

Home staging subtracts clutter, adds value

It's all about depersonalizing your space

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If you're thinking about selling your house, you've probably heard about home staging. The home design concept is actually focused less on decorating and more on reworking your home, says Kimberly Dunn, a Greenville home staging professional.

As odd as it may sound, she says, the main focus of staging is to depersonalize your space. That means removing items like family photographs and hobby-related paraphernalia like trophies and prize fish. It may sound harsh, but Dunn explains that it is all about relating to the buyer's mindset.

"The objective is to make a home appealing to a broader range of people," Dunn says. "You want to help a potential buyer see themselves in the house."

And once you've depersonalized your home, it's time to declutter. Even though you think the collection of plates you inherited from your grandmother is priceless, Dunn says a potential buyer is more likely to see a wall full of clutter and a small dining room.

The result? The room seems smaller than it is.

Instead, Dunn recommends packing up those collections, as well as furniture that crowds a space. If that third chair in the living room takes away from open space, you should store it, Dunn says.

"The idea is to open a space. You want to draw a buyer into each room so they see the whole house."

The good thing about home staging, says Dunn, is that it can actually be accomplished with all your existing things. That means it's a great return on your investment.

Barbara Schwarz, and author and creator of the staging site, www.stagedhomes.com, said a staged home sells faster and costs the seller less than a price reduction would.

"People think; I'm moving out, I don't want to spend more money on the house," Dunn says. "But it's not going to take \$9,000 to stage a home."

Once you've got things depersonalized, decluttered and rearranged, Dunn says the only thing left is to clean. In the staging business, she says they refer to it as a "Q-tip clean" because it should be thorough enough to pass a Q-tip inspection in every nook and cranny.

People don't see the dirt because they live with it everyday, she says. But, "a potential buyer will see it."



TIPS

- If you have to maneuver around obstacles, that's a flag that a piece of furniture needs to go.
- Extension cords are no-nos because they scream inconvenience and can add to clutter.
- If you have an extreme color scheme, consider repainting in a more neutral shade.
- If you don't have enough stuff, it's not important to buy expensive accessories, it's more important to have touches like fresh flowers. You want something that suggests that a house is inviting.

Source: Cecelia Hardee, owner, Arranged By Design and Cecelia Hardee Interiors

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