



## How to Choose a Home Stager

Good first impressions are crucial when you're selling a house. Selecting a **professional** home stager to objectively assess your home's strengths and challenge areas, and create solutions that buyers fall in love with - are essential to creating that positive first impression.

Currently, there are no official standards or gauges to determine the effectiveness of a home stager. The following guidelines can help provide you a framework for choosing a **professional** stager.

- 1. Expert:** Is the home stager recognized as an expert in their field? Are they quoted by the media? Do they provide presentations to others in the real estate industry or speak at events? Have their projects been featured on TV or in print? Do they publish articles on staging? Look for someone with appropriate experience and local market knowledge. Keep in mind that interior design is geared toward home *owners*, while home staging is geared toward home *buyers*. Also, you are selling one of your largest assets so make sure that it is handled by professionals rather than inexperienced hobbyists.
- 2. Track Record:** Does your home stager have a long track record of staging homes that sell quickly? The primary goal for a home stager is to emphasize the strengths and improve the challenge areas to help buyers fall in love with what they see and make an offer. Ask for their information on the stager's "Stage-To-Sale" statistics. Do the statistics show that their homes sell quicker than the local average of market-to-sale without staging?
- 3. Pricing:** Does the quality of their work demonstrate the value you will be receiving (i.e. you get what you pay for)? Are their rates competitive with the local market? Do they have a clear breakdown of their services? Staging is an investment in marketing your home for sale. *"The investment in staging is always less than your first price reduction"* Barb Swartz, *Founder of StagedHomes.Com*. Find the most experienced home staging professional that you feel can successfully give your home the WOW factor within your budget and time frame, rather than the cheapest price.
- 4. Professionalism:** Do you feel confident that home stager is competent and professional? Do their marketing materials reflect their level of expertise? Do they carry their own liability insurance when working at your property? Have you received a well presented and clearly written proposal, consultation or written contract? If you don't understand something, or something that you discussed is not in writing, ask for clarification. Does the home stager provide you a clear picture of the services they will be providing? Do they have an organized and efficient plan to stage as well as de-stage the home? These things can be a reflection of the staging to be performed.
- 5. Portfolio:** Does your home stager have a portfolio of their work? Do any of the photos match the references provided (i.e. not just stock photos or from someone else's website)? The home stager should have an extensive portfolio of before and after photos of their recent work. Do the post-staging photos show a significant improvement from the pre-staging photos? Do the post-staging photos emphasize the features of the home? Does the portfolio provide a diversity of styles and use of color? Has the stager worked on houses in a variety of price ranges and architectural styles?
- 6. Training:** Has your home stager had any professional training? When selecting a qualified home stager, make sure you hire someone who has been specifically trained to prepare a home for sale. There are several well-known, respected, and qualified training organizations that offer certifications or accreditation. We recommend that you look for professionals that have one or more of the following insignia: ASP (Accredited Staging Professional), CSP (Certified Staging Professional), CISS (Certified Interior Staging Specialist), HSE (Home Staging Expert), HSR (Home Staging Resource), or HSP (Home Staging Professional)
- 7. References & Testimonials:** Does your home stager have references that you can contact to verify their abilities and quality of work? Ask the home stager to provide you with a client list that you are able to contact about their experience. Try to determine if they met or exceeded the expectations of the seller or agent.
- 8. Inventory of Furnishings:** Does the home stager have the appropriate inventory to stage homes? Do they own or rent their furnishings? Is their inventory good quality and able to translate into various styles of homes? Be mindful that the furnishings are fitting for your particular home and will appeal to any future buyers.
- 9. Staff and Equipment:** Does the home stager employ competent staff to facilitate the completion of the work? Do they treat your belongings with respect? Do they have the necessary equipment to manage large projects (i.e. trucks, moving equipment, warehouse facilities, etc)? Do they manage their billings accordingly? Do they accept major credit cards?
- 10. Northwest Staging & Redesign** strives to excel in all these areas and customer service is of the utmost importance!