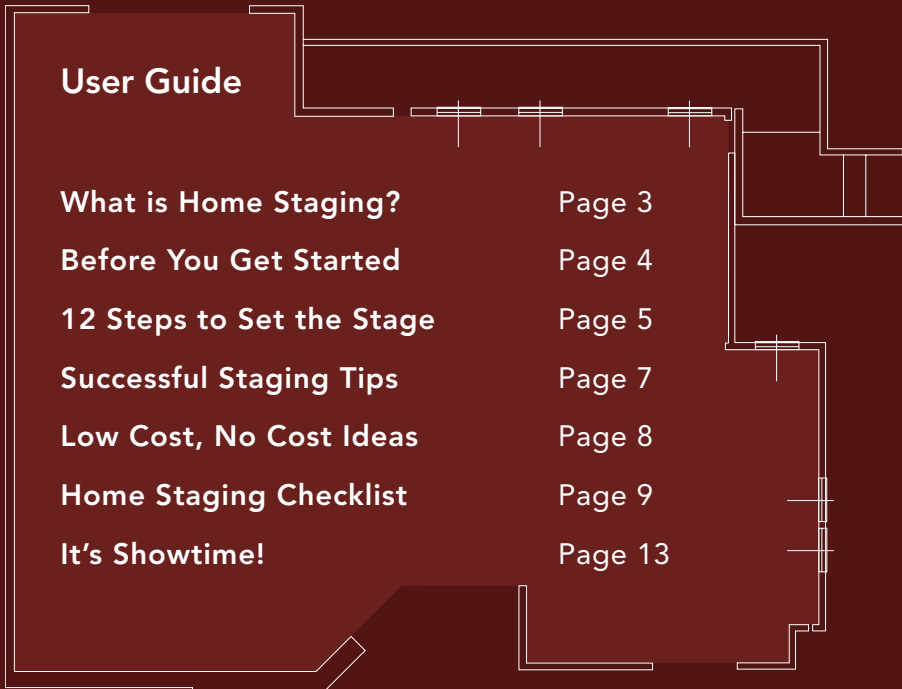


Your Home is Your Most Valuable Asset

Timing is critical when marketing your home and you won't get a second chance to make a first impression. The most important thing to understand is that once you decide to put your home on the market, it is no longer your home – it is a product. Therefore, it needs to be marketed and prepared for sale like any other product. Think about it as you would if you were getting ready to sell your car. You would do a number of things to prepare it for sale, such as detailing the inside and outside, changing the oil, checking the tires, etc. You would highlight its best features to get the maximum amount for it. Luckily, your ERA® sales associate has already done that research for you! Either a buyer will like your product, or they won't. It's that simple. With some planning, creativity, hard work, and dedication, you can accentuate the positive features of your home and help it sell faster! The time and effort made before your home is marketed will be a reflection of the number of buyers it attracts.



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WHAT IS HOME STAGING?

Home staging has been around for a long time, but it is quickly becoming a standard in the real estate industry as the first critical step in marketing your home. It is simply utilizing a series of proven techniques to highlight the home’s strengths and downplay its weaknesses in order to appeal to the largest possible pool of buyers. When a home appeals to more people, it translates into more interest and therefore, more offers – possibly even competitive offers! By following the simple guidelines described in this book, your home could possibly spend up to 80 percent less time on the market with 95 percent of staged homes selling in one month or less.*

In order to get your home ready for the market, you first have to take a step back and see it with “Buyer’s Eyes.” If you cannot see it objectively, you will not be able to package it effectively. For some, this seems impossible. This is your home, the place where many memories have been created. How can you now view it as just a product? Your ERA® sales associate will be there to guide you through this entire process and help you easily transition to the next milestone in your life. The good news is, preparing your home for sale doesn’t have to break the bank! Home staging is about creativity, not cash. Your staging budget will vary on your home’s individual needs. It can cost as little or as much as you want.

*Based on a June 2007-November 2007 StagedHomes.com survey 400 houses staged by ASP™ stagers across Canada and the continental United States.

The following is a summary of the results of HomeGain’s 2007 national survey, based on the ten areas of home improvement identified by real estate agents in HomeGain’s original survey in 2003. They are listed from the highest to the lowest returns on investment:

	Typical Cost	Increase Price	Return On Investment	% of Agents Recommending	
Lighten & brighten	\$233-\$370	\$1,178-\$1,566	355%	97%	Home Staging
Clean & declutter	\$190-\$318	\$1,505-\$1,937	578%	97%	
Landscape front/back yards	\$378-\$546	\$1,718-\$2,158	319%	97%	
Stage home for sale	\$403-\$584	\$1,938-\$2,431	343%	91%	
Repair electrical or plumbing	\$436-\$621	\$1,205-\$1,590	164%	93%	Home Repair
Repair damaged flooring	\$628-\$878	\$1,633-\$2,061	145%	94%	
Update kitchen & bathrooms	\$1,404-\$1,828	\$3,216-\$3,934	121%	87%	
Replace or shampoo carpeting	\$562-\$808	\$1,532-\$1,950	154%	98%	
Paint exterior walls	\$663-\$938	\$1,757-\$2,205	147%	88%	

* Courtesy of HomeGain.com. HomeGain surveyed over 2,000 real estate agents in each of the U.S. regions. All agents might not necessarily agree on the same pre-sale strategy. See “% of agents recommending” column above. Differences of opinions may vary based on the climate of the market, region of the country or condition of the home in question. The percentage of agents that agree on the positive impact of a particular pre-sale activity is summarized here.

The following are a few things to keep in mind when beginning to prepare your home for sale.

- Walk through your home looking at it objectively with the potential buyer in mind. View your home as a buyer would and completely remove yourself from your emotional attachment. Get a “second opinion” from a neighbor or friend in order to help you be more objective.
- Each room has a positive feature that a buyer will notice. Begin to plan how you will accentuate that special feature.
- When removing your personal possessions, do not think that your personal taste is in question. Just think of it as packing some things early and alleviating some stress come moving time.
- Staging is not a waste of money; it is a beneficial and necessary marketing investment.
- Always seek to elicit a positive emotional response from the buyer in every area you stage. The idea is for the buyer to be able to “mentally move in” and have them say “I can see myself here for a long time” not “I hate the colors of these walls and it will be a hassle to repaint.”



Staging your home can seem overwhelming. With the end-result in mind, stage room by room instead of trying to stage the entire house at once. Focusing on one room at a time creates a fun project the entire family can enjoy!

There is a process to staging that should be implemented in each and every room. Follow these 12 steps every time, and you'll be done before you know it!

- 1. Assess the room.** Use your "Buyer's Eyes" to imagine that you are looking for your next home. What would you notice? Be tough on yourself.
- 2. Pick a focal point.** Everything will revolve around showcasing this highlight. Is there a beautiful view? Fireplace?
- 3. Remove clutter.** Box up all non-essentials including your closet clutter. Again, think of it as packing up a little early. What can you live without while your home is on the market?
- 4. Depersonalize.** Remove personal collections and pictures. You want your home to appeal to the largest pool of potential buyers. You don't want them to feel as though they are intruding on your personal space.
- 5. Renew, repair or replace** anything that needs to be.
- 6. Rearrange furniture** to showcase spaciousness.
- 7. Re-accessorize.** Go back to the storage pile. Is there anything that you can use that will coordinate well with your plan for this room? Please refer to "Low Cost, No Cost Ideas" on page 8.
- 8. Fine-tune your work.** Make sure all details are exactly as you want them.
- 9. Clean! Clean! Clean!** This cannot be stressed enough. You'd be surprised at what a buyer will look at.
- 10. Add life!** Bringing any form of nature into a room adds a feeling of "home." Use flowers, greenery, natural lighting, or anything else you can think of.
- 11. Prepare to show.** An "It's Showtime" checklist has been provided for you on page 13. These are things that need to be taken care of each and every time potential buyers visit – from open houses to private showings.
- 12. Ask for help if you need it.** Remember your ERA® sales associate is your partner.

