



THE
ULTIMATE
LIST OF
HOME
MUST-
HAVES
TO SELL

17

DIY
HOME
STAGING TIPS



HEARTOFNWA.COM

Hello There!

Welcome to home staging

After serving as a business owner of Mail Plus, Cheryl studied graphic design and became an Art Director. Her later experiences working as a graphic designer and commercial photographer for DaySpring/Hallmark Cards, Creativity Inc., and Walmart were invaluable in her growing understanding of how to create art that is broad in its appeal while maintaining the integrity of the artistic vision.

Cheryl grew up in a small town in Arkansas. Having traveled the United States and abroad, Cheryl and her husband decided that Northwest Arkansas is a great place to live. She spends family time on Sunday afternoons at her sister's home, mostly because of her sister's children, which include triplets! They all enjoy watching the kiddos grow up!

Cheryl she loves to match her outfit to her shoe color and when you see her in a crowd she answers to, "tall girl" that's because she has always been teased about her height of 5'10". She has always been a dog person and with two miniature Goldendoodles they keep her lap full and her face covered with puppy kisses. She started a business, By Cheryl Images, LLC as a photographer specializing in real estate, commercial, products, portraits, and graphic design.

As a REALTOR®, Cheryl will help you with your Real Estate needs. She is enthusiastic, passionate about helping people, tech-savvy, friendly, responsive, and committed to excellence. Cheryl is ready to impress you with her service, encourage you with her trustworthiness, and thrill you with her commitment to urgency to find the right house.

Cheryl Barton





Staging Basics

Before putting a house on the market, consider staging it. By doing so, the house will likely sell faster and for more money than non-staged house. Staging is an art focused on showing off your home in its best light. It involves combining knowledge about real estate with creative design.

A house can be staged while you're living in it. Equally important is that a house can be staged on a budget without spending much money. Look at the big picture and focus on areas that make the biggest difference in the selling price of your house. Then get ready to roll up your sleeves and get ready to go to work.

While there are many things on this list, don't be discouraged. Focus on the areas that need the most attention. Once that project is completed, move to the next one.



Maximize Staging

This isn't your tidying up cleaning. It's deep cleaning that includes baseboards, ceiling lights, nooks and crannies. Since the kitchen and bathroom are areas buyers are very interested in seeing, make sure they sparkle. This is really important if the appliances in the kitchen are older. Don't forget to clean and straighten your cabinets/pantry since buyers will likely look at storage space. Never assume buyers won't look "There". Potential buyers will look in drawers, behind doors and nooks and crannies. Make sure these areas are clean and decluttered.

Clean all your windows inside and out, window blinds/shades. In addition, if possible, wash curtains and make sure drapes are dusted with no spots or stains. If your curtains or drapes are dated, take them down and replace them or leave the window without any.

If you have a pool, make sure it's crystal clear and uncluttered with swim toys and gear.



Decluttering Your House

You want to show off all the room and storage space in your house. Since this includes closets, garages, outbuildings and possibly the attic, you need to declutter all of these areas. You will remove things from your house. If you have time, go through and get rid of things you haven't used in the last year. However, if you're pressed for time, pack up the extra things and move them to a rented storage unit. People will want to see if your basement, garage, storage shed or attic are large enough for their things. In addition, you may need it to temporarily stash items during a showing such as dog beds and bowls.

Clean off your kitchen counters. Crowded countertops give buyers the idea there isn't enough storage space. Spacious closets very important to most buyers. Therefore, leave them at least one-third empty. You may be able to store out of season clothing, shoes and accessories at a friend or relative's house.



Depersonalize Your House

In addition to decluttering, take this opportunity to depersonalize your home by removing personal items. This will make it as easier for buyers to see their family living in your house. Therefore, save time and pack up your personal items while decluttering. Examples of items to remove are: family, friends and pet photos, items with names on them, refrigerator art, religious items. Additional items include anything that's highly personal such as diplomas/awards and décor items that aren't considered neutral.



Fix it Up

Make a list of everything that's defective, broken or worn out. If buyers spot problems or non-working items as they tour your home, they will wonder what other problems aren't seen.

Repairs include such things as patching holes and cracks in the walls and ceilings. However, if foundation problems are causing the cracks, you'll need to fix it or tell potential buyers about it. Fixing foundation problems increases the sale of your house. If an inspector says the foundation is sturdy, repair any cracks in it so buyers won't be scared off. Also get the inspector state it is sturdy in writing to show to buyers.

Other repairs to make include broken or sticking windows, fix or replace broken appliances and heat and air systems (HVAC). In addition, fix doors that don't properly close and drawers that jam, leaky faucets or running toilets. If your house has a roof issue, either repair or replace it. If your roof needs replacing, you will increase your chances of selling it if you replace the roof.

Appliances that aren't working should be repaired or replaced. If you choose to replace them, they do not have to be designer or top of the line appliances. Lighting fixtures that are out of date or broken can be replaced cheaply and easily. Replace burned out lightbulbs or bulbs that have been used for awhile to avoid a blown bulb during a showing. Recaulk around sinks, tubs and showers.

Outside repairs include fixing your steps, porch, patio or walkway if they have any cracks. Replacing any rotted wood or trim on the house or outside deck. Making sure your garage door opens smoothly as well as doors on any outside buildings. If you have a swimming pool, make any needed repairs on the pool or its equipment.



Paint and Wallpaper

Although wallpaper is coming back in style, a potential buyer may not like your wallpaper. Therefore, to increase sale potential, take it down and paint the walls. It's best not to paint the wallpaper since it may look shabby and signals buyers about work after the sale.

Since buyers may not like custom paint colors or finishes in a house, repaint the walls a warm neutral color. The warm neutral colors are better than white walls. New wall color can have a huge effect on how a room looks and feels.

If kitchen or bath cabinets are older, update them by painting or putting a darker stain on them. They may need to be stripped before painting or staining them but it will be worth it. Another way to update is to buy new faces for the doors and drawers. Add some new pulls and handles to finish the update.



Flooring

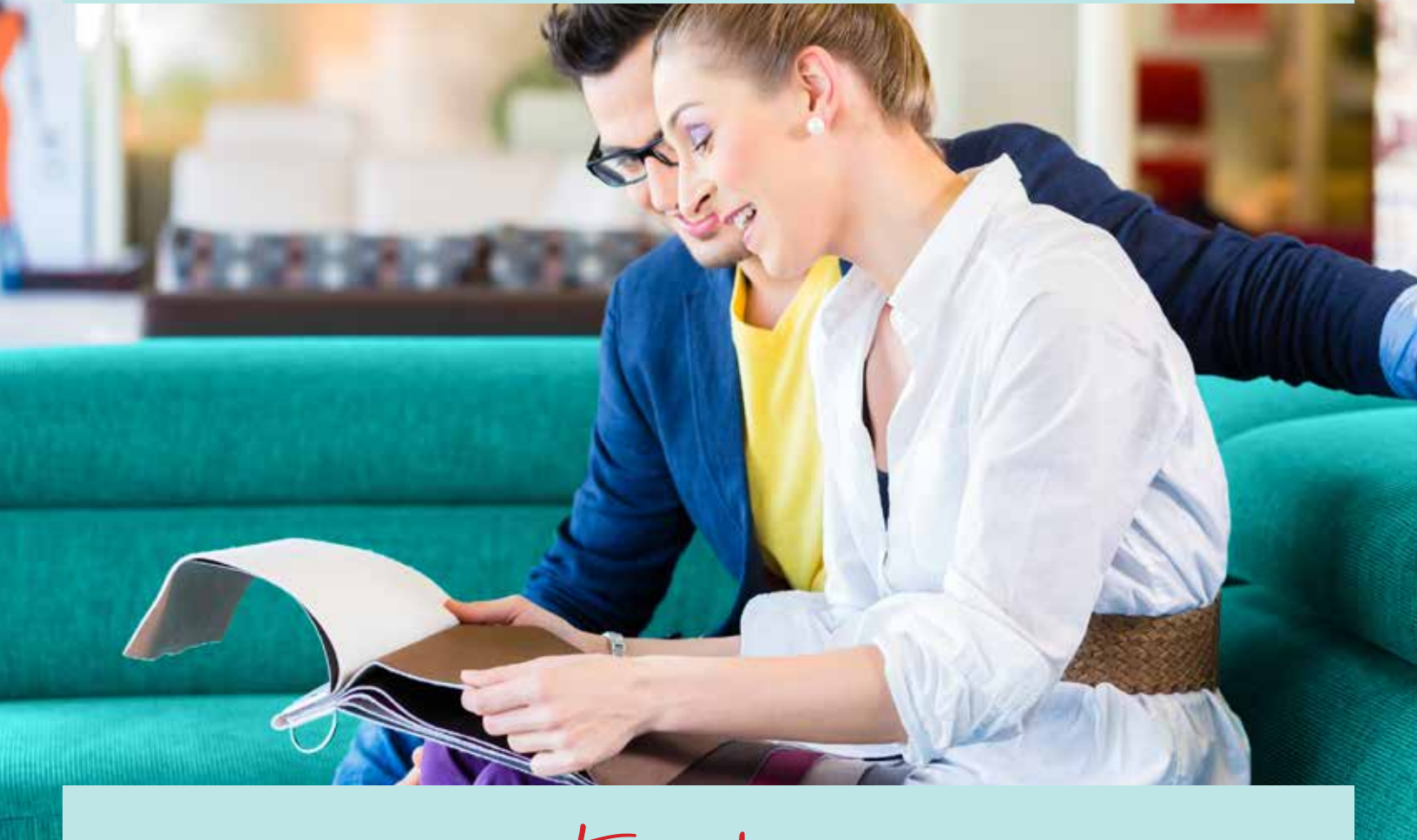
Buyers don't want worn, dirty looking and stained carpet. Try steam cleaning it to get rid of dirt, stains and odors. However, if the carpet is beyond repair, replace it with plush carpeting or hardwood floors that appeals to buyers. Another option you might consider if you have a limited budget is floating vinyl plank flooring. Its relatively new on the market, looks a lot like hardwood and is waterproof. Buyers should be told that it is vinyl plank flooring.

If your hardwood floors are in poor condition, see if they can be refinished. If that's not an option, consider placing area rugs that help with a good first impression. Be ready to tell prospective buyers about any damage.

If your kitchen or bathroom has tile floors and are in good shape, clean tiles thoroughly so it'll look its best. If the grout lines are dirty, freshen them up by applying new grout on the grout lines. However, if your kitchen or bathroom floors are out-of-date or worn, consider new flooring. If you can afford it, go with ceramic tile or stone. If not, choose high quality vinyl tiles or the vinyl plank flooring that mimic more expensive materials.

Staging: General information

Show off all the natural light your house has to offer. Remove heavy draperies and open up the blind. Unattractive views can be hidden with sheer window coverings that still lets in the light.



Furniture

Furniture should be just right for the room. If it's too big, it makes the room look small. Having too much furniture can make the room look too cluttered and small. However, if furniture is too small or there's not enough furniture, it can make the room feel cold.

If your furniture is worn looking, has saggy cushions, or is cheap looking, it takes the buyer's attention from the room. You don't have to spend a lot to change out your furniture. If you have the budget, you can purchase new furniture especially if you plan to buy new furniture when you move. Other options including checking out some of the nicer consignment shops, or even rent furniture to stage your house. Select furniture that looks nice, new, expensive, and inviting.



Defining Rooms

Help buyers see ways to maximize the house's square footage. One way to do this is by giving each room and the space in that room a purpose. This is particularly important for areas that aren't easily used such as alcoves, breakfast nooks, corners and window seats. For example, an alcove becomes a study area and chalkboard paint on a short wall becomes a message center. Other ways include, using a finished basement as an entertainment room or making a finished attic into an office space. A junk room can become a beautiful guest bedroom.



Entryway and Living Room

People should feel like they're home the minute they walk through the front door. The living room furniture arrangement should make the room feel spacious and homey. For example, arrange furniture to focus on the room's best feature such as a fireplace, the view or artwork. If there is a dark area, add a lamp. To update an outdated lamp, change out the old lampshade for a clean white drum one. You may want to include a potted plant or two – either real or a realistic looking fake. Use colorful throw pillows or a nice throw blanket to make the room feel homey.



Dining Room

In your dining room, take all the leaves out of your dining room table to make the room seem larger. Place a centerpiece on the table which can be a vase with flowers or some candles. Otherwise, leave the table empty. By doing so, buyers can imagine their family eating dinner in the room. A dining room table, chairs and perhaps a hutch or china cabinet is all that should be in the room. Keep four chairs at the table and remove extra ones to make your dining room look less crowded.



Kitchen

Bright, clean kitchens appeal to buyers. The kitchen should look like the buyers could walk in and cook a meal for their family. If you have a window in your kitchen, put a couple of pots of fresh herbs growing on the window sill. Make sure any curtains on the window are clean and not outdated. Removing them can help bring more natural light into the kitchen and make it seem brighter.

Pick an accent color from a nearby room and use it for kitchen towels, potholders and accessories. A wooden bowl with real lemons, apples or oranges helps freshen up the kitchen. Remove some bar stools and chairs around the table to make your eating area look larger.



Bedrooms

Bedrooms are usually the most personalized room in the house. However, in order to sell your house, bedrooms need to appeal to the largest possible number of buyers. Therefore, make sure you've taken all of your personal items out of them. In addition, these rooms need to be pleasing to both males and females.

If your comforters/bedspreads are worn or out of date, consider purchasing new ones. Bedrooms will look larger if they only have a bed, nightstand and maybe a dresser. Colorful throw pillows, one or two pieces of artwork walls and a plant makes the room feel comfortable. Also, these additions will draw the buyers' eyes around the room so they see all of it.



Bathroom

As for bathrooms, your goal should be to make everything look new. Make sure there's no tub ring and clean behind the toilet where you think people won't look. Make your toilet look better by buying a new toilet seat.

Purchase some new luxurious towels for the bathrooms. Give the master bath a spa-like feeling by adding a small potted orchid, fresh flowers or unlit scented candles or lotion. Hide all your toothbrushes, make-up and razors in drawers or under the cabinets. On the countertop, display some decorative soaps.

Rugs in the bathroom make it look smaller so pick up any rugs you may have down prior to a showing.



Outside

First impressions are very important and “curb appeal” is key to making a good one. Curb appeal is how a buyer will see your house from the street. Therefore, make it a warm and inviting impression. Several things help accomplish this goal. One is to make sure the yard, shrubs and plants are well-maintained. This includes the yard being mowed, leaves raked, shrubs trimmed and flower beds weeded. In addition, remove dead plants (not dormant ones in winter) and replace with colorful seasonal plants. If it's in your budget, add fresh mulch to your flower beds to make them pop. Check to see if lower limbs of trees need to be cut for a better street view of the house.

Make sure your front porch/entry way is clean and inviting. You can do this without spending a much of money. Paint your front door and shutters if they need it. Consider a new door mat for your front and back door, wreath for the front door or flowers in pots. Your porch lights should be working and free of cobwebs, spiders and other bugs. Keep your driveway, sidewalk and porch swept, clear of debris, snow or ice. Don't forget to do the same things for your back yard, patio and backdoor.

If you can do it, power wash your home's exterior since it can make it look almost freshly painted. Power washing your driveway, sidewalk and patio can help brighten them up and look newer. Do not power wash your windows since it may break the seal on insulated windows.

If you have a back deck, power washing it may help it look like it's been freshly painted or stained. If not, paint or stain it if at all possible.

If you have exterior furniture on a patio, deck, or balcony, make sure its clean and in good repair. Purchasing some new cushions for chairs will give it a new look. Arrange the furniture to take full advantage of a fire pit, fireplace or beautiful view. Show buyers how they can enjoy the space.



Odor Removal

Become aware of the smells in your house and develop a plan for replacing unpleasant odors with inviting aromas before a showing. The smell of a house when a buyer walks in is part of the first impression. Kids, pets, moist bathrooms, indoor smokers and dinner all contribute to your house's smell. Since you are used to your house's smell, have friend or neighbor tell you the what they smell.

Inexpensive tricks to replace odors with an inviting aroma include baking an apple pie or slice-and-bake cookies. Some people are allergic to synthetic scents so using actual food smells is a better choice.

A handy tip to remove sink odors, is to grind half a lemon in the garbage disposal. If you're a smoker and usually smoke indoors, start limiting your smoking to outside. In addition, take extra steps to deodorize inside your house. Don't forget to take out the trash, compost bucket, diaper or doggie cleanup pail.



Pets

Potential buyers can be turned off if they see hairballs or smell pet odors. And remember, buyers will look everywhere, so just tucking your pet's belongings in a closet won't cut it. Pack up and remove everything pet-related, including:

- Kennels or crates
- Toys
- Water and food bowls
- Pet food
- Pet beds
- Dog houses or cat condos
- Cat climbers or scratching posts
- Leashes
- Pictures of family pets



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