

# How much can home staging boost your sale price?

One quarter of real estate agents say it bumps price by 10%!

It makes sense that staging a listing to make a home more appealing might influence a buyer's decision. But, that's just a vague idea until you put a dollar value on it.

So, here it is: 25% of agents representing buyers in a survey by the **National Association of Realtors (NARs)** last month said staging increased offers by up to 5%. Using NAR's March median price of \$259,400, that's \$12,970. About 12% said it increased offers by up to 10%, or \$25,940. And, 29% said it had no impact on the offer.

Agents representing sellers put a higher dollar value on home staging. About 22% reported a bump in sale price of up to 5%, 17% reported an increase of up to 10%, and 2% reported a payback of up to 20% - on a median-priced home, that's a cool \$51,880.

"Buying a house is more than a financial decision - it's an emotional decision as well," said NAR President John Smaby. "Realtors have the expertise and local market knowledge to know which properties and specific rooms will benefit the most from staging."

About 47% of agents who represent buyers said living rooms are the most important area to stage, 42% put master bedrooms next on the list, and 35% cited kitchens in third place. Sellers' agents had the same list, but in reverse order: kitchens, master bedrooms, and then living rooms. One thing they all agreed on: the guest bedroom is the least important room to stage.

More than half of sellers' agents said that staging decreases the amount of time a home spends on the market.

**So, what exactly does "staging your home" mean, and how can I do it effectively?**

Staging a home is the process of strategically arranging furnishings and decor to make a house look its best while selling. This may involve a refresh of your own belongings, or renting furnishings and decor temporarily. If you're having trouble selling your home, staging can make a big difference. Here's how to do it:

## 1. Get rid of clutter.

The most basic task when staging a home involves removing clutter and cleaning the house. Remove knick-knacks and personal items from all surfaces. And don't just put them in closets; potential buyers usually look in them, and you want yours to appear roomy. Box up spare belongings and get them out of the house.

With all the clutter gone, do a deep cleaning. Make your kitchen and bathroom sparkle, and be sure to close the toilet lid before people come by. Air out the entire house by opening the windows, which is better than air fresheners or scented candles, which can trigger allergies. And make sure

you wash everything your pets touch. No one is attracted to pet odor.

## 2. Aim for a light and bright look.

Buyers typically like to see bright rooms, so lighting is an essential part of staging a home. Open your blinds or pull your curtains back before a showing. Make sure your light fixtures look appealing. If your lampshades are dingy or your fixtures are dated, consider replacing them. Play with different types and temperatures of lighting, as well. In addition to your overhead lighting, create an inviting atmosphere with lamps and wall sconces.

## 3. Remove furniture.

Remove about half your furniture. This could be difficult since you probably are used to—and use—the furniture in your home. But your house will look bigger and more appealing to most buyers with less furniture in it.

"Sellers need to shift their mindset and focus on the buyer," says professional home stager Tori Toth. "Once a home seller can detach themselves from their home, they can view it as a product and prepare the space properly for maximum buyer appeal."

## 4. Rearrange furniture.

Once your furniture has been thinned out, position couches, chairs, and tables away from your walls. This is a design technique called "floating" the furniture. Anchor the space with an area rug, even if the room has wall-to-wall carpet. This creates a cozy, intimate space, ideal for chatting with friends and family.

## 5. Don't forget about curb appeal.

If you neglect the outside of your home, you probably won't attract as many buyers to the inside. Get buyers in the door by doing the following:

- Power-wash your house and walkways
- Clean your windows
- Make sure your house number is easy to read
- Mow the lawn
- Trim overgrown greenery
- Plant flowers
- Put a welcome mat and potted plants on your front stoop
- If you have a porch, include outdoor furniture

## 6. Add little extras.

Once your house is picture-perfect, add some finishing touches. People love to see fresh flowers in vases, a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen counter, and folded towels in the bathroom.