



The Best of Home Seller Tips

*Home Staging tips that
sell your home fast!*

**AtWell**
STAGED HOME

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About the Author and this eBook



Susan Atwell, home staging expert and President of **AtWell Staged Home** is passionate about staging homes to sell quickly and for top dollar.

Since 2005, Susan has staged homes of all sizes and in all price ranges in Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and Fairfield Counties. From a 750 square-foot post war co-op to a multi-million dollar 10,000 square-foot historic home.

These experiences inspire the [Stage Every Listing Letter and Log](#), a monthly newsletter and on-line resource of home staging tips and tools for anyone selling real estate. Join our mailing list at

www.StageEveryListing.com.

The log is written to help both real estate professionals and home sellers successfully prepare and market their homes for a quick sale.

Thank you for downloading your free copy of [The Best of AtWell Staged Home's Home Seller Tips Volume 1](#). If you like these tips, please pass them on to your friends, clients and colleagues.

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Avoid HGTV's #1 Biggest Real Estate Mistake

For a quick sale, showcase or stage your home.

Failing to showcase or stage their home is the number one mistake home seller's make, according to HGTV's [25 Biggest Real Estate Mistakes](#) and their panel of top real estate experts.

"When you are selling your house, you have to really look at it objectively and think about it from the viewpoint of the house hunter," asserts Lisa LaPorta of HGTV's [Designed to Sell](#). This means decorating to appeal to the home buyer, not yourself. To achieve this look, Kendra Todd, real estate expert and winner of *The Apprentice* season 3, suggests hiring a professional home stager.

What is home staging? Staging is about decorating a house to sell quickly and for top dollar. If you wouldn't wear pajamas to a job interview, don't just stick a *For Sale* sign on your lawn. Prepare for the sale and put your homes best foot forward.

But isn't staging expensive? Staging can cost as little as a few hundred dollars, or in more practical terms, much less than a typical month's mortgage payment, condo fee, or taxes. And the cost may even be tax-deductible. By the end of a 2-3 hour consultation you will know how to make your home stand out from the competition.

Do I need to hire a professional stager? When you hire a professional home stager, you hire someone with an eye for decorating and a mind for business – someone who is committed to helping you sell your home quickly and who understands your target market. Their experience will save you time and money, as they know which changes reap the greatest returns.

Want to sell fast and for top dollar? Stage your home and make it the best in its class. Spending just a few hundred dollars to showcase your home has the potential to return thousands at closing. Staging a house may well be the best investment you make.

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Hidden potential...



A large 5-bedroom split in Katonah, NY, is taken off the market after **14 months and no sale**. The home sellers are trying a new approach – home staging. *AtWell Staged Home* develops a detailed and budget conscious DIY plan, aggressively implemented by nearly 30 volunteers over a two week period. The only items purchased for this transformation are paint and a slipcover. The approach works. **Four days after going back on the market it sells.**

Six Tips to Maximize Your Home Staging Dollar

Think you can't afford to hire a professional home stager? Think again. In today's market, you can't afford not to.

1. **Interview the stager by phone.** The stager will explain the process and gather needed information about your property before you meet.
2. **Email your listing to the stager.** First impressions start on the Internet. Staging will bring out your home's best features – in person and on the Web.
3. **Start with a home staging consultation.** Sometimes referred to as a “working” consultation, these meetings generally last 2-4 hours. During that time, the stager walks through your home with the critical eye of a potential home buyer, proposing design and decorating modifications that are unique to your space.
4. **Take your own notes.** During the consultation allow the stager to focus solely on dispensing advice. This will save both time and money.
5. **Prioritize your notes at the end of the meeting.** The stager will ensure that you concentrate on the tasks that give you the most bang for your staging buck.
6. **Do the work yourself.** Let the home stager know your skill set, budget and time frame, before the consultation. Armed with this information, the stager will make cost effective recommendations you can do yourself.

Contact your home stager any time after the consultation for clarifications or quotes on additional services.

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No Vacancy...



A vacant Stratford, CT, condo - sitting on the market for 5 months - sells just one week after staging is completed. A team effort by the homeowners, who implement cost effective recommendations and *AtWell Staged Home*, who decorates this unit to sell.

Staging Succeeds where Price Reductions Fail

A lower price is a great way to gain fresh interest in your property, but price isn't everything. For a competitive advantage, stage your home.

You've probably heard the joke – beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes straight to the bone. It's no joke to house hunters. If potential buyers can't immediately see a home's surface beauty, they won't hang around long enough to learn what's underneath. Buyers will assume that superficial flaws go down to the foundation.

Staging dresses your house to impress.

Like meeting someone for the first time, whether it's a job interview or a blind date, appearances matter. If you've grabbed the buyer's attention visually, you've got a chance at grabbing him emotionally.

Staging makes buyer's fall in love with your house.

House hunters buy the home they love, the one that excites them. Staging allows buyers to connect emotionally to your home by picturing themselves living there. You know you've set the scene when house hunters start planning where they will put *their* furniture, instead of commenting on *yours*.

Staging makes your house move-in ready.

Home buyers are looking for an easy transition – not a project. A move-in ready residence will put your home at the top of their list.

Staging adds value that can't always be measured in dollars and cents.

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Simply Amazing...



4,100 square-foot Granite Springs, NY, ranch home **sells first day on the market**. An agent paid 3-hour consultation simplifies and stages this home in preparation for its next owner. Hard work by the sellers, at minimal expense, helps these home owners move up to their dream home closer to their careers.

Selling Insanity

Definition: Trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.

I'm sure you've seen it. A seller puts their home on the market. They are convinced it will sell quickly, but after a few weeks, no offers. The price is reduced. A few more weeks pass, still no offers. Another price reduction is considered. And so it begins.

How do you prevent – or stop – this from happening to you? Focus on product, price and promotion.

Product

- Your home became a commodity the second the *For Sale* sign was placed on the lawn. But does your home's "packaging" reflect the image you want to project? Employ staging, a marketing tool that uses decorating, to sell your house quickly and for top dollar.

Price

- Price it right – from the start. Desperate to sell? Consider real estate expert [Barbara Corcoran's advice](#). Set your initial price as much as 10-15% below the asking price of comparable homes in your market. Read her advice in [How to Sell Your House Fast](#) or [watch the video below](#). (Pricing advice starts at 1 minute and runs 45 seconds.)



Promotion

- Choose a real estate agent that will aggressively promote your property. An agent with a proven reputation for getting homes sold.

Buyers won't be able to resist the combination of a home they love at a price they can afford. Work with a professional home stager and your real estate agent for the sanest selling experience you can have.

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Your Return on Home Improvement Investments

[2012 HomeGain Survey of over 1,000 real estate agents nationwide](#)

HomeGain 2012 Top 10 D-I-Y Home Improvements For Sellers (NATIONAL)

D-I-Y Home Improvements	Cost	Benefit	ROI	% Recommended
Clean & de-clutter	\$402	\$2,024	403%	99%
Lighten & brighten	\$424	\$1,690	299%	96%
Electrical & plumbing	\$807	\$3,175	293%	93%
Landscaping	\$564	\$1,777	215%	97%
Staging	\$724	\$2,144	196%	76%
Carpet	\$671	\$1,746	160%	99%
Floors	\$902	\$1,897	110%	93%
Paint Interior	\$967	\$2,001	107%	94%
Kitchen & bathroom	\$1,957	\$3,254	66%	70%
Paint exterior	\$1,406	\$2,176	55%	79%

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An Inconvenient Truth

Truth is few things are more inconvenient than having your home on the market.

Part 1 of 2

Imagine a bad reality show, where you – a home seller – are forced to live in *Macy's* window for weeks on end. Your personal items, your life, constantly exposed to strangers. And everything has to be perfect all the time.

If your home is currently on the market, you may feel this way already. So what's the best way to get out from under the microscope? Sell fast.

Well, that sounds easy – and obvious – but how do you sell fast?

A combination of staging, effort, and a willingness to be inconvenienced – at least for the time that your home is on the market.

Remember, your efforts will be rewarded. The more you do now, the faster your home will sell, and the sooner you can return to a normal life.

Just one question remains. Are you willing to do what it takes to sell? The following questions should help you find out.

1. Are you willing to detach yourself emotionally from this home and view it as a product or commodity?
2. Are you willing to let go of your personal style and decorate to appeal to the widest variety of buyers?
3. Are you willing to pack up anything you won't need for the next few months – even if it includes children's toys, personal photos and keepsakes?
4. Are you willing to eliminate or hide TVs, computers or other electronic devices?
5. Are you willing to send your pets away when the home is being shown?
6. Are you willing to furnish an unfurnished home so that it is warm, inviting, and spacious?
7. Are you willing to clean like you've never cleaned before?

If you answered "yes" to most or all of these questions, then you are ready. The truth is that you will be inconvenienced, but it will be well worth it when you sell fast and for top dollar.

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Take Two...



Seven months and no sale. This Pound Ridge, NY, home seller tries a new approach – new agent, new price and this time the home is staged. **Finally, in just two months, a sale.**

No Vacancies

Five reasons furnished homes are more appealing and sell faster than vacant homes.

Builders do it and so should you. Furnish and stage a vacant home, that is. And why do they? Here are five reasons.

1. **Furnishing a vacant home hides minor flaws while showcasing a home's best features.** No home – not even new construction – is ever perfect. Staging distracts the home buyers from minor cosmetic flaws and imperfections.
2. **Vacant homes appear smaller because they lack perspective.** Placing representative pieces of furniture in a room allows home buyers to imagine how – and if – their own furniture will fit.
3. **Furnished homes are inviting and warm.** It may sound corny, but your goal is to create a love connection between your buyer and your home. Buyers will purchase the home they love.
4. **Furniture gives each space a purpose and helps sell a lifestyle.** Defining each room with furniture and accessories quickly lets buyers picture themselves living in this space.
5. **Vacant homes broadcast a message that the home owners have moved and are desperate to sell.** Don't give home buyers any reason to ask for money off on the sale. An investment in rental furnishings and accessories will be returned at closing.

Even builders of new homes know that vacant properties appear cold, uninviting, and often times small. It is money well spent to downplay cosmetic construction flaws, showcase features, create warmth, and help buyers connect emotionally to a home. Staging a vacant home – new or old – is an important step to selling quickly and for top dollar.

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All the Right Moves...



A newly renovated, but vacant, 2-bedroom condo in White Plains, NY, **sells in just 4 days**. The seller makes all the right moves. After consulting a Realtor, she makes the necessary upgrades and fixes. Next, she calls *AtWell Staged Home* to decorate the home to sell. And finally, she prices it right. The perfect combination for a quick sale.

An Inconvenient Truth

Truth is few things are more inconvenient than having your home on the market.

Part 2 of 2

To reduce the amount of time that you will be inconvenienced – and you will be inconvenienced – focus on the following:

Be prepared. The hardest part of living in a home that is on the market is constantly being prepared to show your home. But you must be ready at a moment's notice. You never know when your perfect buyer will walk through the door. This is not a good time to entertain or have guests.

Clean sells. It's surprising how dirty even a vacant home can get. Dust on surfaces, cobwebs in corners, stains in stagnant toilets, finger prints on windows and appliances – all of these areas need to be inspected and cleaned regularly. Consider hiring a cleaning service during this period.

Pack it up. Pack up and store anything you won't need while your home is on the market. Packing sooner, rather than later, will make the transition easier. Many moving companies offer storage options for those staging their homes to sell.

Stick to the essentials. Too much or no furniture can make a home feel small. Cluttered homes are distracting, while vacant homes are cold. Either way, buyers will have trouble picturing their furniture in these spaces. Define each space to have a single purpose, minimize clutter, and make sure there is plenty of light.

Showcasing or staging your home will minimize the stress and inconvenience that comes with selling. Being inconvenienced for the short term will pay off.

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December Deal...



This 2,300 square-foot home in Yorktown, NY, has an **accepted offer just 10 days after listing**. And who says December is a bad month to sell a home? A 2-hour agent paid consultation with *AtWell Staged Home* transforms most rooms on the spot while giving the home owners the tools to complete the look.

When a Stager Calls

Afraid to stage? You're not alone. Here are 5 common home staging fears debunked.

I'm afraid it's too late to stage.

In this tough market, your home needs to be the best to stand out from the rest. Even if your home has been on the market for months, it's never too late to stage.

I'm afraid staging won't work.

Staged homes really do sell faster and for more money than unstaged homes. Here are just two recent examples. A home previously on the market 14 months sold 4 days after staging for just 3% below asking price. Another home staged prior to going on the market sold in 5 days with multiple competitive offers. *(For more success stories visit AtWellStagedHome.com.)*

I'm afraid staging is too expensive.

Stagers understand you don't want to spend a lot of money on a home you are selling. Home stagers are experts at redesign – the art of using what you already have to decorate.

I'm afraid I won't have time to fix up my home before the stager arrives.

Would you lose weight before joining a gym? Probably not. Once you decide to sell your home, contact a stager. Working together, you will establish a staging plan that fits your time frame, budget, and skill set.

I'm afraid I won't like the changes the stager makes.

This is unlikely if you've researched the home stager and viewed examples of their work. Keep in mind she is decorating for mass appeal and not for your – or even her own – personal taste.

The idea of someone – a stranger – coming through your home and critiquing every inch might be a little scary. But have no fear. A home stager is not critiquing your personal style or taste; she is making your home the most desirable to the widest audience possible.

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Small Changes Add Up to Big Sale...



Small changes – decluttering, furniture arrangement, wallpaper removal – lead to a big sale. The transformation starts with a 3-hour agent paid consultation. Changes focus on showing off this home's unique architectural features and generously sized rooms. **Prior to staging, this 3,000 square-foot Granite Springs, NY home was listed for 3 months. After staging, it sells in 1 week.**

It All Boyles Down to this: Looks Count

Remember the Susan Boyle phenomenon in 2009? What lessons can we learn from this experience? And what does this have to do with selling a home?

Singer Susan Boyle proves that first impressions and looks do count.

If you don't believe looks and first impressions count, you may want to review this [video](#). Note your thoughts, your initial impressions, the first time you see Susan. Also note audience members and judges reactions. I think the phrase, "Are you serious?" sums it up well.

If Susan Boyle was a house, most people wouldn't slow down to take a look, let alone wish to go inside. Does it surprise us then that she has "never been given the chance before" to become a star?

We are superficial. Admit it. We believe, what we see, is what we get. All the more reason why we must impress our audience of home buyers the minute they open the door. Few buyers have the ability – or inclination – to look longer and deeper.

What a wonderful surprise to discover this beautiful voice hiding deep inside the out-of-date packaging that is Susan Boyle. Hair, make-up, clothing all make her appear much older. It gives the impression she is not keeping up with the times, and implies she does not care enough to do so.

Does your home's décor – its packaging – leave the same impression? Does your home look old, neglected, and leave buyers to believe it is not being well maintained?

How do you unleash the inner beauty in your home? Staging, of course. A professional stager is your home's personal stylist.



In 2009, the Internet, the media, the world, went wild for a singer that proves yet again that looks count. If Ms. Boyle was made over prior to this show, maybe she wouldn't have waited almost 47 years to become a star. How long until you stage your home into an overnight sensation?

The competition is fierce and your buyers are all Simon Cowell wannabe's. Showcase your space now and give it the chance it deserves.

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AtWell Staged Home – Services:

Home Staging Redesign Organizing Interior Decorating

Designing to Sell

How does it work?

Every Home Staging begins with a 2-hour consultation.

What is a Home Staging consultation?

Sometimes referred to as a “working” consultation, these meetings generally last 2-4 hours. During that time, Susan walks through your home with the critical eye of a potential home buyer, proposing design and decorating modifications that are unique to every space.

What happens after the consultation is complete?

Following the consultation, you will know exactly what’s needed to prepare your home for sale. You decide what work you want Susan to handle and what you’d like to do yourself.

What if my home is vacant?

AtWell Staged Home offers affordable vacant home staging services. Whether you have a small condo or large house, all homes sell faster when furnished. *AtWell Staged Home* will:

- Source rental furniture and unique accessories.
- Work within your budget and price point of the home to establish an effective and economical staging plan.
- Quickly transform your home with furniture and accessories to showcase its best features.
- Create an environment for potential home buyers to fall in love with your home.

Designing to Dwell

What is designing to dwell?

Decorating to create a warm and inviting home reflecting *your* personality, likes and tastes.

How can *AtWell Staged Home* help?

- Paint color recommendations
- Planning projects, repairs, and upgrades
- Recommending and coordinating with contractors
- Window treatment recommendations and selection
- Furniture arrangement, placement, and accessorizing
- Interior redesign, organizing, and new home decorating
- Shopping for accessories, furniture, or any other home décor

