

Home Stagers: Does it Pay to Use One?

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A home staging expert can play up your home's assets, mask its flaws and, ideally, make your home easier to sell.

Home staging is hiring a designer or stylist (called a home stager) to suggest ways to make your home more appealing to potential buyers. When selling your home, it often helps to have a professional help highlight your home's selling points and make it appealing to a wide range of buyers.

But home staging is not a one-size-fits-all service. Here's what to consider when deciding whether to hire a home stager.

- **Many levels of service are available.** For about \$100, a home stager will walk through your house and offer advice on how to best show it. You may be told to remove clutter, hang mirrors in strategic places, repaint or clean carpets. Or, for a higher fee, a stager can perform a more hands-on role, such as repositioning furniture and arranging flowers. For those willing to pay in the thousands, there are stagers with warehouses full of furniture and decor items with which they can redecorate your house.
- **Stagers say the cost is worth it.** Some studies show that a house that has been staged is on the market for fewer days and sells for a higher price than comparable homes. Others have found the price increase can be sizable in a hot market or in an area of luxury homes.
- **Check the local market.** Then decide whether a home stager is really going to make a difference to you. In a hot seller's market, houses may not need staging in order to move. As well, if your home is in a modest neighborhood, you may not get the return on an extravagant makeover. A little old-fashioned advice may be enough: clean up and clear out the junk.
- **Consider your time.** For busy people, hiring a home