

Staging in a Buyers Market, by Emilia Rees, CSP™

It is *imperative* for sellers in this competitive market to stage their homes if they want top dollar for them. The end result should not look like a model house in a furniture magazine but rather like a warm, welcoming, and *ready-to-move-in* home. To make the staging more natural, I combine the seller's furniture and accessories with some of my company's to create a sense of harmony without excess. I constantly advise my customers not to highlight furniture or decorated rooms, but rather emphasize the *concept of spaciousness* and a *well maintained* house. The potential buyer should leave the house feeling certain that the house he saw is the house he wants to live in. This will invariably help when you are aiming for your clients to feel *comfortable* making an offer.

Recently a few of my realtor customers have observed that their mid-range home buyers were predisposed *against* houses that were obviously staged. Consequently the potential buyers focused on the cost while ignoring the apparent benefits of a fully staged home, such as fresh paint, new counters, etc. The prospective buyers get an impression that the value of the house might be based on its *décor* instead of its actual worth.

Staging will always help you sell your homes for top dollar, if done correctly. *One* mistake that will mislead potential buyers is over-decorating homes. This trend is inspired by some television shows and staging-for-dummies type books. While TV shows justifiably highlight staging advantages to sellers, the buyers watch the same programs or read the same books. Therefore, over-staged houses, with expensive rented furniture and an air of perfection, do not convey the "live in" feel that a house should have, and might even cause the buyer a sense of discomfort. Staging, like a good facelift, is *only* effective if it cannot be noticed.



Living room with expensive rented furniture
(Staged by another stager)



Living rooms staged by DecoDoc

One of the houses I staged will be featured on the HGTV program *The Unsellables* (in January '09), as a house that is correctly presented for sale



In order to achieve a *win-win* situation for both our buyers and sellers use a certified CSP™ (Canadian Staging Professional) with the best tactics, know-how, and strategies that *balance* the satisfaction of our buyers with the goals of our sellers.

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