

# STAGE TO SELL!

By: Terrence L. Clayton

The common mistakes most sellers make are clutter and cleanliness. When selling a house it should be as neat and clean as possible. The last thing you want is for buyers to have to "squeeze" through rooms and think, "How am I going to clean the grime off of that?"

If you are entertaining family and have ample seating for a high volume of guests.... consider renting a storage unit. I have come across this problem on several occasions. If a perspective buyer sees a room crowded with furniture all they will think is, "This room is small."

Many of us "family oriented" types love photos of our loved ones. Some purchase the "full portrait package" of every vacation we ever took. Many love those "novelty" frames. All this may give us that "homey" feeling, but buyers can't see themselves in your home if it is cluttered with dozens of photos everywhere. Remember, **De-clutter!**

**De-personalizing** is a common phrase in staging. I personally don't believe a total de-personalization is necessary. It is perfectly acceptable to have a photo of your children on a dresser or your Great Grandparent's portrait in a hallway. A few "personal" touches help buyer to feel like yours is a home that they could love to live in.

People who have lived in a home for many years tend to get "comfortable". After living in a home for a long period of time, residents don't see the flaws. I have been in homes where furniture and accessories have been in the same spot from day one! Please take note of that silk floral arrangement that has been in the corner of the room for fifteen years. Greenery helps soften a room, but only if they are fresh and "dust free"!

Another point to consider is, after years of living in the same home they get used to those scratches from the dog and dings from the kids. Make sure all doors and woodwork are clean and scratch free. An easy remedy is "Old English" to freshen up old furniture. Sometimes an "inexpensive" paint job will transform a "tired" room. Many people like surrounding themselves with bold, bright colors. That is all well and good. However, when selling a house "bold" colors can offend more people than please them. "Neutral colors" is another commonly used phrase in staging. I believe color can enhance a room as long as it is calming and not "in your face!"

Remember the two most important rooms in a home are the kitchen and bath. Sometimes investing in an update in those two rooms can benefit you in the long run. If those two rooms are "outdated" perspective buyers will see outgoing \$\$\$ signs before moving in. The **Drive by** is the first impression. If your yard is un-groomed and un-kept buyers will assume the interior is the same and may not even want to look inside.. Weeds, leaves and trash in the yard are a definite deterrent. Trimmed shrubs and fresh cut grass is a welcoming "first impression"! Planters with

Remember the D's, Drive by, De-clutter, De-personalize and Delight your buyers!

fresh flowers in the front **and** backyards are always a wise and an inexpensive investment. For vacant homes on the market, furniture rental is the best option. An empty home is cold and uninviting, no matter how beautifully appointed it may be. The main rooms to focus on in a vacant home are living, dining, family and Master suite.

If it is a home with only a great room, better for the budget. A minimal amount of furniture will get the point across. Accessories like plants, kitchen canisters, dishes and towels in kitchen and bath will help a buyer to imagine living in the home.

The moral of this article is, if you **remember all the D's** in staging a home you will **delight** your buyer and achieve the ultimate **"D".....DEPOSIT your commission check!**

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