

# To Stage or Not to Stage...



Photographs courtesy of Done in a Day, Inc.

**T**HANKS TO THE BIRTH OF HGTV and similar programming, we homeowners can get instant access to design ideas, organizational processes, and how-to tips from the pros. With the help of Ty Pennington, we can install new plumbing in the powder room, and we are forever indebted to Nate Berkus for helping us select the perfect shade of teal for the guest bedroom.

With this wealth of information, we can declutter the office, install the new vanity, and faux paint the entryway all by ourselves. That's all well and good while we're hanging our own hats in the foyer, but what about when it's time to sell? Do we need the help of a pro, or can we rely on our own fabulous sense of style?

Chances are, when you decided to paint the master bedroom "celery," you probably weren't thinking about what potential home buyers would be attracted to and/or what moods and emotions the color green

evokes for the masses. Professional stagers know what sells, and they know what appeals to the largest section of the market. In other words, if you want to sell your home faster, and likely for more money, hiring a stager is a great investment.

If you've ever bought a home, you can quickly recall those emotional tugs as you walked through each room—the warmth of the family room, the casual elegance of the dining room. You may think you fell in love with the house, but the truth of the matter is that you probably fell in love with the packaging.

"He who packages the best is going to fly off the shelf first," says Caroline Carter, professional stager and owner of Done in a Day, Inc. of Washington, D.C. This is especially important when you're trying to sell a vacant property. Per Carter, "Ninety percent of people can't fill a room in their own minds—they just don't have the spatial concept."

Bob Crawford, Executive Vice President of Brook Furniture Rental, agrees that furniture placement is a critical element in the selling process. "Furniture helps buyers envision how they will interact with the home."

Carter sees one of her roles as a stager as controlling how a potential buyer tours a property. A good stager anticipates and answers questions the buyer may have about the property. She says, "A potential buyer is going to spend about three seconds in each room and will comment on something. Good stagers will create a positive impression in that three seconds."

Like you, a professional stager's main objective is to sell your home



quickly. "As home prices have increased, how you market your home is a much more financially relevant decision," says Crawford. The bottom line is that time is money. The longer your house sits on the market, the more money you spend. Why not invest in a professional stager to help you sell your home faster and for the best price? 🌹

—Lori Welch

Lori Welch is the founder of JCL Services, a personal concierge and professional organizing company serving clients in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia since 2001.