

How Much Does Home Staging Cost?

As a home stager the first question I often hear is, *How much will it cost to stage my home?* But really, the fundamental question to ask is, *Can Home Staging help me sell my home faster and for more money?*

To put this into perspective, if your doctor recommended a life-improving procedure, would your first question be, *How much does it cost?* or are you more likely to investigate the efficacy and perceived personal value of the treatment?

Let's start at the beginning. What is Home Staging and why would I want to spend money on a home that I'm selling?

Home Staging is a marketing tool that uses decorating to properly prepare a home for sale. Staging shows off a home's best features while downplaying its flaws. Its main objective is to sell your home quickly and at maximum value. In less analytical terms, Staging invites buyers to fall in love with your home.

Staging speeds home sales by making your home appeal to the largest number of potential buyers, and a faster sale generally leads to a higher sales price. Put another way, improve your product, and more people will want it. Simple, right? In this case, the product is your biggest asset—your home. And as with any form of marketing—or advertising—there is usually an initial investment made with the hope that the principal invested will be returned, along with a little profit, when the “product” sells. In the real estate industry, this investment sweet spot is generally accepted to be between one and three percent of the price of the home. (But most home sellers spend far less.)

The initial goal of any staging project is to make a home move-in ready. With that foundation, you can determine how much (or how little) investment is required. You also will need to know which projects are most essential for improving the salability and desirability of your home. If you are having trouble figuring this all out—and most home owners will—consider hiring a professional home stager. A stager will quickly evaluate your home and ensure that you invest your home-staging dollars wisely.

I recently talked Jayme, a Putnam Valley home seller, out of putting most of the contents of her home into storage. Instead we simply create a plan to equally distribute these items throughout the home. That advice alone saves her much more than the price of the three-hour consultation, and Jayme has an accepted offer within 48 hours of listing. To be on your way to a quick sale, consider starting with these six tasks.

1. Clean, clean, clean. And then when you think you are done, clean again!
2. Declutter spaces without leaving them feeling cold or abandoned. Remember, buyers need to make an emotional connection with your home.
3. Pack collections and items you will not need while the home is on the market.
4. Make necessary repairs, but don't involve yourself in any major renovations (like that new kitchen remodel or master suite addition that you never got around to).
5. Paint walls with fresh, warm, universally appealing colors.
6. Rearrange furniture, art, and accessories to create a flow that shows off the best features in every space.



If that sounds like a lot of work, you may be wondering if simply offering a lower price than the competition will guarantee a quick sale.

Here are two reasons price reductions alone won't sell your home. First, price reductions won't make buyers fall in love with your property. All buyers have a list of features they want in a home. But when they really love a home, they often throw out that logical list and buy the property anyway. If all buyers love is the price, they probably are not going to buy the property.

Second, price reductions still won't make a home move-in ready. Many of today's buyers are busy two-income families. They don't have the time, money, or energy to do major fix-ups and renovations if they perceive your home as requiring too much work. They will instead continue their search, often paying more for a home that is move-in ready.

Think of selling your home as a competition. Those who prepare and train will always have the competitive advantage over those who do not.

Does home staging *always* work? No, it does not. But not for the reasons you might think. Staging needs to be combined with a realistic price that represents the current value of the home. No matter the market, there is no amount of staging that will make up for a home that is overpriced or underrepresented.

So back to the question at hand, *How much does home staging cost?* Many home-staging techniques like cleaning, decluttering, and furniture rearrangement, cost nothing to implement. And those recommendations that do come with a price tag will be returned at closing. Done right, home staging more than pays for itself.

I'll leave you with this. If you could sell your home faster and for more money by making only a relatively minor financial investment, wouldn't that be an investment worth making?



Susan Atwell, home staging expert and President of *AtWell Staged Home*, is passionate about staging homes to sell quickly and for top dollar. Contact Susan for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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