



Set the stage

Three Ottawa home-staging experts share their tips to get the edge in a sluggish real estate market

BY JANET WILSON

Selling a home in a slow real estate market is no easy feat. But with a little elbow grease and a modest budget, your house can be transformed from drab to fab to stand out from the crowd.

According to three Ottawa experts, preparing or staging a home for sale will not only help sell it faster, but at a higher price. It's important to remember that first impressions are often made within 30 seconds of entering a home, so at the very least, it should be clean and clutter-free.

A home stager can walk you through the dos and don'ts to ready your home for resale. A two-hour consultation costs about \$200 and up, and often includes a written report of recommendations.

We asked our experts for their top three tips to help close a quick sale:



DERRY CULLWICK

of Royal LePage Performance Realty
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1. Curb appeal. When a potential buyer drives up, make sure snow and ice have been cleared away. It's too cold to paint outside, but clean your front door, exterior lights and mailbox, and replace tarnished house numbers. Dress up outdoor urns with seasonal greens or hang a wreath on the door.

2. Banish clutter. Give away things you don't need or put them in storage. Clean off countertops and dressers.

3. Freshen up. Touch up chipped paint on baseboards and window frames. Fix leaky faucets, cracked tiles and clean or repair bathroom caulking. Replace tattered rugs and fill vases with fresh flowers. But don't use plug-in air fresheners. It might look like you're trying to mask a bad smell.



PHOTOS BY BRUNO SCHLUMBERGER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Stager Kristy Morrison adds a simple vase to a table, top, to replace personal photos, above, so potential buyers can feel their own connection to the home.

KRISTY MORRISON

Professional stager, designer and owner of Capital Home Staging & Design capitalhomestaginganddesign.ca

1. De-personalize. Homeowners need to cut emotional ties and start thinking of their home as a house. Take down family photos and religious icons so buyers can concentrate on the rooms and not the decor. People need to feel a connection with a home before they buy it.

2. Tone down the decor. Soft, neutral colours sell. You don't want people to feel overwhelmed by your paint choices.

3. Work with what you have. If your sofa is torn, slipcover it or use a tablecloth on a worn kitchen table. Replace tattered towels and shower curtains.



'It's all about packaging.'

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NEDERGAARD'S TIPS
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