



FAQs for Realtors on Home Staging

What you need to know about cost, time, value, and how home staging leads to more listings.

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Mary Ann Benoit- [Northern Lights Home Staging and Design](#)

Susan Atwell- [Atwell Staged Homes](#)

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WHAT IS HOME STAGING?

What is home staging?

Home Staging is a marketing tool that uses decorating to show off a home's best features while downplaying its flaws. Done right, staging creates an emotional connection between home and buyer, leading to a faster sale at maximum value.

Is staging just for vacant homes?

Home staging is for all homes, occupied or vacant. Staging a home with what a home seller already has is always the preferred choice, as it leads to greater savings on rental furniture and labor fees.

COST

How much does home staging cost?

Usually the first question I get! A better question might be can home staging help me sell faster and for more! Think of home staging as an investment, rather than a cost.

That investment will depend on the size of the house, if it is vacant or occupied, if the stager will do everything or just a consultation, followed by the seller doing the bulk of the work. It also depends on the seller having suitable furniture and accessories or if items need to be rented.

Stagers charge a fee for a consultation and give an estimate (based on an hourly fee, or a flat fee) if additional time is needed. A monthly rental fee may apply for furniture and/or accessories.

On average, stagers charge \$300-\$500 for that initial “working” consultation and about \$100/hour for their time after that. Furniture and accessory rental costs vary based on what is needed to properly showcase the home.

Just like a home seller shouldn’t pick a real estate agent based on the highest quoted sale price for your home, a stager should not be picked based on the lowest bid. In both cases, the agent and the stager may be quoting that price just to get the job. You get what you pay for. Quality counts.

Who pays for home staging?

Some popular options include:

- the home seller pays all
- the real estate agent pays for a consultation
- the real estate agent reimburses the home seller at closing for an agreed amount (i.e.: for the initial “working” consultation).
- the real estate agent pays all or part of the staging

More and more Realtors are covering the cost of a consultation as part of their marketing plan, leaving any further investment up to the home seller. For clients that like to DIY, a consultation may be all they need to properly prepare their home for sale. [See the article, “Who Pays for Home Staging” for more detail.](#)

As a Realtor, why should I pay for home staging or a consultation?

Many savvy Realtors pay for the initial consultation and their clients pay for any additional staging services.

While getting a higher price is paramount for home sellers, it may not make a big difference in a Realtor’s commission, but certainly makes for happier clients and more referrals! Ultimately, selling faster will be great for you and your client because everyone gets paid faster. It also lowers marketing expenses for you and holding costs for your client. Home staging is an investment. With little money up front, you should be able to list the property for more and sell faster.

How can I help my clients understand the value of home staging?

Most Realtors believe that [staging increases the dollar amount that buyers are willing to pay for a home by between 1 and 10%](#). Also, [homes that are staged first before listing spend 90% less time on the market](#).

Help your sellers see that staging will cost less than that first price reduction. The increased sales price of their home, faster closing, and reduced holding costs, will more than cover the staging investment and all with a whole lot less stress!

My sellers have a very limited budget. How can they afford the services of a professional home stager?

Think you can't afford to hire a professional home stager? [In today's market, you can't afford not to](#). For the most budget friendly option, [invest in a home staging consultation](#). Home sellers can do the work themselves based on the advice of a professional home stager. For the best results, have the stager return for a final checkup prior to photos.

How much does it cost to do "Lite Staging"?

Putting a few decorative items or sparse furniture in an otherwise vacant house is often more distracting for buyers than not adding anything at all. "Lite" staging or "vignette" staging of small areas is generally not a good investment as it does not help make that emotional connection which sells the home. It also does not highlight the home's best features, give buyers a sense of how big the space is, or how their furniture might fit in the space.

PROCESS AND TIMELINE

How long does it take to stage a home?

This varies based on the size of the home, what is needed to best market the property, and the experience of the stager.

Overall, I find that an average occupied home can be staged in 8 hours or less, and a vacant home in 2 days or about 16-18 hours. If you plan to stage a vacant home, it is best to call the stager at least 2-3 weeks prior to listing. An occupied home may require less lead time, based on the staging needs. For best results, call the stager as soon as possible.

What is the home staging process for a vacant home?

Generally, staging can be completed within 7-14 days after the initial consultation and all needed repairs and updates are complete.

- **Consultation**- Up to 2 hours
- **Pre-staging**- (usually 1-2 weeks). Home seller works on the consultation task list to get the home cleaned, de-cluttered, maintained, and completes updates such as painting, replacing flooring or lighting etc. The stager prepares the staging plan, coordinates with furniture rental companies, and prepares art, accessories, and furniture for transport.
- **Staging**- 1 to 2 days on site.
- **De-staging**- 2-3 hours. Prior to closing and after inspection is complete and/or contract is signed.

What is the home staging process for an occupied home?

- **Consultation**- Up to 2 hours.
- **Pre-staging**- (usually 1-2 weeks). Home seller works on the consultation task list to get the home cleaned, de-cluttered, maintained, and completes updates such as painting, replacing flooring or lighting etc. The stager prepares the staging plan, coordinates with furniture rental companies, and prepares art, accessories, and furniture, if applicable, for transport.
- **Staging**- As little as a few hours or up to a full day.. Sometimes it can be done directly after the consultation.
- **De-staging**- (usually 2-3 hours, if the seller has rented furniture or accessories). After inspection is complete and/or contracts are signed
- **Please visit my [Services page](#) and call to discuss details.**

What does a consultation include?

A consultation gives your sellers a complete list of everything they can do to prepare their home, both inside and out - whether it is vacant or occupied. With this information, the home owner can then decide how much work they will do themselves and how much they would like the stager to do. Recommendations include:

- cleaning
- decluttering
- maintenance
- paint colors
- flooring

- lighting
- furniture and accessory placement to highlight each space or focal point
- purchases, if needed, for bedding, towels, or other items
- contractors
- advice for keeping the home show ready
- curb appeal
- preparing for the photo shoot

A professional consultation can help reinforce information you, as the Realtor, already provide.

Can the home seller do the staging themselves?

The most budget-friendly and effective thing a home seller can do is [invest in a consultation with a professional stager](#). Have them follow the stager's advice and do the work themselves. For the best results, have the stager come back for a final checkup prior to photos. See my article, [What is the Cheapest Way to Successfully Stage Your House? Get a Home Staging Consultation](#).

Can I, the Realtor, do the staging myself?

It is always faster and more effective to hire the right professional for the job. If you wouldn't recommend a home seller list as For Sale By Owner (FSBO), then it's probably not a good idea to do the staging yourself. Even if you are a home stager, you still may wish to avoid staging the clients' home and having those difficult conversations about cleaning, odors, pets, animal heads and the like to maintain a great relationship with your client. Wouldn't your time be better used marketing your current listings and finding more?

Should every house be staged?

All houses can benefit from a 2-hour home staging consultation. There is always something that can be done to raise the perceived value of a home in the buyer's eyes. A small investment in a home staging consultation can increase buyer appeal, reaping large rewards in the final sales price.

Does every room need to be staged?

Every space in an occupied home should be staged for a consistent look-and-feel throughout. For vacant homes, it is critical to stage the main rooms, awkward spaces, and any areas that add

value to the sales price such as a potential rental unit. When rooms are left empty, buyers may wonder if the seller has already moved out or is desperate to sell encouraging low offers.

As the Realtor, do I need to be at the consultation?

Some agents never attend, some always attend, and others attend occasionally or a few minutes only. The real key to success is the home owner's willingness to go along with the staging recommendations, and not whether the agent attends the home staging consultation. For more detail, see a [great article](#) by Susan Atwell on this subject.

Does the stager coordinate all the contractors such as painters, maintenance people, flooring specialists, etc.?

Stagers can recommend trusted, professional contractors. For owner occupied homes, the home owner will find it faster and more convenient to coordinate these contractors themselves. For home sellers living away from the property, the stager can easily coordinate all.

VALUE

Can home staging help me sell my listing faster and for more money?

Various reports (see Resources) publish statistics on the benefits of home staging. A 2017 report by the National Association of Realtors states that at least 50% of Realtors think [staging increases the dollar amount buyers will offer to pay by between 1 and 10%](#). Also, [homes that are staged first before listing spend 90% less time on the market](#). See the [summary](#) of some of the 2017 findings from the National Association of Realtors.

What should I tell a client that wants to list first and stage later if their home does not sell?

The same thing you tell a client who wants to "test" the market with an unrealistic listing price, just to inevitably reduce the price later. The longer a home is on the market, the less desirable it is. Just like food, a listing becomes stale in a very short time. You can also add that [Consumers Guide to Real Estate Staging](#) found that homes that were staged first before listing, rather than after listing, spent 90% less time on the market. See the article, the ["Big Bang Theory of Home Staging"](#).

Why should I invest in home staging in a seller's market?

Home staging works in every type of market. Even in a seller's market, there will always be listings that do not sell quickly. Staged homes generate more interest on the web and in person, by creating move-in ready homes that feel fresh, spacious, and up-to-date. All these conditions lead to higher offers, potential bidding wars, and greater profits for you and your clients.

Can home staging get me more listings?

YES! Would you like to tip the scales in your favor when competing for a listing? Want to know what top producing real estate agents do? Offer your sellers an affordable home staging consultation. Position yourself as a forward thinking agent that:

- Gives extra value.
- Goes the extra mile.
- Is a savvy marketer.
- Is known for having the best listings.

What should I look for when selecting a home stager?

Even though there is no legal licensing or training requirement to become a home stager, do your homework and look for a professional with training, experience, and good reviews.

An accomplished stager will have both training and proven natural talent to get you great results. See the article on [tips to hiring a great stager](#).

Resources

[An Inconvenient Truth about Selling your Home.](#)

[Answers to questions commonly asked by real estate agents considering Home Staging for their clients](#)

[Helpful Tips on Finding a Great Home Stager](#)

[Home Staging Consultation: Should Realtors Attend?](#)

[Home Staging Proof: Solid Science Proves Staged Homes Sell Faster.](#)

[National Association of Realtors 2015 Profile of Home Staging](#)

[National Association of Realtors 2017 Profile of Home Staging](#)

[Consumers Guide to Real Estate Staging](#)

[Six Tips to Maximize Your Home Staging Consultation Dollar](#)

[Summary of 2017 Home Staging Statistics](#)

[What is the Cheapest Way to Successfully Stage Your House? Get a Home Staging Consultation.](#)

[Who Pays for Home Staging](#)

[Why Hire a Professional Home Stager?](#)