



THE VANCOUVER SUN

SPECIAL INFORMATION SUPPLEMENT

HOUSEHUNTING



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RESALE REAL ESTATE | RENTALS

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Set the stage to help prospective buyers dream of making your house their home, and you will sell quicker and for the most money possible.

Savvy vendors enlist the objectivity and expertise of a trained staging professional to maximize their potential equity, while saving both time and unnecessary stress.

Thanks to the popularity of television shows such as *The House Doctor* and *Sell This House*, we are more aware of the things potential buyers respond to.

The objective of home staging is to have them focus on the house and not what's in the house.

"You want the potential buyer to be able to imagine themselves living there the whole time they are in the house, and to linger in the rooms as they look at your home," says Val Sharp, President of the Canadian Redesigners Association and owner of Sharp ReDesigns.

"You want to draw people's eyes toward the selling features of the home – a gorgeous fireplace, a beautiful window/view, lovely molding, coved ceilings, and built-in bookcases," she says.

Sharp offers valuable advice to help maximize a home's potential.

Clean everything so it sparkles – especially anything reflective like glass & metal. Make sure it's clean to the touch. Pay specific attention to door handles and cupboard handles.

Get rid of clutter. As a general rule you can remove up to 50 per cent of what you own. Pack it into boxes and put them neatly in the garage or preferably, offsite storage. Weed out what you do not need and neatly organize the rest.

Pack away everything you're not using.

Eliminate personal items – personal photographs, personal items in the bedroom, personal items in the bathroom. (Bedrooms and bathrooms should look like a hotel – like nobody lives there).



Home staging professionals help potential buyers imagine themselves living in the home.

photos: Donna Russell, Design a Move

Staging helps to sell homes more quickly and profitably

Once you make the decision to sell, you must no longer regard your house as your home, but as a product to market.

Let there be light. The home should be as bright and light as possible. Check all light bulbs and increase wattage if safe to do so. Open blinds and curtains. Even consider taking down heavy

draperies if they block light for summer. (You may want to add them for warmth for winter.) Increase the wattage in light bulbs in the laundry room, kitchen and bathrooms. For showings,

turn on lights in every room.

Stimulate buyers' imaginations. Your goal is to set a scene that will encourage buyers to imagine they live in the home. Use

the coziness and romance of the fireplace to advantage. Put a pair of wine glasses and a vase of flowers on the coffee table in front of the fire. Put a barbecue on the deck.

Be ruthless about odors. If there is a smell, the house won't sell. Use cleansers of all kinds to make the home smell fresh, from carpet freshener to potpourri. However, be careful when using room sprays as they can irritate allergies. Deodorize cat litter and scoop litter daily. Put cedar chips inside the closets.

Smells, light and color will influence a buyer, so put fresh flowers out, and bake cookies or bread prior to an open house. You can also use the sense of smell to your advantage by having fresh-baked cookies on the kitchen table, creating a welcoming sensual environment for potential buyers.

Create a spacious feeling. Make sure that all doors, cabinets and drawers open all the way without bumping into anything or sticking. Clean out the entry closet and put only a few hangers in it, so that the buyer can visualize winter coats. Move oversized and/or excess furniture to a storage facility. Make sure entrances to all rooms have an open flow.

Make the most of views. Disguise unsightly views. Put a screen or a basket of flowers in front of a fireplace if it isn't in use. Let breezes move the sheer curtains at the window. Make sure the interior is visible from the street. All windows must be crystal clean and clear.

Avoid eccentric decor. De-personalize the teenager's room, the game room or other areas by removing wild posters or any decorative item that could be construed as offensive. Remove decorations which might not appeal to the masses, from hanging beads in doorways to jars where the children store their spider collections. Even really gorgeous art can be a distraction if it's too gorgeous. Keep it fairly middle of the road. You aren't selling the art, you're selling the home.

For more information on home staging visit www.canadianredesigners.org