple steps to ensure your success.

Here are some easy, inexpensive fixes that will help create that outside appeal and get you one giant step closer to a sale.

- 
- 1** Paint or stain the garage doors, especially if they show any weathering. These are the first visuals a potential buyer focuses on. If garage doors are metal and dented, they may need to be replaced.
  - 2** Any old, basically abandoned sheds or small structures must be removed, the area graded and replaced with grass.
  - 3** Change any dated outdoor light fixtures.
  - 4** Fix that driveway. If it’s blacktop, make sure cracks and crumbling areas are dug out and filled, and then the whole driveway sealed. If it’s cement, have large cracks filled in and repaired professionally. The buyer must at least feel they can drive in with the moving truck confidentially!
  - 5** Make sure landscaping bricks are in their proper placement. Mowing and weed removal by gardeners sometimes dislodges them, and while this is something the homeowner rarely notices, it makes the property look unkept.
  - 6** Fill in the bare dirt are under large shade trees. Plant shade-tolerant plants in defined planters or lay down groundcover.
  - 7** All landscaping beds should be cleaned out and updated for your time of year. Replace old bedding.



**8** Have trees and bushes pruned and trimmed. If a bush or tree is looking old or about to expire, remove it and replace it with a similar size and type if possible. If there are tree limbs hanging over the roof, have them removed.

**9** If the house needs painting and a full paint job is not in the budget, have it touched up professionally in the most visible spots. Paint and fix any crooked or damaged shutters. At the very least these updates may help get a buyer in the front door, even if they later negotiate a full paint job into the sale.

**10** If the house has siding, have it power-washed and have gutters and windows cleaned. Window cleaning inside and out makes the house feel updated and fresh, eliminating that old and dingy look.

**11** Make sure the grass is in good shape, weeds are removed and that trimming is done regularly. So many sellers fall down on this job the minute the house is listed. This is critical to selling a house quickly, especially one where the owners have already moved out. In snowy climates, removal must be done regularly as well. If you are no longer living in the home make sure you have a Home Warranty in place to reassure buyers.

**12** Keep garbage and recycle containers inside the garage along with all toys and equipment. Make sure the garage is

neat and organized. Painted walls and floors also go a long way in this area and are inexpensive to do.

**13** Decks should be washed and repainted or resealed. The plantings around them cleaned, weed-free and looking good. Patio furniture should be in excellent condition as this is the area where the family will envision enjoying the warm days and the new yard.

**14** If the roof has missing shingles and they can be replaced inexpensively, go ahead and take care of it as it may save negotiation over a completely new roof. Roof repair and cost should be minor but if repairs are extensive you might as well replace the entire roof, or adjust the price accordingly.

**15** A little extra effort goes a long way. Some very nice finishing touches could be solar lights lining the driveway, installing a more attractive front door with leaded glass inserts or replacing plain doorknobs with something a little more customized.

**16** If you have an evening showing, make sure the lights are on both outside and inside. This makes it look warm and inviting.

**17** If it's a holiday season, by all means decorate the home! Just as the scent of freshly baked cookies or vanilla helps create a 'homey ambience' inside the house, seasonal decorations really say "This is a home" and "I can see myself enjoying life here!" At the very least, always have some greenery or flowers appropriate to the season on the front step or porch. Even a simple birdbath with some flowers around it around it says "home".



Remember, most home buyers cannot visualize even these very simple changes and fix-ups in a house, and the ones who can will be looking for a reduced price from you. So, to sell the house quickly and for top dollar, make it appeal to all the potential buyers who will be seeing it, rather than the few who may be looking for a "fixer upper."

Those buyers know what they want, will go after it and need less assistance in the process.

Finally, have neighbors or friends look at the finished results to see if you've missed anything that would be quick and easy to do.

When the home looks its very best, make sure your agent updates the pictures on the Internet. This is especially important if the season has changed, for example from winter to summer.

# HOW TO

## Quickly **Stage The Inside Of** A House **In 5 Steps**

As homeowner, you need a simple step-by-step process for staging the interior of your house. The following is a logical 5-step sequence that anybody can do in each room.

### STEP 1

#### **De-Cluttering**

This is the single most important action you can take in preparing the home for sale. Your goal is to remove as much visible clutter as possible and turn disorder into order. This includes removing any excess and unnecessary furniture so that the rooms look bigger.

An Accredited Home-Staging Specialist can teach you exactly what to do for each room to make your home look its absolute best for prospective buyers.

### STEP 2

#### **De-personalize**

Your Accredited Home-Staging Specialist can teach you why it's important to remove everything that provides any information about anyone who lives in the house. That means removing all photo frames, clearing off all information from notice boards, kid's schedules, invitations and photographs, religious symbols and even removing visible prescription drugs.

These items only act as distractions for the house-hunter, and you don't want to lose the naturally curious prospective buyer to a display of family photographs. Also, and perhaps more importantly, you don't want to expose your personal information for any potential illegal use.



## STEP 3

### Repair

An Accredited Home-Staging Specialist will show you how to find problems with your home that are in need of repair, but only the types of repairs that will be obviously visible to a potential buyer, not major electrical or plumbing issues. These would be things such as leaky faucets, broken tiles, damaged hardware and the like.

A home that is in a good state of repair indicates to potential buyers that the house has been well maintained and is not hiding something that will cost them later on down the road. It's important that you learn how to take each room step-by-step and look for items that may be in need of repair. An Accredited Home-Staging Specialist will give you easy to follow checklists that make this step easy to follow.



## STEP 4

### Cleaning

The rule here is clean, clean and then clean some more! This is without a doubt most critical to your success. Consider the impact on a potential buyer who gets the impression they will have to spend days and days cleaning a dirty home before they can even unpack a single box. Dirt puts buyers off faster than anything! If this task seems daunting, your Accredited Home-Staging Specialist can give you some ideas on how to get it handled quickly and efficiently.

## STEP 5

### Decorating

Decorating can simply be accomplished by repositioning the existing furniture, perhaps removing or replacing certain pieces, adding accent pillows, replacing or adding art and maybe incorporating other effective accessories. An Accredited Home-Staging Specialist will show you exactly how to do this, and can also give you resources that you can use if you need to add additional items.

One of the biggest challenges with decorating is creating symmetry. An Accredited Home-Staging Specialist can show you several strategies to ensure that every room is decorated to maximum effect.

