



Design Times

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Smallest Investments Bring the Biggest Returns!

Staging can be the best value of all

Often as soon as a person decides to put their home on the market, panic sets in as they begin contemplating all the projects and upgrades that could maximize the value of their home. Without professional advice, sellers can waste a lot of time, money and energy doing things like repainting the walls stark refrigerator white or launching into unnecessary remodeling projects. Without direction, two things generally happen: either they don't do enough and are not able to sell their house for it's true worth or they do too much and are not able to recoup their home improvement investment. As a realtor, you can save your sellers a tremendous amount of frustration by directing them to the services of a professional stager who can help them prioritize changes that will be most impactful to potential buyers.

Remodeling projects can add value to a home and help it sell faster but dollar for dollar, simple cosmetic changes, especially staging, will insure that your sellers get the biggest bang for their buck. A minor kitchen remodel may get as high as 83% return on investment and a basement 75% but according to the 2007 Cost Verses Value Report, not one project listed recouped more than 88% of the investment. Below are four things, that combined, can give you well over 300% return on investment!

Lighten and Brighten

One of the simplest and most dynamic ways to improve a home is to lighten and brighten: that can be as inexpensive as replacing burnt out bulbs, using higher wattage ones and cleaning windows and light fixtures. Small investment= BIG return!

Cleaning and de-cluttering

What does a used car dealer do before they sell a car? They have it detailed. They remove all the imprints of the previous owner so it looks like new. No one's going to buy a car with cigarettes in the ash tray, sticky soda spills, and a hula girl on the dash board. The same goes for a house: it's crucial to get it looking as pristine as possible. When all the extra furniture, personal photos, knick knacks and refrigerator magnets disappear, prospective buyers will actually be able to focus on the house and picture their own furnishings in the space. Small investment = BIG return!

Effective staging can actually add as much perceived value as a mountain view or a three car garage.

Testimonial

Lisa,
Thank you so much for the wonderful job you did for my clients. The house sold in 23 days and for the highest price per square foot of anything in Tallyn's Reach.
I really look forward to all our future homes!
Kim Olson

Design Details

The Art of Hanging Art

Many home decorators are perplexed as to how high a picture should be hung, how to arrange pictures in a grouping or simply what goes where. Following are some simple guidelines to help you make the most of your art.

- Artwork should be hung so that the center point of the picture or grouping is about eye level for the average person.

- Connect art to the furniture so that it is not floating. Do not leave more than 6 to 9 inches of wall space between and keep the art about 2/3 to 3/4 of the width of the furniture over which it hangs.

Cont. on page 3

Smallest Investments Bring...

(cont.)

Repairs

Because the market is so saturated with houses, today's buyer can afford to be choosy; they want homes that are move-in ready. They don't want to face the prospect of re-caulking bathtubs and peeling off dated wallpaper. If those issues aren't addressed, not only will buyers wonder what hidden things have not been taken care of but they will automatically deduct repair costs at grossly inflated rates. Why not just take care of these things up front and make a great first impression? Small investment = Big return!

Staging

The art of staging, which is much more than simply de-cluttering, takes the home prep process to a whole new level. Staging is a tried and true service that increases a home's marketability by enhancing its visual and emotional appeal. Effective staging can actually add as much perceived value as a mountain view or a three car garage. Using what the homeowner already had I have totally transformed entire houses for as little as \$300 and most of these sold in less than two weeks. Small investment=Big Return!

Professional advice is invaluable to maximize the homeowner's resources and steer them away from projects that are simply not necessary to get the home sold quickly and for top dollar. Major remodeling projects may be a great investment if the homeowner plans to live in the house and enjoy it for a few years, but when moving, consider the options, weigh the cost of any upgrade against the ultimate benefit and only spend money on those changes that will improve your profit margin. Cosmetic enhancements, along with staging, have the greatest visual impact and will make investment dollars go the farthest towards setting your listing above the competition. *Remember, when selling a house, it's the little things that really count!*

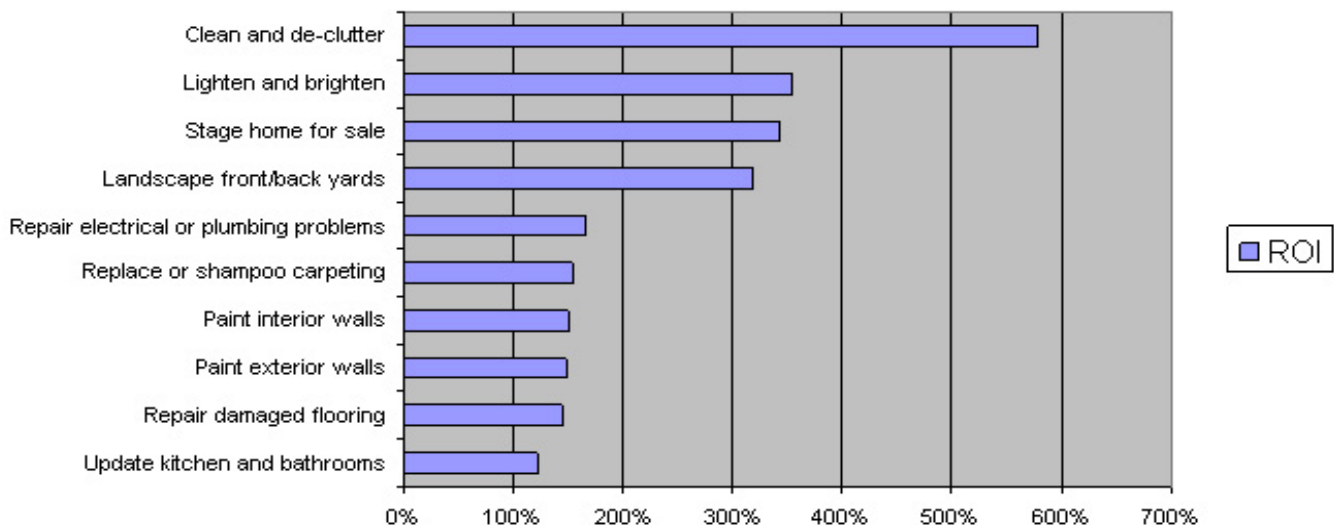
*This chart shows lower cost home improvements and their bottom line.

Blah to Aah

We used a combination of leased items and some of the home owners own furnishings to create a dramatic presentation and show the house off to the best advantage.



HomeGain 2007 National Average ROI For Top 10 Home Improvements



Fall Tips for Extra Special Curb Appeal

As the cooler weather draws people indoors, create an environment that celebrates the season and encourages togetherness!

Rearrange for a Positive Change

Move the furniture to create a focal point around the fire place instead of the TV. Add comfy floor pillows and stock up on logs for cozy family times. If you don't have a working fireplace place large pillar candles of varying heights inside for a warm dramatic glow. Pull out your favorite board games and stack them on the bookshelves or coffee table for accessibility and charm.

Change with the Changing Seasons

The beginning of a new season is a great time to rotate items that allow appropriate colors, themes and textures to be displayed. Bring in the vivid golds, oranges, browns and reds of fall by switching out sofa pillows, accessories and even art and add an area rug for added color and warmth. Another easy way to decorate for fall is to set the table with earth tone napkins, table runners and dark wicker chargers.

Engage the Senses

In the fall it's time to switch out the fruity and flowery scented candles for cinnamon, apple pie and vanilla. Throw a cozy textured afghan on the sofa and put a big bowl of red apples or unshelled nuts (with a nut cracker) on the table. Add more ambient lighting and install dimmers for a more inviting atmosphere.

Get Inspired with the Kids

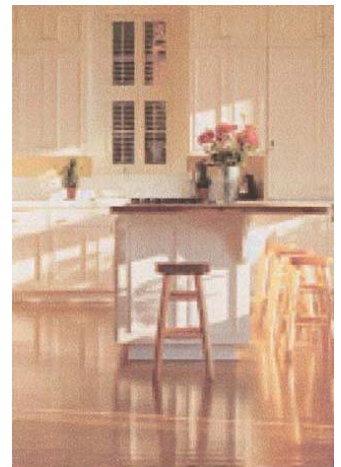
Go on a family nature hike and take your cues from the beautiful hues and textures around you. Gather up fall foliage - cat tails, acorns, pine cones, wheat stalks and tree branches to make simple and dramatic decorations. Go to the internet for a plethora of ideas and directions on how to assemble centerpieces or wreaths. Other inexpensive seasonal items like gourds, corn cobs and pumpkins can be found in abundance at the grocery store.



Cont. from page 1

- Relate Art to Wall Size. Choose smaller pictures for narrow walls and larger works for big spaces.
- Smaller pictures can also be grouped for greater impact on larger walls
- Bigger is often better. One large painting makes a statement and keeps things simple and is a great way to call attention to the focal point of the room such as a fireplace mantle.
- Hang art symmetrically for a formal feel and asymmetrically for a more casual look.
- Stack art to add the illusion of height to a room.
- Contrast frame and mat color with the wall so that it stands out against the background.
- Frames in a grouping do not have to match exactly but need to coordinate well together

“The goal is... to create a memorable experience for prospective buyers so that your property stands out above the rest...”



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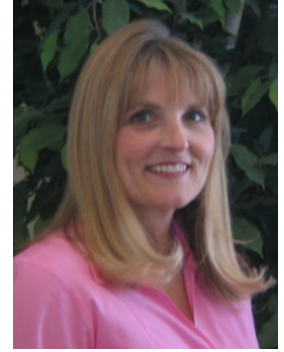
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and fax number shown above.**

Lisa Sachleben Lisa Sachleben is a Certified Interior Redesigner and Home Stager. She is the 2007 Affiliate of the Year for Women's Council of REALTORS®, affiliate member of Aurora Board of Realtors and Sponsor for Investors Realty Resource. Lisa's business includes both real estate staging and interior redesign. She works with REALTORS® to help them prep their listings to sell quickly and for maximum profit. She enjoys helping people find creative and low cost solutions for their design needs.

Meet my team!

Valerie Shoemaker has been actively involved in the interior design field for many years. Earning a degree in Interior Design in 1994, her focus has been on residential design. Always an advocate for "use what you have first" decorating, interior redesign and staging was a natural step for her. Val has an incredible flair for color and design. She does murals, decorative borders and faux finishes. Valerie is a great asset to Design Refined because of her uncanny ability to find creative and affordable solutions to any design challenge.



I'm excited to introduce my newest team member; the multitasking **Karen Vallely!** She not only keeps the office running smoothly but she's also a super asset in the field helping me stage homes. Decorating definitely comes naturally to her and guests at her home always comment on how beautiful, warm and inviting she has made it.

R E A R R A N G E F O R A D R A M A T I C C H A N G E !