

A high-end living room with a white brick fireplace, a chandelier, and built-in shelving. The room features a large grey sofa, a white armchair, and a coffee table. The fireplace has a fire burning in it. The room is well-lit with natural light from large windows and a chandelier.

HOME STAGING

Debbie Stevenson
Certified Luxury Stager
Accredited Luxury Broker



Setting the Stage

No longer optional for sellers

Gone are the days when all it took was a sign in the front yard to attract buyers and their agents. Public search engines such as Zillow, Realtor.com and Trulia took care of that.

Today, the curb appeal has moved inside with buyers relying on quality interior photographs to narrow down the property finalists that will make the in-person tour. And it cannot be photographs of a blank room. Buyers browsing online have hundreds of properties from which to choose. To catch their attention, the home has to stand out. That is where staging comes in.

You can't sell it if you can't see it

Barbara Schwartz, IASP Founder

For the vacant property, a photograph of a staged room adds color, dimension and warmth. Combined, those attract the buyer's attention and then help with the visual. If there is a standard sofa and loveseat in the picture, the furnishings can offer a starting point for the buyer to imagine their furniture fitting.

Even the seller-occupied home needs to be staged. In fact, staging can be more important than ever for the occupied home, from de-cluttering, to updating and depersonalizing the space. That is the difference between staging versus interior design and decorating. Interior decorators and designers make the home an ideal reflection of your lifestyle and family. Stagers do the opposite, taking you out of the house and setting up furnishings and décor to highlight the house highpoints and maximize its appeal.

Selling a home is a big deal. Why would anyone do it without the advice of professionals?

Jonathan Scott, Licensed Contractor

HGTV 'Property Brothers'

Staging does come at a cost. Most stagers charge \$300 to \$600 for an initial design consultation, and \$500 to \$600 per room. A 2,000-square-foot home could cost \$2,000 to \$2,400. Some stagers charge monthly, with a minimum three-month contract, regardless how quickly the home sells. Despite the outlay, Realtors say the return is worth it. A 2017 study by the National Association of Realtors revealed 77 percent of buyers found it "easier to visualize the property as their future home when it's staged." As a result, 32 percent of buyers' agents and 37 percent of sellers' agents told the NAR's annual Profile of Home Staging report that staged homes increase the amount of money that buyers are willing to offer by 1 to 5 percent.

Essentially, Shark Tank's Barbara Corcoran told the NAR researchers, "Home staging is no longer optional in this market, it's a must."

Full Staging

Before And After



Houses—at all price points—will sell better when staged. Thirty-eight percent of listing agents say they stage every one of their sellers' homes before listing them. Fourteen percent say they will only stage homes that are difficult to sell, while 7 percent say they only stage in higher price brackets.

The NAR survey found the most common rooms that are staged include the living room (83 percent), kitchen (76 percent), owners bedroom (69 percent), and the dining room (66 percent).

Sixty-two percent of listing agents say professional staging decreases the amount of time a home spends on the market, the National Association of REALTORS® 2017 Profile of Home Staging found.

Thirty-one percent of respondents to NAR's survey say staging increased the dollar value of a home they sold by 1 percent to 5 percent; 13 percent of respondents say it increased a home's dollar value by 6 percent to 10 percent. Agents on both the buying and selling side agreed that the living room is the most important part of a home to stage, followed by the master bedroom, kitchen, and outdoor space.



ABOVE: Cabinet and neutral wall paint, decluttering, a cleaning, plus proportionate furnishings positioned to enhance the space. This entry-level property in Copperas Cove took three days to stage and one day to sell in a bidding war.

LEFT: High-end homes have the highest competition for the fewest buyers. Staging is critical for affluent and luxury homes.

Full Stage/Update



This house sat on the market for months in Salado before being removed from MLS, staged and re-listed. Even when the owner has a limited budget, a can of paint and a few tweaks to the existing template can turn the tide toward a sale. The house went under contract within 4 days of listing.

Vacant or Staged



Draw your buyers a picture

This house in Temple first was listed vacant. With very few showings and after 30 days on the market, it went under contract after two weeks as a partially staged property. Only the kitchen, dining and living area was staged. It doesn't have to be expensive furniture—just proportionate in scale.



Forty percent of buyer's agents say their buyers are more willing to walk through a home that has been staged, according to the National Association of REALTORS®' 2017 Profile of Home Staging.

Furniture catches
the eye, adds
dimension, interest

Remodel or Stage



Staging works with existing infrastructure. Sometimes, that will include painting, adding different hardware, updating the purpose for an existing built-in.

A remodel is recommended only when a key room is so dated it is "functionally obsolete." Remodeled rooms with the greatest pay-back at sale are the kitchen and the owners bathroom. This kitchen in Salado kept the original footprint. The dining wall was removed to create a breakfast bar. The refrigerator and overhead cabinet were moved and inserted into the footprint of the adjacent mudroom, creating a seamless wall at the bay dining option. Its 36-inch space was filled with a chef-grade propane slide-in range with vented hood. The original 30-inch range slot received an under-the-counter second oven. A 1-inch thick butcher block was installed over it. The microwave remained in place. The sink was aligned with the wall. The wood floor was continued seamlessly throughout the living and dining. The existing cabinetry was repainted white and updated. The look was completed with wood ceiling, faux oak beams and granite counters.



After 2 weeks of staging, cleaning and decluttering, this Austin home sold with multiple offers within one day of going on the market. The owners bathroom had more attention. The builder wallpaper was removed from the tub, the walls and carpet replaced by a ash wood-grain ceramic tile. Glass tile was installed around the tub. The walls were not textured, just painted.

We have a supporting gallery

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NORTH TEAM

DEBBIE STEVENSON, BROKER ASSOCIATE



Debbie Stevenson, BROKER

512-468-8210

debbie-stevenson@jbgoodwin.com

254-947-7110



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600-A N Main Salado