

Top 18 Home Staging Tips For Realtors

By Emile L'Eplattenier on November 29, 2017 | [Marketing](#), [Real Estate](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#)

Even the best agent in your office will admit that home staging can help a listing sell faster, and for more money. The only problem is that spending a few hours pinning million dollar kitchens on [Pinterest](#) will not magically make you a home staging pro. That's where we come in. We interviewed 16 professional home stagers from around the country and asked for their best tips.



1. Don't let furniture or artwork overshadow the home

Fainna Kagan, Associate Broker, DJK, New York City

"I once showed an apartment that had sexually explicit artwork displayed throughout the home. Not surprisingly, that is all my buyers remembered from the apartment. They didn't notice the large kitchen or the great views because they were distracted by the art. You want the great qualities of a home to stand out, not the furniture or art. Because furniture and artwork are often the first items that a buyer notices, the furniture should be simple and understated. Use neutral colors, like whites and beiges, for furniture and walls. And lastly, add pops of color for accessories — such as pillows, table lamps and artwork — to make the listing stand out in photos."



Living room of 161 West 75th st before Staging



Living room of 161 West 75th st after staging



2. Freshen up a Dated Kitchen With Off White Cabinet Paint

Audra Slinkey, President, Home Staging Resource

"Color trends have changed drastically over the last 5 years, so it's critical to blend what's currently trending into your home in order to freshen it's appeal. The challenge with paint color is picking something that will work with your current finishes (counters, backsplash and flooring). A common solution for updating a "brown" kitchen is painting your kitchen cabinets off-white to update a dark, dated kitchen instantly!"



Kitchen before & after staging



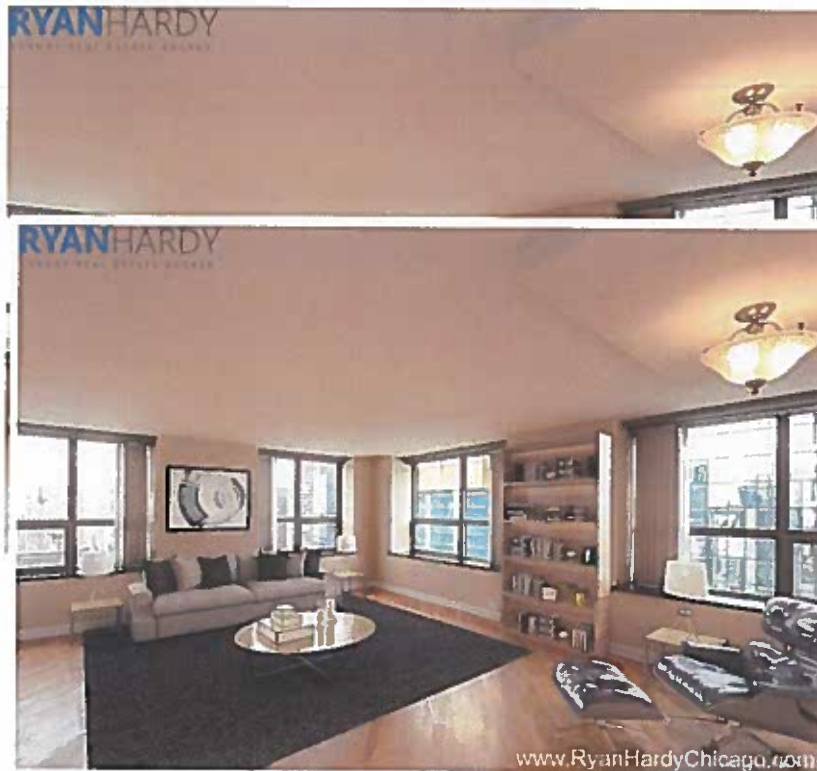
3. Try Virtual Home Staging

Ryan Hardy, Chicago Luxury Realtor

"When presenting your home to prospective buyers, first impressions are crucial. Buyers begin judging your home the moment they see it. Unless they're looking for a deal on a fixer-upper, they prefer homes that are well- maintained, clean and clutter-free.

Web appeal is the new curb appeal and you need to grab buyers attention online, where most people start their home search. **Virtual staging** is a cost effective alternative to traditional staging and it works!

The pictures below are from a recent listing of mine in Chicago's **Streeterville** neighborhood.. After only 7 days on the market, the seller accepted an offer of 99% of the asking price. The buyer paid all cash and made the initial offer sight-unseen. The takeaway: The pictures did their job!"



After virtual staging



4. Great Bed Linens are Crucial to Staging Bedrooms

Raj Qsar, Founder [The Boutique Real Estate Group](#)

Since beds tend to be the focal point of most bedrooms, don't just settle for whatever linens your client happens to have on hand. A collection of high end duvets, pillows, and throws and shams are key to effectively staging a bedroom.

If you want to see just how important bed linens along with better lighting and composition are to staging a home, check out the before and after shots below.



Before home staging



After home staging



5. Update Old Lighting Fixtures

Margaret Schaffer, Restyle Home Staging

"My best tip for staging any home? Let there be light. Updating lighting fixtures makes a major difference in nearly any space, and this is particularly true for homes that are not newly built. One of the biggest giveaways to a home's age are outdated lighting fixtures. I recommend swapping out old fixtures for ones that are more modern, as well as adding a good balance of floor and table lamps to brighten up the room. For a truly cost-effective solution, always allow windows to bring in some natural light as well. The better buyers can see the home, the better they can see themselves in it."



Before home staging



After home staging (alternate angle)



After home staging (alternate angle)



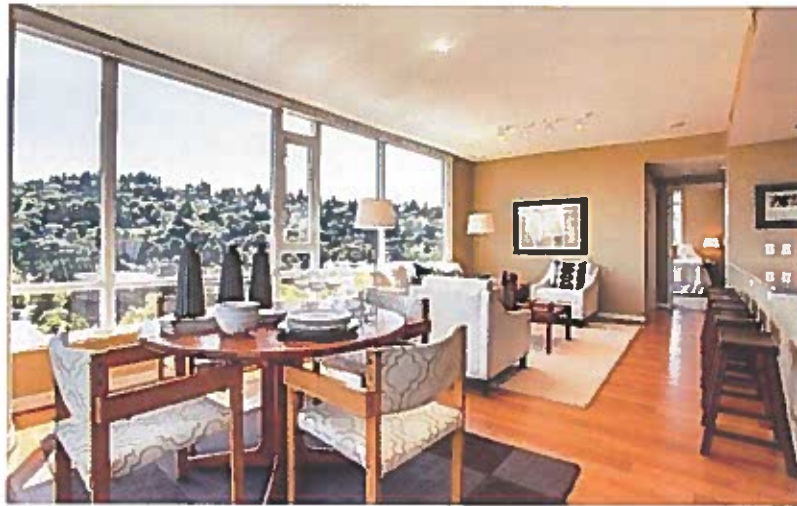
6. Create a symmetrical room to really add harmony to your space.

Justin Riordan, Founder, [Spade and Archer Design Agency](#)

"Symmetry, repetition and rhythm can be found throughout nature and humans find them to be aesthetically pleasing. Symmetry can be found in most animals and insects. Repetition is why we find flowers so pleasing. Rhythm can be found in the ripples of a sand dune. A quick and easy way to make a space more aesthetically pleasing is to use these simple principles of good design."



Before home staging



After home staging



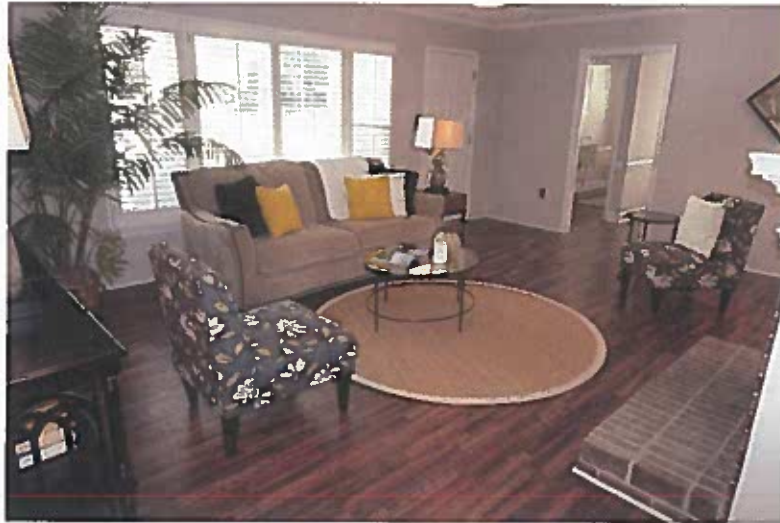
7. Quickly & Cheaply Update an Outdated Room with Paint

Karen Mendenhall, [Stage It Charlotte](#)

"Update an outdated property with paint. It is the lowest dollar investment with the highest rate of return. Stage with updated furnishings to appeal to the target buyer. The seller is not buying their property back – so they need to put their personal preference aside and trust a professional Stager knows what to do to best present the property for sale."



Photos Courtesy of [Stagedhomes.com](#) and Karen Mendenhall



Photos Courtesy of Stagedhomes.com and Karen Mendenhall



8. Put Excess Clutter in Storage, Not the Closets

Julie Young, [BY Design Home Staging](#)

On almost every showing I've ever been on, my clients did two things; opened the curtains, and peeked in the closets. This is why jamming everything you've decluttered from the home into the closet is a bad idea. Here's Julie from By Design Home Staging on the subject;

"Storage space is high on your buyer's list. If there is not enough room for your stuff, they know there will not be enough room for their stuff."



9. When in Doubt, Bring in a Professional Home Stager

Karen Gray Plaisted, [Design Solutions KGP](#)

"I am a professional home stager and I find most agents suggest to clean and declutter. Unfortunately the majority of sellers have no idea what that really means so they go overboard to the point of sterilization - a little too far so the house has no personality that a buyer can relate to.

There is a fine line, and if the agent, or seller are not sure how to get a look in a house that buyers desire, it's always best to call in the pros to achieve best look possible for the house. An agent is a pro at negotiations, pricing not necessarily the aesthetics of a home."



10. Learn How to Hire a Professional Home Stager

Deborah Boggs, Owner, BY Design Home Staging and [Staging Studio](#)

Let's face it. If you're going to hire a professional to stage your listing, then you need to know how to hire a great one. Over on [mystagingstudio](#), professional home stager Deborah Boggs runs you through the [ten questions you need to ask your home stager before hiring them](#).

Covering everything from portfolios to insurance, her guide is a must read for any Realtor thinking about hiring a home stager.



11. Create a focal point for each room.

Tracy Kay Griffin, Lead Designer, [Express Homebuyers](#)

"Understand every room has a focal point. To create a nice focal point in the rooms in your house, pick a key piece of furniture to anchor the room and place the rest of the furniture room around it. Remember to keep in mind the traffic patterns of how you'll walk from one room to the next and move within the room. Leave these traffic patterns and pathways open. If you have accumulated too much furniture in one room, perhaps you can move some of it into another room. Or make the decision to get rid of extra pieces of furniture. You can also use furniture differently from how you are accustomed to using it. I've used dressers as foyer tables and dining room consoles and chairs as bedside tables. I've used ottomans and trunks as coffee tables and folding kitchen tables as desks. Think creatively and come up with your own ways of repurposing items.

I also like to use nature to create focal points and add beauty. Floral arrangements go on entry tables, coffee tables, dining tables, bedroom dressers and even in the bathrooms! Bringing the outside in always tends to lift our spirits."



12. Get rid of the clutter because buyers think clutter is contagious.

Sissy Lappin, Co-Founder, [ListingDoor.com](#)

"Clutter is one of the frequently overlooked, but most important factors that will affect whether you get your asking price or not. For some reason, "buyers think clutter is contagious!" If you have too much stuff in your house, they will subconsciously doubt that all their stuff will fit.

Clutter can actually take off 5 to 15 percent of a home's value, just because buyers are less inclined to make a high offer for a house that looks messy. "Having clutter is like having a strip club across the street: no one will want to live there!"



13. Try to Camouflage Outdated Features

Alice McCray, [Coastal Design Interiors](#)

"This staging job had a really outdated pink marble fireplace that the owner didn't have time and wasn't willing to update it before the sale. I knew that the blush color was in style right now and thought rather than trying to work against it, use it as a focal feature that complimented with the the decor. So thats what me and my partner did and It seemed to visually make it less noticeable when you entered the room."



14. Remember that Your "First Showing" is Online

Tracy Deno, [Just Like Home Staging](#)

"I always tell sellers that your first showing is a virtual showing, so having pictures that are of good quality, and showcase your house in the best way possible should be a priority. Fewer, larger items showcase the space, and give it more scale so buyers can visualize themselves in the home. Brighter and de-cluttered spaces photograph better and will lead to buyers spending more time looking at your home, and could lead to a faster sale."



15. Always Give a Room a Purpose

Pam Hopgood, [Perfect Match Homes](#)

"Always give a room purpose - if you don't know what to do with the room then neither will potential buyers and your house will be remembered as the one with that funny space by the kitchen or wherever!

I recently staged the home in the example, a lovely family home with a large space directly off the front door between the kitchen and family room and the master suite. The first thing you saw as you entered the home was this massive space used as a playroom and dumping ground for toys, sports equipment. We staged it as the formal dining room and living room, and the house now had a totally different flow to it."



16. Use Light Colored Pillows to Keep Dark Sofas From Disappearing into the Background

Monica Glover, [Arrange Home Staging and Redesign](#)

"Dark sofas create black holes in listing photos. Pillows and throws instantly add light. Since over 90% of home buyers shop online first, listing photos have to sell. Dark leather sofas create large black holes in the photos, distracting buyers from a room's potential. Simply add light colored pillows and throws to instantly brighten the photos."



17. Avoid Dark Colored Ceilings or Accent Walls

Lisa Beekman, [Changing Styles Redesign](#)

"When choosing paint color for your room my tip is to stay light and airy and paint the walls and ceiling the same color. Gone are the days where you have a dark colored accent wall, over time you just get tired of it. And never paint a dark color on the ceiling it will only make the ceiling height feel lower and make the room feel closed in. If you want color bring it in the room with your accessories like pillows, rugs, furniture and draperies."



18. Keep Textures in Mind When Choosing Paint Colors

Lara Allen-Brett, [Staging by Lara](#)

"A fresh coat of paint, or at the very least, touching up all the moldings and doors and windows with a glossy white, can absolutely breathe a fresh life into a tired or sad space. Everyone comes in and says just paint it gray or paint the house all one color, but there's much more to paint selection than that... colors of the floors, texture of the floors, the amount of lights and windows, all these elements can make a big difference in whether the Greige is flat or if it is inspiring. But it has to be a thoughtful paint prep."