

Is Your Home Market Ready? Here's Some Time-Tested, Sensible Advice

By now, you've probably heard about "staging" a home. If your home is vacant, this could entail renting furniture and accessories to make the key rooms show better. But if your home is occupied, it's about thinning and re-arranging your "stuff" so that the house looks bigger and feels better.

My wife, Rita, helps me provide staging advice to prospective sellers. I understand the main concepts of staging, but Rita has that extra insight that can make that special extra difference..

Concept number one is to thin your possessions. You're moving anyway, so why not put half your possessions in a storage unit — please, not in your garage! Get everything out of your garage that you don't need before closing. You'll be surprised how much bigger your garage feels! The same applies to other storage areas,

from the crawl space or unfinished basement to your closets. A half-filled closet looks a lot bigger than a full closet. Put away your out-of-season clothes. (I provide free wardrobe boxes to my clients.)

Similarly, book shelves should be sparsely filled with books and accessories, not jammed with books. Kitchen countertops should be cleared of all but a few items.

Curb appeal is, as everyone knows, really important. If you have some lead time, hire a lawn care company to green up your lawn. It's amazing how quickly they can get visible results on a lawn. Pull weeds front and back, but especially in front. Trim foliage, especially where it overhangs paved surfaces.

Here's some other specific advice which can make a difference:

- Make those simple, low-cost fixes such as replacing that \$2 plastic doorbell button that is cracked, broken or just discolored. It's the first impression!
- Remove screens, repair ones with sun damage (typically \$15 each at your local hardware store), label them and put them away.
- Wash all windows inside and out.
- Replace broken windows and those double-pane windows with condensation inside them — they'll become inspection issues anyway
- Install CO detectors within 15' of every bedroom door — it's the law to do so before putting your home on the market.
- Expect to get free staging advice from your agent — and follow it.
- Ask your agent for vendor referrals — do not find vendors on your own or you could be disappointed/defrauded.
- Ask your listing agent to order a home warranty. It helps sell the home, but it also covers you until closing.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH,**
Realtor®

This Week's Featured Listings:

Their Backyards Make These Homes Special

To me, a great backyard can be a major selling point for a home, so this week I want to feature two of my listings which have particularly nice back yards. They both, by the way, also have the same reduced price—\$250,000. The yard at right belongs to **6273 Yank Court**. This house has



the added advantage of being next to a beautiful lake. The yard at left belongs to **1500 Utah Street**. Both yards have vegetable gardens and wood decks and are nicely landscaped. Go to their websites to take a video tour of both the yard and the home itself. Then call for a showing!



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Jim Smith

Broker/Owner

Golden Real Estate, Inc.

DIRECT: 303-525-1851

EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com

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