

If you don't like the theme of your house, your furniture is old or you have nothing on the walls after you've taken off the quirky decorations and personal photos, consider staging your house, either doing it yourself or with a professional home stager.

According to Realtor.com, staged houses sell 88 percent faster and for about 20 percent more than comparable home that had the seller's furniture and decorations in it.

HIRE A PRO

If you can afford to, consider hiring a stager; this person can bring in furniture, art and accessories. Before hiring a stager, consider the real estate market in your region; it's possible homes like yours are selling very quickly and you don't need the extra help. If you are considering it, find a stager who specializes in homes that are similar to yours; be prepared to interview them, asking about how they stay on top of interior design trends, what style they see for your home and how much time the stager will need to work on your home, keeping in mind that effective stagers are in high demand. Ask for photos from recently staged photos and if their business is insured, since there's a possibility of damage as the stager moves furniture.

USE YOUR BUDGET WISELY

Finally, ask stagers about their rates. Most charge \$300 to \$600 for an initial consultation and then \$500 to \$600 a month, though some charge per room.



You could choose to stage just a few rooms; the living room, kitchen and master bedroom are the most important.

If you can't afford a stager, do

what you can to create the same appeal. Hanging curtain rods higher gives the illusion of taller ceilings and more overall space. Use mirrors to make

rooms seem bigger and bright. Keep the furniture and paint fairly generic and neutral-colored, but add swaths of color with curtains, pillows or a

REAL ESTATE 101

By the Numbers

The National Association of Realtors' 2017 Profile of Home Staging attempted to quantify the effects of staging. Here are some of its findings:

- Staging the living room for buyers was found to be most important (55 percent), followed by staging the master bedroom (51 percent), and staging the kitchen (41 percent).
- Seventy-seven percent of buyers' agents said staging a home made it easier for a buyer to visualize the property as a future home.
- Forty-nine percent of buyers' agents cited that homes staging had an effect on most buyer's view of the home.
- Only 4 percent of respondents said that home staging had not effect on the buyer's view of the home.
- The costs of staging a home were typically paid by the seller before the home is listed (25 percent). Sellers' agents commonly personally offered to stage the home (21 percent), and offered a home staging service to sellers (14 percent).

bright, attractive throw over the back of the couch.

You can also move the furniture to change the feel of rooms. Moving couches toward the walls makes a living room feel bigger, though be careful to not pile furniture in front of windows or make maneuvering around the house difficult. Sheer curtains allow light to come through a window but blocks an unflattering view.

Should You Stage?

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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Encumbrance: Any claim on a property, such as a lien, mortgage or easement.

SOURCE: Federal Trade Commission

AD SPACE