



Is Professional Home Staging Worth the Cost?

Home staging has become a "must-do" for many sellers, and 81% of buyer's agents say doing this makes it easier for prospective buyers to visualize the property as a future home. Staged homes also have historically sold faster and for more money than those that aren't staged.

What Is Staging?

Home staging is a marketing strategy that temporarily refits your home with furniture, art, and other décor to make the visual space more appealing to prospective buyers. The goal of staging is to flatter the property, accentuate the strengths of the home, and help interested parties visualize themselves living in the space.

Good staging companies strive to make-over a property without being obvious. A high-quality staging job is beautiful without being obvious, as the intent isn't to deceive a buyer or have an interested party feel like a staging job is attempting to hide a home's flaws.

Staging is also practical, as it allows other people to see spaces and how they may be used. Using furniture and property that you don't own, staging companies can demonstrate how awkward spaces can be best used, what pieces go well in what areas, and how to most efficiently lay out a room.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Home staging is the curated furnishing and prepping of a home that is for sale on the real estate market.
- The goal of home staging is to create a believable, clean, attractive living space that buyers can envision living in.
- Proponents say that staging a home can increase a home's selling price and the likelihood that it will sell quickly.
- You will have to pay the stager as well as pay for the rental of furnishings and home accents while the house remains unsold.
- You can stage your home yourself or rely on some feedback from your real estate agent.



How Home Staging Works

Home staging isn't putting a bunch of fancy furniture in your home. It's a deliberate marketing strategy with specific objectives that drive higher real estate prices. Home staging may be more appropriate for home sellers who think they may benefit from any of the following improvements. Home staging:

- Makes your home look clean and organized
- Strives to make rooms look bigger
- Makes your home feel more welcoming
- Uses maximum space, adding functionality to each room and corner
- Modernizes your living space through new, creative furnishings
- Depersonalizes your home and attempts to have the buyer imagine themselves in the space

★ **Tip:** Home staging companies often have a number of requirements and clauses in their contracts. Make sure you're aware of whether they require all utilities to be connected, what notification periods are needed, and what cleanliness requirements they have prior to staging.

Benefits of Staging

Sellers often pursue home staging for several specific benefits. For one, staging makes it easier for potential buyers to see themselves in the home.

Instead of having an empty space,

staged homes have dining rooms, bedrooms, and other personal settings arranged for buyers to see and imagine themselves in.

Staged houses also have the benefit of appearing clean. Staging companies own a plethora of furniture and goods, and they often ensure all property is maintained and looks professional. A staged home reduces clutter, removes personal items of the seller, and likely involves cleaner furniture than what the seller owns.

A stager can help with your online listing, too, as 96% of home buyers use the internet during their home search. That means your home had better show really well online. Staging and photos by a professional can help create a beautiful digital marketing portfolio that entices buyers without needing them to visit the physical space.

Staging is used to demonstrate that a home is move-in ready. By showing that the house can be set up and livable, staged homes are often more appealing to buyers, as they may come across as needing less repair or maintenance.



How Staging Affects Sale Price

Staging a home also affects the sale price. According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), 20% of buyers' agents said that home staging raised the dollar value offered by between 1% and 5% compared with homes that hadn't been staged. Fourteen percent of agents believe home staging increased the dollar value offer between 6% and 10%.

Additional Considerations to Staging

The obvious downside to home staging is the cost. It's important to note that whatever you spend, you are incurring an optional expense that isn't mandatory to sell your home.

You may encounter the issue of needing to store your belongings in preparation for a stage. Staging companies will often require that your items be removed before the temporary furniture is brought in. If you're not quite at the stage of having a new home lined up, you may be forced to expedite packing and incur additional costs to have your goods held off-site.

While staging may mask or cover some of your home's flaws, it doesn't fix them. In addition, it may even call attention to deficits of your home, depending on how it's staged. For example, you may have used furniture to cover poor paint jobs or scratches on the walls or floor. Staging companies often use a minimalist approach that may not cover all of the blemishes you once hid.

Staging often gets your house off the market faster. However, it also takes longer to get staged homes onto the market. In addition to removing all your belongings, coordinating with a staging company takes planning. You may also decide to undertake repair and maintenance based on how a staged product will appear.

The Cost of Staging

The cost to stage a home is very specific to geographical location and individual real estate markets. In addition, staging expenses will vary throughout the year, as companies will be more in demand during the peak selling season. While you might be able to secure a contract, you may be faced with being charged a premium.

According to HomeAdvisor, the national average home staging cost is \$1,776. Homeowners typically pay between \$784 and \$2,812, though full furniture rentals for extended periods can cost at least \$2,000 per month.

! Warning: Home staging can be done while you are still living in the house. However, you may be contractually obligated to keep your home clean and be responsible for any damage to the temporary furnishings while you're temporarily occupying the space.



Ways You Can Stage Your Home

Consider the design skills, time, and energy that staging will require and be realistic about whether you could undertake the task yourself. Professional companies have expertise and inventory, but many sellers design the layout of their home themselves and use the furniture they already own.

According to a 2023 NAR report, staging the living room was found to be most important for buyers (39%), followed by the primary bedroom (36%), and the kitchen (30%). National Association of Realtors.

You also can opt for your real estate agent to help stage your home, though it's traditionally not within their role to do so. Your real estate agent is motivated to sell your home as quickly as possible for as much as possible, they so may have recommendations based on what they've seen work on other listings.

Unlike some professions, there is no official licensing entity and no licensing exam for staging. Just about anyone can call themselves a stager, so the best way to find a good one is to get referrals from a seller you know who has used and found success with a particular stager, or from your broker. A good broker will have connections to good stagers.

What Is the Process of Staging a Home?

If you hire a staging company, the company usually will require you to remove your belongings from the property. They often will take a tour of your property, take measurements, and work with your real estate agent to get information about your home. The company will then deliver furniture and high-end accessories to your home, stage your property, and remove the furnishings at the end of your agreed-upon contract.

Is Home Staging Worth It?

For many, home staging results in a higher selling price and a quicker home sale. There are downsides to home staging, such as creating more work prior to listing and ancillary costs like storing your property, but these downsides are often outweighed by the benefits of staging.



Is It Better to Sell a Home Staged or Empty?

Every market and property will have different strategies. In general, it is often best to stage a home to maximize bid prices. If you are looking to sell a property quickly, be mindful that there is considerable planning and coordinating required before listing and staging, so selling a home empty may be best in some situations.

How Can I Stage My Own Home?

Should you choose to stage your own home, it's most often advised that you begin by simply cleaning and de-cluttering your space. This includes performing cosmetic repairs and maintenance on both the interior and exterior of your home. Remove personal items that make it more difficult for buyers to envision themselves living in your home. Consider borrowing furniture from friends or family.

The Bottom Line

The staging by a professional—someone who has a great track record in the business—can result in a higher selling price for your home. For many, having a professional bring in their expertise and furnishings leads to a more successful home-selling experience and often makes the cost of staging pay off with a higher selling price.

