

**Top Ten Tips for a Successful Sale –**  
*The Real Estate Staging Secrets of the Pros!*

1. **Think like a buyer.** Even if the house you're selling is 100 years old, buyers want something new. You've got to make your house look its best. Remember, your house is no longer your home – it's a commodity for sale in the real estate market. Put on your "buyer's eyes" and take a look at your entire property. Be realistic – would *you* pay \$400,000 for a house with peeling paint, worn out carpeting and a dead tree in the front yard? Unless they're buying a fixer-upper, the average buyer is looking for a house to buy with as few needed improvements as possible.
2. **Create curb appeal.** It's absolutely essential that the outside of your house create a positive preview of what's to come once the buyer walks through the door. A yard full of weeds, abandoned toys and a worn-out Welcome mat may result in a "drive-by" showing. Take the time and spend the money to have your front yard manicured, while ensuring your paint isn't peeling and your porch isn't sagging.
3. **De-clutter it.** Nothing is a bigger turn-off than a house that's packed to the rafters with collections, personal photos, magazines and more. Not sure how much to de-clutter? Take a look at model homes: no clutter! And model homes sell.
4. **De-personalize it.** While you're de-cluttering it's a good idea to pre-pack personal items. This includes family photos, the kids' artwork on the fridge, collections, etc. It's human instinct to be interested in how other people live, but buyers won't make it past your wall of wedding photos to see the special details of the house. The less there is to distract a buyer, the more likely an offer will be made.
5. **Neutralize it.** You want your home to appeal to the widest possible audience. Now's the time to paint that orange room a nice, mellow shade of creamy white and replace the forest green carpeting with a nice neutral Berber. You don't have to spend a fortune re-carpeting – just enough to keep buyers from using the "worn out carpet" in your house as the reason not to buy. Most buyers don't want to think about the added effort and expense that's involved in repainting and re-carpeting.
6. **Paint it.** This is especially important in small homes: the more rooms there are with different colored paint, the smaller and "choppier" the house feels. Buyers are looking for space, the best value per square foot. Make your space look larger by painting each room a warm, calming neutral tone. The thought of having to paint before moving in turns off

- most homebuyers. Paint is relatively inexpensive, and it's something you can do yourself.
7. **Make sense of it.** Does the use of your rooms make sense? Perhaps you're a bachelor and scrapped the idea of a dining room and replaced it with a game room. However, the family of three looking at your house will be stumped. The average buyer has difficulty conceptualizing their stuff in your house. Make sure the use of your rooms makes sense to anyone who walks in off the street.
  8. **Arrange it.** Arrange each room to highlight focal points (fireplace, big windows with views). Make sure there's plenty of room to walk around and get to doors and windows. You may need to remove furniture. Again, take a look at most model homes – they are staged with less, not more. You want each room to appear spacious and to give the illusion that there is ample space to fill.
  9. **Market it.** Be sure to include all your hard work in your marketing effort. Make sure your real estate agent replaces any marketing photographs with your newly staged images on flyers, MLS listings for other agents, and websites. Email your list of contacts and colleagues with a couple of the best shots and let them know your property is for sale, your asking price, and the stats.
  10. **Get help.** Selling a house can be an emotional, time-consuming process. Save yourself the time and stress by hiring a trained staging professional to help you sell your listing for top dollar as quickly as possible.

**Still not convinced? Consider this:**

According to the National Association of Realtors, for every \$1,000 sellers put into staging, the sellers get \$4,000 back. The average increase over the listing price is 6.32%, enough to cover the real estate agent's fees. On a \$500,00 house, the added value of staging is \$32,000.

According to the Wall Street Journal's RealEstateJournal.com, staging can increase the selling price of a home from 2 to 10 percent.

**Questions? Contact Heather Wood at 505-690-2685 or thorough [www.HouseMiracles.com](http://www.HouseMiracles.com).**