RE/MAX®
HOME STAGING GUIDE

A room-by-room guide to help you stage your home for sale.

What is Home Staging?

Staging means preparing a home for sale to appeal to the largest number of buyers, increasing the chances of selling quickly and for a higher price. As a seller, you can stage your own home, have your Realtor® help you stage it, or hire a professional home stager. A new twist on home staging is "virtual" staging, which means that photos of a home are digitally enhanced to demonstrate the possibilities of the space.

THE BENEFITS OF HOME STAGING

Faster Sale, Higher Price.

When potential buyers can picture themselves living in the home, they will be more motivated to make a competitive offer. Depersonalizing the home of family photos and other such items helps buyers see the space as "theirs."

Swipe Right

Photographs of a staged home are more likely to attract interest online. Since most homebuyers these days start their home hunt online, it's important to make a good impression through photos.

Picture It!

When potential buyers view a listing, they're thinking beyond what their eyes are showing them. They're visualizing themselves living in the space. Is the home an ideal place for growing children, or to enjoy retirement? A home stager will take an objective approach to decluttering and decorating, allowing prospective purchasers to view the space as theirs.

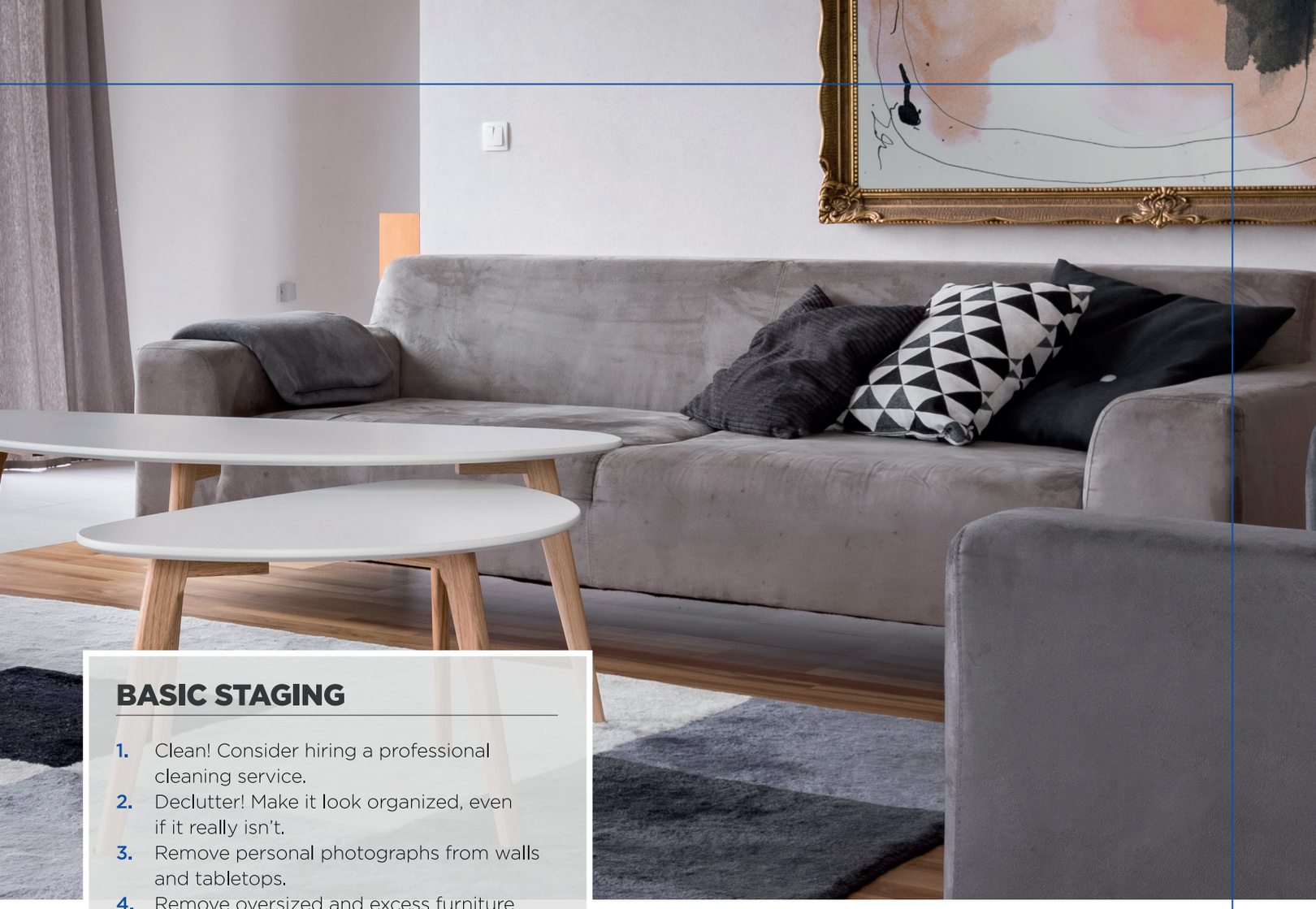
LET A RE/MAX AGENT GUIDE YOU

The advice presented here includes tips from RE/MAX agents and other professional sources to help sellers like you through the home staging process. It's a challenge to objectively critique your own home. Your RE/MAX agent will bring a fresh perspective, an understanding of the local market and knowledge of what buyers there are looking for, to ensure your home shows beautifully in person and in photos.

Keep in mind that staging is not remodeling. Staging involves cleaning, rearranging and a bit of decorating to highlight a home's best features, such as a fireplace, beautiful wood floors, gorgeous views or a cozy master suite. Your RE/MAX agent can also refer you to professional staging resources as needed.

START WITH DECLUTTERING

"Decluttering" is the first step in staging your home. Pack all non-essential items that you can live without until you move into your new home. This will help with the staging process and will kick-start the packing process. Donate or discard items that you don't want, need or use.



BASIC STAGING

1. Clean! Consider hiring a professional cleaning service.
2. Declutter! Make it look organized, even if it really isn't.
3. Remove personal photographs from walls and tabletops.
4. Remove oversized and excess furniture and area rugs.
5. Keep closets tidy! Prospective buyers will want to evaluate the home's storage capacity, and clutter creates the illusion of less space.
6. Let the sunlight in by opening blinds and curtains.
7. Replace burned-out, dim or flickering light bulbs.
8. Consider replacing dated light fixtures.
9. A fresh coat of paint will help renew the look and feel of any room. Choose 2 to 3 different neutrals to use throughout the whole house.
10. Don't forget the exterior!

MISTAKES TO AVOID

- Don't spend a lot of money. Be resourceful.
- Don't paint everything white. Opt for soft neutrals.
- Don't cover up architectural details such as windows or the fireplace.
- Don't try to hide odors with overpowering air fresheners and candles.
- Don't make the house too sterile by removing everything. Your goal is "inviting and livable."

PACK IT! STORE IT!

Plastic storage bins are great for items that may need to be stored for an unknown period of time. Store these off-site if possible. Consider renting a portable storage unit. Many companies provide these large containers that can be stored in their climate-controlled warehouse until you are ready to have it delivered to your new home!

Start with:

- Personal framed photos, photo albums, trophies and awards.
- Extra bake ware and cooking items.
- Rarely used kitchen gadgets, cookbooks and small appliances.
- Collectibles, figurines, special occasion dishware,
- extra or out-of-season décor items.
- Out-of-season clothing, coats, boots and shoes.
- Books, CDs, DVDs and games.

Room By Room

Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home, and it should be one of its biggest selling features. Ensure that it is clean, well-lit, and it should feel warm and welcoming.

- Remove magnets, photos and the children's art that's hanging on the refrigerator.
- Remove decorative items from the tops of cabinets which can make photos look cluttered.
- Remove everything from the counter tops, then add items back strategically.
- Accent a neutral space with something colourful, like a bowl of lemons or a nice bottle of vinegar.
- Lighten up dark corners with a white or bright object like a vase or a high-quality small appliance.
- Put away area rugs.
- Update the light fixture.
- Add self-adhesive LED lights under cabinets.
- Clean the oven/stove, microwave, refrigerator and garbage can to eliminate odors at their source.

Room By Room

Family Room

This room should feel spacious, relaxing and comfortable. Features to highlight, if your home has them, are the fireplace and up-to-date media systems. If your television is from the 1990s, get rid of it or buy a new one.

- Remove excess furniture to create the illusion of more space for entertaining family and friends.
- Pack up any toys that are cluttering the floor.
- Board games, video games, DVDs, remote controls and other items should be organized on shelves or in cupboards.
- Evaluate the lighting in the room. If needed, add a lamp or two, and replace dim light bulbs with brighter ones.
- Remove anything too casual or too personal, including beanbag chairs, family photos, sports trophies and, yes, the taxidermy must go!

STAGING CHALLENGE: PETS

Pets may be part of your family, but buyers may not be as receptive. If you can't remove the pet from the home, minimize evidence inside and out:

1. Deep-clean carpets and upholstery.
2. Put away all pet paraphernalia (dishes, toys, leashes, litter boxes).
3. Take your pet with you during showings.
4. If it's impossible to hide all the pet gear these items should be restricted to one low-traffic room.

Room By Room

Living Room

Is this the first room a prospective buyer will see? Make sure it wows them! Highlight the fireplace, hardwood floors or the beautiful view. Ideally, the television is not the focal point of this room.

- Remove excess furniture and arrange remaining pieces to enhance the flow of traffic.
- Group furniture for easy conversation.
- Remove outdated window treatments.
- Remove worn or shabby furniture or update it with slipcovers in neutral tones.
- A little decorating can make a difference in this room. Invest in some trendy accessories and throw pillows.
- Artwork should be high-quality and hung at eye level. Black-and-white photographs are neutral and can give a space a sophisticated look.

Room By Room

Dining Room

- Remove excess furniture, such as a hutch full of collectibles. They can be distracting to potential buyers.
- Remove extra leaves from the table to make the room appear larger.
- Have no more than 4 chairs around your dining table unless your dining room is exceptionally large.
- Consider removing the rug from under the table.
- Update the light fixture. Many trendy, inexpensive options are available.
- Add a decorative centerpiece, such as fresh flowers, to the tabletop.
- Talk to your agent about whether setting the table will enhance this room.

Room By Room

Bedroom

Focus on the master suite. It should feel like a restful sanctuary from everyday life.

- Rearrange beds so they are facing the doorway.
- Remove excess furniture and items such as heavy dressers, exercise equipment, pet beds, and medical equipment like C-PAP machines.
- Remove photos and other personal items.
- Make the beds with clean, coordinated linens in a solid colour or simple pattern.
- Remove half the items in every closet and make sure what's left looks neat and organized.
- In the master bedroom, think in pairs — two nightstands, two lamps, two pieces of artwork hanging over the bed.

Room By Room

Bathroom

- Deep clean!
- Re-caulk around the tub and toilet.
- Replace old toilet seats.
- Hide all personal hygiene items and the garbage bin.
- Display fresh towels in a neutral colour.
- Run the fan to reduce humidity.
- Freshen the space with a small vase of flowers on the vanity.
- Remove toilet tank/lid covers.
- Only place one rug!
- Replace the shower curtain.
- Clear counter tops.

Room By Room

Other Spaces

HOME OFFICE

Pack away piles of paper, especially any sensitive information such as passwords, confidential work documents and similar items. Keep cords out of the way. And just as in every room, remove clutter and excess furniture.

FRONT ENTRYWAY

Make sure it's completely clutter-free, with space for shoes and coats, depending on the season. If there's a table, add a floral arrangement or another single, beautiful decorative item.

GARAGE, LAUNDRY ROOM, BASEMENT

These are lower-priority areas but ensure there's no laundry hanging or piled up; ensure the washer and dryer are clean; organize tools/equipment and ensure there's enough room in the garage to park the car.

OUTDOORS

Your curb appeal makes a crucial first impression. Take the time to show off your yard, patio, deck, landscaping and the home itself, to generate the maximum level of interest and yield a higher return on resale!

- Power wash and/or paint the home's exterior.
- Trim landscaping and keep the lawn mowed at all times.
- Add fresh mulch to gardens.
- Add hanging baskets or potted plants by the front door.
- Repair any hazards, such as broken concrete.
- Remove toys, equipment and other objects from the yard and driveway.
- Make sure outdoor furniture is fresh, clean and ready to use.

STAGING CHALLENGE: KIDS

In children's bedrooms, decluttering is paramount. Moving can be tough on anyone, but especially kids. Make this process easier on them by including them in the process. Put them in charge of picking up and putting away their toys and games every day, focusing on high-priority areas like the living room, family room and kitchen.

In their bedrooms, declutter as much as possible. Clear toys off the floor, organizing them in baskets and bins for a quick clean-up. Children's rooms are often colourful and busy. Tone it down by removing personal photos, music posters and most plush toys. A fresh coat of paint will take care of any wear and tear on the walls.

Vacant Homes/ Virtual Staging

VACANT HOME ISSUES

Selling a vacant home can be more convenient for the seller. It presents an ideal opportunity to paint the walls, maintain the floors and complete any projects that might be difficult to complete while living in the home. However, to buyers, a vacant home may appear empty, unloved and abandoned.

Staging a vacant home illustrates to buyers that it is well-maintained and helps them envision how each room can be used. Ensure every room contains a piece that matches its role—beds in the bedrooms, a desk in the home office, a table and chairs in the dining room.

VIRTUAL STAGING

A home can be staged remotely using photos and videos provided by the homeowner. When selling a vacant property, 3D home staging software uses room measurements to generate renderings, complete with perfectly scaled furniture, paint colour and decor that's totally on trend – no home visits, furniture rental or heavy lifting required. Connect with your RE/MAX agent to learn more about remote and virtual home staging services.

HOME VIEWING CHECKLIST:

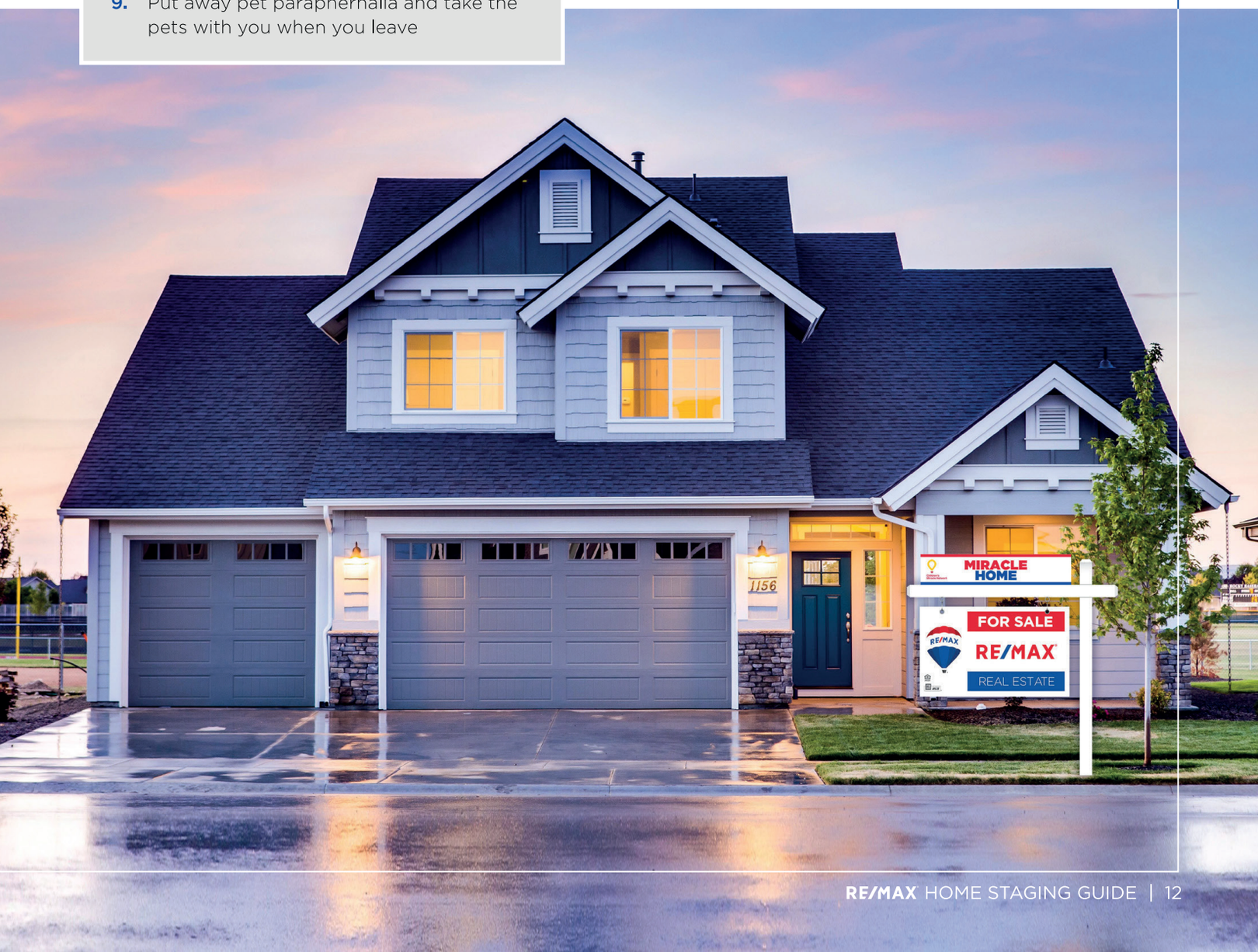
Whether in person, online, or through a live video tour, here are some things that will enhance the viewing of your home:

1. Open patio umbrella
2. Empty/hide all garbage cans
3. Open the blinds and curtains - turn on the lights
4. Put away medications
5. Put away jewelry, personal and financial documents
6. Place a vase of fresh flowers in the front entryway or dining room
7. Turn on classical music
8. Turn off computers
9. Put away pet paraphernalia and take the pets with you when you leave

CONTACTLESS SHOWINGS

Ready to show buyers what might be their next home? Your RE/MAX agent can schedule a virtual open house or showing for brokers or buyers, promote the event online, and host it via live or pre-recorded video. Apps like FaceTime allow people to view the home and ask questions in real time. It's the next best thing to being there in person. In cases where an in-person showing is required, your agent can minimize contact by

- only holding scheduled showings, no drop-in open houses;
- limiting showings to 1 or 2 people from the same household at one time;
- providing hand sanitizer, face masks, gloves and shoe covers prior to entry;
- turning on all the lights;
- leaving doors, closets and storage areas open;
- making utility areas in the home openly visible;
- accompanying visitors on their tour of the home; and
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces, like doorknobs, after each showing.



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