

# THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO Real Estate Staging

INCLUDES:

MOST RECENT STATISTICS

TIPS ON HOW TO HIRE A  
REAL ESTATE STAGER

CURB APPEAL TIPS

STAGING BENEFITS

THINGS TO CONSIDER  
WHEN HIRING A STAGER

DIY VS HIRING A PRO

DIY TIPS

REPAIR IT OR REPLACE IT?

PAINT TIPS

SHOWING TIPS

6-WEEK MOVING CHECK  
LIST



Photo Courtesy of Brad Fletcher, The Home Staging Pros, LLC.  
2016 RESA Professional Stager of the Year



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# RESA<sup>®</sup>

## HOME STAGING

### NATIONAL STATISTICS REPORT

#### VACANT & OCCUPIED HOMES PREVIOUSLY ON THE MARKET UN-STAGED AND NOT SOLD

In a recent RESA study of 1,081 homes, un-staged homes spent an average of **184 DOM** (Days On Market) before staging. After staging, these homes sold on average in **41 days**. Homes that were staged prior to going on the market sold on average in **23 days**.



Staged First  
**90%**  
Less Time On  
The Market

# Real Estate Staging, The Key to Successful Selling



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 merchandize that home so it is appealing to others.



Well Dressed Home WellDressedHome.ca

A professional stager can make your selling and moving experience LESS stressful. Professional stagers will be able to give you advice on what items need to be addressed in order to properly prepare your home for sale.

If you have a budget, then a professional stager will be able to tell you where to invest your dollars for the best return. They will be able to make recommendations on everything from paint choices to knowing when to replace or update items, knowing what stays, and what should be packed up.

Professional stagers should never make you feel bad about your personal taste or insult your belongings, style, lifestyle etc.

# Staging Benefits Sellers and Buyers

Overall, professional stagers agree that staging a property prior to going on the market benefits everyone involved with the sale and purchase of the property. Professional stagers recommend repairs and upgrades that are needed to get the property in market ready condition.

Staging shows buyers the property's true potential.

Buyers often do not have the funds to purchase a home then pay more money to address repairs, painting, etc. Buyers realize and appreciate the benefits of purchasing a professionally staged property.

- Professionally staged properties show better than competing ones for sale, including new construction homes and higher-priced properties.
- Staged properties sell faster when compared with properties that have not been staged. From the date of listing until the day of closing, home staging shortens this time frame, even in a slow real estate market.
- Staged properties can increase the number of offers and selling price in hot markets.
- Buyers view professionally staged listings as “well-maintained”.
- Buyers’ agents recognize that professionally staged listings are “move-in” ready and are more inclined to show staged properties.
- Photos of professionally staged listings look better on the MLS, as well as in print.
- Professionally staged listings “STAND-OUT” in prospective buyers’ minds.



# 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

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.

## 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. Make your home look organized – even if you aren't.
2. Remove excess furniture throughout your home.
3. Hang mirrors to widen a narrow room.
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 homebuyers 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?"



Typical MLS photo un-staged.



Staged with Professional Photography

Photo Courtesy of Harry Lim Photography



Above is photographed with a camera phone and below is professional photography.





Above is photographed with a camera phone and below is professional photography.



# Common Repairs You Should Look For

Repair	Item	Replace/Upgrade
	Worn carpets	✓
✓	Broken light switches	✓
✓	Loose door knobs	✓
✓	Leaky faucets	✓
✓	Running toilets	
✓	Sticky locks	
✓	Slow drains	
✓	Broken garbage disposal	✓
✓	Cracks, holes in walls	
	Broken screen doors	✓
✓	Clogged shower heads	
	Ripped window screens	✓
✓	Sticky windows	✓
✓	Damaged cabinet door knobs	✓

Properties that have had issues repaired are more attractive to potential buyers than properties that still need repairs.



## Quick & Easy Tips To Get Your Home Ready For Sale



### Fixtures

- Update lighting fixtures. Installing new lighting is one of the most economical facelifts you can give your property. Outdated fixtures make your property feel outdated to buyers.
- Install new light bulbs. Make sure to use the correct wattage for the light fixture.
- Install new toilets if the current ones are old & damaged.
- Clean windows both inside and outside.
- Repair broken windows.
- Make sure windows slide on tracks easily.
- Wash window screens and replace damaged ones.
- Update blinds if current ones are old & damaged.
- Repair/replace the garbage disposal if needed.
- Repair or update the faucets in sinks and bathrooms, including shower heads.



Consider hiring a professional to clean your property. Their fees are reasonable and it frees you up to take care of other matters. Do your cleaning **AFTER** you have made repairs, upgrades, painting, etc. This will ensure your cleaning is not ruined by the dust of repairs and upgrades.

# Kitchens and Bathrooms

Kitchens and bathrooms sell homes. Buyers will pay special attention to these areas. It is so important to be sure these rooms are in the best condition possible. This includes being clean and up-to-date.

## Kitchen & Bathroom Tips

- Kitchens and bathrooms must be immaculate.
- Update appliances if possible.
- Check doors and cabinets to make sure they open smoothly. Repair if needed.
- Tighten doorknobs.
- Re-caulk and re-grout showers, tubs and sinks.
- Touch-up cabinet paint in bathroom and kitchen.
- Consider upgrading bathroom mirrors.
- Replace missing or broken tiles.
- Replace/repair the garbage disposal if needed.
- Air out and clean inside of cabinets and under sinks.



Consider giving mirrors in your bathroom a facelift by using MirrorMate®.



Photos courtesy of MirrorMate®  
[www.MirrorMate.com](http://www.MirrorMate.com)

# Give Your Home a “Paint Lift”

## Color Choices

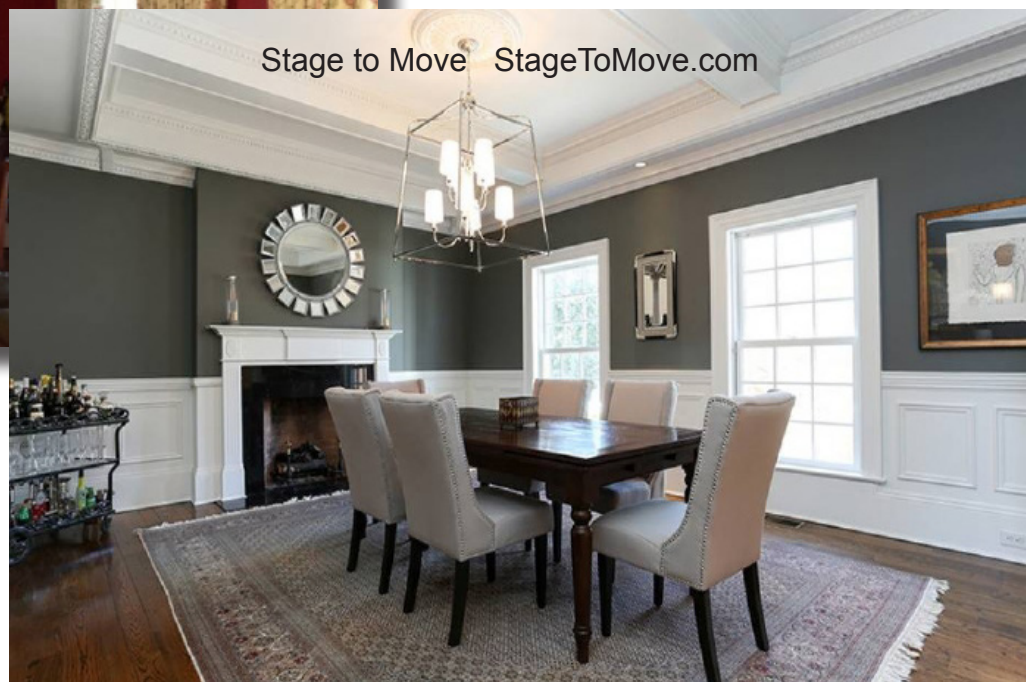
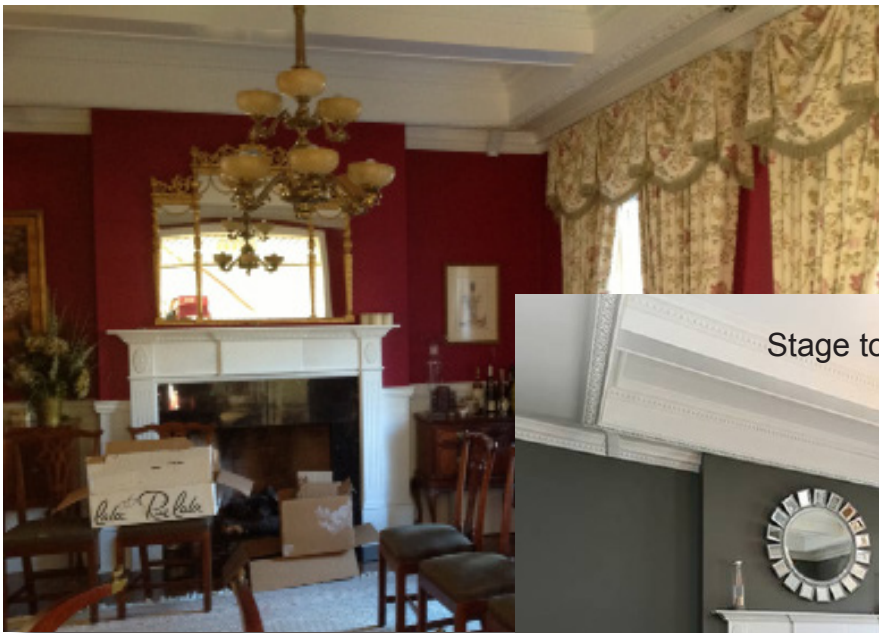
Neutral wall colors are best for selling homes. Color can be used in the accessories you use for staging.

## Exterior Prep Work Tips

- Remove light fixtures and shutters, prior to painting.
- Make repairs to light fixtures and shutters so you can replace them after you have painted.
- Power wash the house to remove dirt and paint chips.
- For loose paint, use a paint scraper. (Be sure to wear eye protection)
- If power washing loosens mortar, repair this before you paint.
- Tape off areas you don't want painted.

## Interior Prep Work Tips

- Move the furniture to the middle of the room and cover.
- Remove artwork from walls.
- Patch holes in the walls and sand them.
- Remove electrical switch plates and use masking tape or painters tape over the outlet.
- If painting the ceiling, cover lighting.
- Clean the walls with TSP. Follow the manufacturers directions.
- Tape off areas you don't want painted.



# Curb Appeal The Real First Impression

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 Nighttime Shot

Be sure to include a nighttime photo to your MLS photo gallery.



# Showing Your Home

## Bedrooms

- Make all beds.
- Pick-up and put away all clothes.
- Make sure dresser tops are clean and tidy.
- Put away jewelry.
- Hide any personal items.

## Kitchen

- Put dishes away.
- Wipe down the kitchen counters.
- Put away dish rags, towels, and sponges.
- Put dish soap under the counter.
- Have counter tops tidy with no clutter.
- Wipe down appliances so they shine.
- Empty all trash cans and hide if visible.

## Miscellaneous

- Vacuum carpets.
- Sweep floors.
- Turn on lights.
- Play soft music.

## Living Room/Family Room/Office

- Make sure rooms are clean and tidy.
- Put away magazines.
- Put the remote controls out of sight.
- Turn off computers.
- Hide any documents with identifying information.

## Bathrooms

- Should be white glove clean.
- Glass doors should be free from water spots.
- Towels are clean and tidy.
- Toilet bowl is clean and install a bowl freshener. Close toilet lid.
- Remove or hide medications.
- Empty trash can.
- Clean mirror.

## Curb Appeal

- Sweep walks.
- Power wash house and walkways.
- Use fresh mulch.
- Plant colorful flowers.

# Your Personal Moving Checklist

## Six Weeks Before Moving

Start talking to your children about the move so they are not anxious.

If you are an active service member, decide whether you want to make a DIY move, or have the government handle everything for you.

If using a moving company call and get estimates and choose a company.

If you are moving yourself and need moving trucks, call now to book the truck. If you wait you will risk not having an available truck.

Pick an afternoon or evening for everyone in the family to go through their clothes.

Make piles of clothes to toss, to give to charity, and keep.

Create an inventory of everything to be moved.

Collect everything that is not to be moved and have a garage sale or donate to charity. (charitable donations are tax deductible so save the receipts)

Get boxes and start packing.

Remember moving is an excellent time to purge!! Really take a look at items that you have stored in the garage, basement, etc. Chances are if you have not used it in 6 months you most likely no longer need it. Many items you once felt you had an emotional attachment to, you may now find that you don't. You still have the memory but you may not necessarily need the macaroni pen holder you made in grammar school!

### Moving Companies

### Estimates

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### Notes

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# Four Weeks Before Moving

Notify any mail subscriptions of a change of address.

Check out your new community if you are not familiar with it; use the Internet to locate all of the stores and places you use in your current community.

Get children's school records. Find the schools your children will go to and make arrangements for them & look into new daycare, should you require it.

Collect everything from neighbors or friends that you have lent out and return every thing you have borrowed.

Check with your veterinarian for pet records. If your pets are micro chipped, notify the chip company of new address and phone numbers. If you are traveling to your new location, give them cell numbers and have them post notes that you are in transit incase the pets escape during the move.

Set up a disconnect date with the utility companies; make sure they have your new address so they can send you a final statement or deposit refund if its due.

Stop shopping online so you don't have packages delivered that won't make it before you move.

Service power mowers, boats etc., Drain all gas/oil to prevent spills and/or fires when moving.

Check with doctors and dentists for all family records and prescriptions.

Check freezer and use all the food you can use until you move. Check your pantry for expired canned items or items almost empty. Toss what you don't want to take with you.

If you have a safe deposit box and are moving out of the area, remove your contents so you can take them with you.

## Important Numbers

Current School

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New School

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Current Day Care

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## Important Numbers

Veterinarian

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Utility Company

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Doctor

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Use [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and search, "chamber of commerce" and "the city you are moving to". The chamber of commerce will have lots of resources in your new community.

# One Week Before Moving

Handle your banking needs, close accounts if needed etc.

If moving long distance have your car serviced and fill all fluids.

Request a change of address from the post office.

Dispose of combustibles and spray cans as they can explode, especially if moving in the heat.

Finish packing and don't forget to mark the boxes.

Create one large room in your house for the packers/movers to be able to use so they can work freely.

Cancel newspaper and garden services.

Don't forget your pets; make any arrangements to ensure their safety in the move.

Review the entire list to make sure you have not overlooked anything.

## Important Numbers

REALTOR \_\_\_\_\_

Movers \_\_\_\_\_

Bank \_\_\_\_\_



You can change your address online at [www.USPS.com](http://www.USPS.com)

# Moving Day

If you are moving locally, have one person go to the new house when delivering the first load and one person stay behind to keep the process going.

Have small children stay with friends or family as children will slow the process and get bored.

Make a final check of the entire house including closets, shelves, attic, garage, every room.

Make sure the movers have your correct new address and they know how to get there. Exchange cell phone numbers with the driver.

Moving does take a lot of time and energy and can be a stressful experience for everyone in the family. Be sure to plan ahead and remember that moving affects everyone in the family so everyone needs to be considerate and mindful of each other's feelings.



# Real Estate Staging Association

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Advancing Professionalism And Excellence In Real Estate Staging

For more information on Real Estate Staging or  
to find a professional real estate stager visit  
[www.RealEstateStagingAssociation.com](http://www.RealEstateStagingAssociation.com)

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