

## Why Vacant Homes Should Be Staged

There is a truism in real estate that people don't buy houses, they buy homes. What that means is that they buy the house that makes an emotional connection with them – the house that promises the lifestyle they aspire to. Research confirms that homes containing furnishings sell more quickly than vacant properties. Large builders understand this and spend big bucks to fully outfit model homes, so that potential buyers can *feel* what it would be like to live there.

For homeowners, investors and smaller builders selling vacant properties, home staging is an affordable way to get that model home effect. In this competitive real estate market, staging can make the difference between success and failure. Here's why:

1. Vacant homes are cold and devoid of character. It's hard to feel at home or make an emotional connection with an empty shell. Sterile, cold and uninviting are the three words most often used to describe an empty room. Not exactly a recipe for a quick sale.
2. Only 10% of people have the ability to visualize the potential of a house. Most people will react only to what they see, not what could be done with the home. Staging will create a warm and inviting atmosphere that buyers will want to come home to.
3. Without furnishings, buyers have no frame of reference. They have difficulty gauging the size and scale of a room or picturing how their things will fit. Small rooms actually appear smaller and large rooms feel hollow. In some cases it's actually hard to even know what the purpose of the room is when there's nothing in it.
4. There are more new construction homes on the market right now than ever before. And all of them in a given price range will offer the same features: for example, open floor plan, kitchen with stainless appliances and granite countertops, master suite with walk-in closets, etc. The problem is, all these houses are virtually indistinguishable from each other. This makes it difficult for a buyer to react to a house as "the one". Staging will set the home apart and give it clear advantage over the competition.
5. In a vacant house, buyers focus on the flaws. With nothing else to look at, cracks, chips and worn areas become much more noticeable. Staging does not hide these flaws, but makes them less apparent by emphasizing unique architectural features and other positive aspects of the home.

Staging a property before listing will transform an empty house into a home that potential buyers can imagine themselves living in. Done well, staging strikes the right balance between adding visual and emotional appeal with furniture and accessories, but without having the décor distract the buyer's eye from the property he is considering purchasing.

If you have a vacant listing, we offer full service staging, including procurement and placement of rental furniture and accessories. We will showcase the property's architectural elements and unique features and create a warm and inviting atmosphere that buyers will want to come home to.

