

# 10 Steps to Staging Your Home for a Profitable Sale



Many years ago, when my mum was forced to move into assisted aged care after developing dementia, I was faced with the task of preparing our family home for sale.

I had met Charyn Youngson at a networking event some time before, so didn't hesitate to call on her for advice. I wanted to ensure that any money I spent preparing the home for sale was money well spent, not wasted.

One of the valuable lessons I learned back then was to start by getting a house inspection done, so that I could fix anything (especially things that weren't obvious to me) before the open inspections.

Fast forward several years and Charyn has written a great book - called *Sold For Top Dollar* - and it's filled with great advice for maximising the value of your home.

Here are her ten easy steps for home staging for profit:

1. **Street appeal:** What are your first impressions of the house and yard area? What are the best exterior features and how can you enhance them? What are the worst exterior features and how can you minimise or improve them? Look at making changes in any of the following areas - upgrade the front door, add a 'wow' factor with your landscaping, give the garage a facelift, update your letterbox or house number, install outdoor lighting, upgrade or renew roofing and guttering, add or replace an old fence, paint, render the front of the home, add window dressings, cut back overgrown trees, repair issues relating to the driveway.
2. **De-clutter:** Although de-cluttering is virtually cost free, it can be a daunting task for many, as there can be a lot of emotion attached to our belongings. De-cluttering in preparation for a sale is different to de-cluttering to live. Ideally, you'll take out everything except the necessary furniture and accessories. In doing so you can create a more open, spacious and simplified look that buyers will love.
3. **Repair, replace, renew and update:** In a nutshell, Charyn's general advice for both inside and outside the house is if it's broken, torn, scatched, rusted, frayed, bent, leaky or chipped; fix it, replace it, or get rid of it. If it's dirty, worn, smudged, stained, soiled, faded or discoloured, clean it, replace it, paint it or get rid of it. If it's outdoors and it's dead, spindly, broken or brown; water it, trim it, relocate it or get rid of it. Most switched on buyers will order a building inspection before signing on the dotted line, so you need to ensure that all maintenance issues are addressed before you put your house on the market.
4. **Minimalise:** Think spacious. People often move because they want more room. After you have de-cluttered the house, Charyn recommends going for a minimalist approach with your furniture. Go through all your rooms like a sergeant major and be tough. It's also important to display the rooms the way you advertise the house. If your home is advertised as a three-bedroom home but you have the third bedroom set up as a gym room, an office or, worse still, an undefined spare room with no theme, you will totally confuse your buyers. Remember, your buyers will not be able to visualise the real purpose of the room.
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- Clean it:** Clean, clean and clean again! Some people put more effort into selling their car than their home, even though we all know a house is worth so much more than a car. Absolute deep cleaning throughout the whole house (inside and out) is essential. There is nothing more off-putting to buyers than a dirty house. If you have pets, if there is a smoker in the home, or your favourite cuisine is Indian curries, your home might have a distinctive and unpleasant odour that is noticeable to visitors. Some of the offensive odours become ingrained into the soft furnishings, so it can be a major task to get rid of them. Cleaning your house and opening the windows to get as much fresh air as possible circulating may be all you need but some stubborn smells require more drastic action - like repainting walls and ceilings and dry cleaning curtains and soft furnishings.
- De-personalise:** The real essence of home staging is removing yourself from the picture so that prospective buyers can place themselves in your home. Although buyers probably will not notice that your home has been de-personalised, they will notice if it hasn't been. Remember, when you're selling, it's not about your stuff and your personal taste. It's about selling your space. The more personal stuff you have in your house, the more likely that buyers will be distracted by your life.
- Neutralise:** Your house needs to appeal to everyone, and that means neutralising. Colour is such a personal thing and people respond to strong colours in one of two ways - they either hate them or love them. But if they hate them, it can be the deciding factor between putting in an offer for your home or not. The important thing to remember is that the majority of buyers, when faced with a negative reaction to your decorating style, will walk away and not come back. So, neutralising is all about avoiding strong colour statements on large areas like walls and floors. Charyn suggests to instead bring in colour with accessories and artwork when presenting a house for sale.
- Budget shopping for products and staging accessories:** Make the most of what you've got to stage your house to impress. If you're not happy with what you've got, you can borrow items from friends and family; buy some low-cost furniture items and soft furnishings; rent furniture and plants or use a combination of all the above. When it comes to soft furnishings and decorations, you might want to take advantage of discount cards, like Spotlight VIP members' cards, try factory outlets for new but discontinued lines, or look for clearance items at the end of each season from the homewares sections of Kmart, Target or Big W.
- Lights, candles, action - setting the stage for the open house show:** Home staging is like a stage show. You have done all the rehearsals and the house and its contents have been de-cluttered, de-personalised, neutralised, minimalised, repaired, renewed, replaced and cleaned until it's spotless and sparkling. Now it's time for your investment to pay off in the final production - your open house inspection! Think of every room in the house as a different set and it needs to be dressed for the occasion. Charyn suggests creating a focal point in each room to prevent buyer's eyes darting all over the place in a distracted way. The goal is to make the focal point attractive and arrange everything around it to create a sense of harmony, leaving any negative remaining flaws unnoticed. Create an atmosphere that enables buyers to imagine themselves living in your home. If you really cannot do the staging yourself, hire a professional to get the job done for you. If you fail to stage your home, you are less likely to get the price you're asking and more likely to have your house sit on the market for longer. Don't gamble with your equity - hire someone to help you!

For more business and life coaching tips to help you achieve your goals and create and live the life you've always wanted, visit [www.blueskycoaching.com.au](http://www.blueskycoaching.com.au). To find out more about how you can work with me personally, call me on 0411 471 941 or (08) 8338 3134 or e-mail [tania@blueskycoaching.com.au](mailto:tania@blueskycoaching.com.au).



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