

It All Boyles Down to This: Looks Count

Recently, I was up late, channel-surfing when I came across a documentary on singer Susan Boyle's 2009 meteoric rise to fame. You may remember her as the frumpy, 48-year-old that blew everyone away on *Britain's Got Talent*.

It all begins when the nervous but "cheeky," Susan walks onstage and declares her intention to become the next British singing superstar. The audience and judges react as if they've caught a live one. You can see it on their faces. The audience smells blood in the water and expects her performance to be a train wreck. *How could someone who looks like this possibly think she has anything to offer?* Looking back, even Simon Cowell, every singer's toughest critic, admits his rush to judgment.

So what does all of this have to do with real estate and selling a home? Everything. Singer Susan Boyle proves that first impressions and looks count—probably more than we like to admit.

We are superficial. We believe that what we see is what we get. The phrase "Don't judge a book by its cover" would never have made it into the public consciousness if it were not human nature to do just that. We have trouble seeing past the surface, seeing the potential and the possibilities, and this is why we must impress our audience of home buyers as soon as they see the home on the Internet or open the front door. If those first impressions are not good, few buyers will be inclined to take a deeper look.

All Susan Boyle wants is a chance to be seen, to be heard, but with her facade, those chances are greatly diminished. The same is true for selling a home. If those online photos don't inspire, no visits will be made.

It's a shame, because there could be something quite wonderful hiding below the surface. But most potential home buyers just can't see it, and perhaps worse, they won't see many of the positives that are right under their noses if the negatives jump out at them first. No matter if it's a sellers' or a buyers' market, these home buyers will not waste their time and will simply go on to the next home.



Selling a home is a competition, a *tough* competition, where your home is up against other homes similar in size, price, and location. The hardest part about preparing your home to sell is stepping into your buyers' shoes and trying to see your home through the fresh and objective eyes of the buyer. If you are having trouble with this—and 80% to 90% of sellers will—bring in your agent, an honest and objective friend, or consider employing the services of a professional home stager for an impartial opinion from someone who knows what buyers are looking for in a home.

Susan Boyle's hair, makeup, clothing, all make her appear much older than she really is. Does your home's décor leave the same impression? Does your home look old, neglected, and leave buyers thinking that 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. Relying on luck to sell your home is not a marketing technique, staging is.

In 2009, the Internet, the media, the world went wild for a singer, but many were as focused on her image as on her voice and doubted that she could overcome the odds against her, proving yet again that looks count. It took an amazing amount of talent and dedication to craft for Susan Boyle to overcome the initial impression she made, solely because of her appearance. If she had been made over prior to this competition, maybe she wouldn't have waited almost 48 years to become a star. How long until you stage your home into an overnight sensation?



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.

Sign up for our free e-newsletter at www.StageEveryListing.com for home staging and decorating tips. Designed for real estate professionals, home owners, or anyone who enjoys interior decorating.

914.525.0454
Susan@AtWellStagedHome.com
www.AtWellStagedHome.com