



CHAPTER 1

SO YOU'RE SELLING YOUR HOUSE . . .

STAGING IS A MIND-SET

Before you put your house on the market, make sure you really want to sell. You must begin to think of your home as your house, and your house as a product. This means letting go and moving on. I know your home is full of memories, and you don't want to leave any of them behind. But you're taking those memories with you! If you're going to sell your house and get top dollar for it, you must make it attractive, just like a box of cookies on the shelf at the grocery store. Like a product, people will be drawn to your house because it looks better than other products on the shelf.

That's where Staging comes in. Why offer your house "as is" instead of "the best it can be"? How can you expect to sell a house with scuffed walls, a dirty sink, fading wallpaper, and appliances that don't work? Even used cars are polished to

perfection before they're sent out to the lot. Buyers make decisions with every inch they walk. So go over your house inch by inch. Merchandise it inch by inch. Let's set the Stage!

DETAIL YOUR HOME LIKE YOU DETAIL YOUR CAR

Some people put more into selling their car than their house, even though their house is worth so much more than the car. I always ask sellers, "If you were going to sell your car, what would you do before showing it to potential buyers?" They always reply, "Wash it, wax it, vacuum it, clean out the junk, and touch up the chips." Where is most of your equity—in your car or in your house? Your house, of course. So it makes perfect sense to invest the most care in the house you want to sell for the highest possible price. However, most people don't know the secrets, tricks, and tips of Staging. They put their home on the market the way they live in it—as is. So we'll show you how to Stage it. By Staging your house, you'll immediately pull it ahead of the competition. You'll get rid of all those things that distract the buyer from the property, the walls, the building. You're selling the house, not your things, and that's the key to Home Staging.

STAGING IS NOT DECORATING

Staging is not decorating. Decorating means personalizing your space; staging is depersonalizing it. Staging is not about the ruffles you love or your favorite color rug. Staging is about getting a property sold. Decorating is optional. Staging is mandatory.

You have to get the home sold, regardless of the state of the economy. Even as the market goes up and down, the market is still going up. If you want to sell, you can only change yourself, not the buyers. What you can do is Stage your house and sell it at a profit. You want your property to look its very best so it will sell for top dollar. When you don't Stage, you are cheating yourself—and you may be losing money in the process. If you doubt this, try to flush a dollar down the toilet. Can't do it, can you? Advertising a messy house is like throwing money away. If you want to get the most money possible for your house, you owe it to yourself to Stage the property so you get top dollar.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE BUYER

Buying a house can be exhausting. By the time potential buyers arrive on your doorstep, they have probably already packed and readied their own homes for sale. At this point, all they're looking for is a clean, peaceful house to purchase and move into—somewhere they can relax, feel comfortable, and make their own. Most buyers don't want to do anything to a house initially, at least for the first few months. Their energy is tapped and their resources strapped. They just want to move in and sit back for a while. Let your house be the haven they fall in love with.

THINK OF YOUR HOUSE AS A SET TO BE STAGED

In marketplace terms, your house is merchandise. In Hollywood terms, your house is the set. You're Staging it to look appealing, just like the stage set in a movie. Your favorite



SELLER: Now that we're leaving, we don't want to invest in this house; we want to use the money for our next house.

BARB: Don't be penny wise and pound foolish. When you Stage your home, you're investing in your most important possession and earning back your equity. If your home will sell for thousands more after you buy a new sink and countertops for a few hundred dollars, you're still ahead of the game. By Staging this house, you'll have more to invest in your new home. And many Staging ideas cost nothing. That's where the creativity of Staging comes in—and it works!

television show has a set you remember and connect with. Your house is a set, too.

Consider your audience: You must appeal to the real estate agents as well as the buyers. Agents also remember only what they see, not the way it's going to be. If your house doesn't appeal to the agents, they will pass it by in favor of a house they think they can sell. If your home isn't Staged, they may use it as a comparison to a house that has been Staged. If you were a shopkeeper, you'd show your customer a gorgeous, expensive dress, not a dowdy old frock from last season. If you went into Target or Nordstrom and found a blouse you liked but the buttons were missing, you'd ask for a discount, wouldn't you? The same is true with houses. So make sure your house is Staged to be the best it can be. Be proud and confident. And let me be your director. Ready, set, Stage! On with the show!