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# the real estate advisor

## In this issue:

- Home decorating vs. home staging
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## From decorating to staging

There is a difference between the two. Here's how to get your home ready to sell.



Once you've decided to put your home on the market, you're looking to sell quickly for the best possible price. One tactic that can help sell your home faster is staging.

At first, staging may seem like a real estate term that doesn't actually mean anything. Isn't staging just decorating? Well, not exactly ...

### Appeal to the masses

Your home is likely decorated to your tastes. It could be colorful and eclectic, or rugged and industrial. But when you're staging your home, rather than appealing to a specific decorating sense, you want to furnish your home in a way that appeals to everyone—and more importantly, doesn't turn anyone off who just isn't into your personal style.

### Tone down personal style

Buyers want to be able see themselves in a home and

imagine how they'd make it their own. Unfortunately, that means less of your own style as you're preparing for your move. Cut down on family photos, bold artwork, and unusual furniture. Do some major decluttering so the buyer can see all the space and storage opportunities. It may be sad to start removing the items that make your house a home, but it's an important part of the process.

### Mass appeal doesn't mean "boring"

Your staged home can still be colorful just stay away from extremes. If you paint, stick to whites, grays, or neutrals. Add flourishes of color with window treatments or accent furniture, but try to choose items that will appeal to both genders.

### Call a pro

There are likely several staging companies in your area. If you need a recommendation, reach out to your trusted real estate professional.

Interesting, informative real estate news for you.

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## Take 5: What affects property values?

Some the features that increase property values are obvious—like a remodeled bathroom, a modern kitchen, or a sought-after neighborhood. But here are a few features and circumstances you have not have realized can affect property values.

- 1. The neighbors:** Not every neighborhood or community has an HOA that can keep the neighbors from going overboard with decorations or neglecting to care for their home. Homes adjacent to crazy neighbors can potentially be undervalued.
- 2. Trendy groceries and coffee:** Recent statistics suggest that if your home is a short walk from popular grocery stores like Whole Foods or coffee chains like Starbucks, it can actually appreciate faster than the national average.

**3. Mature trees:** A big beautiful tree in the front yard is enviable, and it's not something that can be easily added to any home. Homes with mature trees tend to get a little boost in value.

**4. Parking:** This isn't too much of an issue if you live in the suburbs or in a rural area, but residents in dense cities can have real problems with parking, and homeowners might need to rent a spot just to guarantee a place to park each night. That's why having guaranteed parking in urban areas will raise property values.

**5. The front entrance:** First impressions matter to buyers—many will cross a home off their list within 10 seconds of stepping through the front door. An appealing front door, a friendly entryway, and a functioning doorbell are all necessities for getting top dollar.

## Avoid these two big mortgage mistakes

We all know that searching for and viewing potential homes is the fun part of the home-buying process. The not-so-fun part? The mortgage.

But if you don't pay attention to the details, your mortgage can end up dragging down the enjoyment of your new home and cause some major regrets. Here are a few mistakes to avoid to ensure that you love your mortgage terms as much as your new home.

Don't find your home first: Shopping around for the best mortgage rate should be the first step in the home buying process. You may even want to talk to a mortgage broker a full year before you plan to buy. It'll give you time to get your affairs in order to qualify for the best

rate, could save you thousands of dollars in the long run, and you won't feel rushed to accept an unattractive loan because you're worried you'll miss out on your dream home.

Don't forget your real budget: There's often a big difference between what a lender says you can afford and what you can actually afford. Your debt-to-income ratio doesn't include the money you spend on hobbies, or the cost of commuting to work, or maintenance and utility costs.

Really sit down and examine your spending before committing to the loan amount the lender is offering. You won't enjoy your home nearly as much if it's eating into your favorite hobbies.



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