



When Good Enough Isn't

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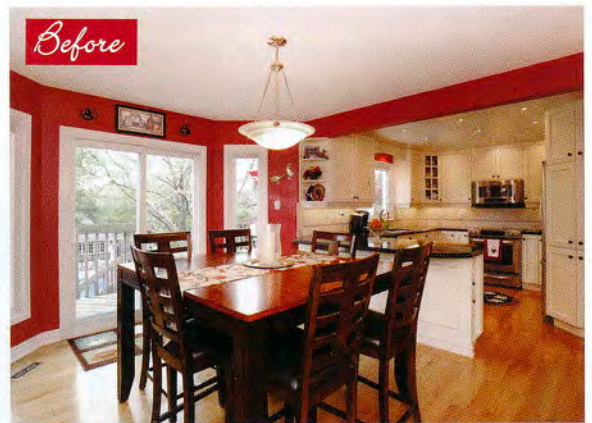
As stagers, we are sometimes approached by either property owners or Realtors after a property has sat on the market for a long time. They think they have done everything possible to attract buyers (except staging). Stagers are then approached to “try” staging as a “last resort.”

Staging should never be viewed as the last thing to try to sell a house after everything else has been attempted.

Case in point: I was contacted by owners who were desperate to sell their house. They had bought another property before putting theirs up for sale, and they needed their current property to sell for the most money possible. Their home was one of the most expensive in the neighborhood and they had just listed it when the market started to slow down.

Their realtor tried their best to get the owners to declutter and prepare the house for sale; however, because the sellers were anxious to get it listed as soon as possible, minimal decluttering was the only focus they placed on preparing the house.

After three months and extremely low offers, they decided to contact us to help them.



As stagers, we always advise owners and agents not to market a property until it is fully ready. Having a “for sale” sign on a property for an extended period makes buyers think something is wrong with the house and as the time on market gets longer, buyers will try and offer far less than the asking price.

Using a professional CSP® stager should always be your first line of offense when selling property.

Entering the house, it was immediately obvious what was wrong. First, while a significant amount of decluttering had been done, it wasn't to the level that it really needed. The house



still had too many items everywhere and way too many personal items such as pictures and knickknacks.

Buyers see only what is presented to them and can't see beyond the sellers' stuff.

Second, while the amount of furniture was appropriate for the rooms, it looked dated and offered limited appeal to younger buyers who typically are purchasing homes. There is a significant age gap between sellers and buyers. The average age of a seller is 56; the average age of a buyer is 32.

Thirdly and probably most importantly, there were some condition problem areas in the house. Strong paint colors and wallpaper were used in some rooms: the bright red/pink color in the kitchen area definitely distracted buyers from truly seeing the newly renovated kitchen, and dark green walls with a wallpaper border in one of the spare bedrooms. Plus, on the second floor there was still the original builders' 20-year-old carpet.

TIP: Buyers will always over estimate the cost and time required to make updates to houses, which makes them reluctant to submit an offer or they will offer significantly lower than asking.

After wasting the money involved in carrying the costs of two houses over three months, the sellers of course only had a limited budget for further changes and staging. Stagers are resourceful, so we could provide solutions to the problems.

Our consultation involved providing the sellers with a detailed list of more packing and storing that still had to be done, paint color recommendations to rectify the wall situations, and a wholesale provider and installer for hardwood flooring to replace the carpeting. Our concierge service also included providing savings with preferred suppliers of outside storage, movers, and paint.

To save money, the owners moved all packed items to their new home by renting a truck and using family members to help with the move. They decided to do the painting themselves, and

despite the strong recommendation to change the carpet, the owners decided to relist their house "as-is" with the hope that all the other changes would make enough impact, even though potentially more money could be made by postponing marketing the listing to replace the carpeting with hardwood. Research shows 85% of all homeowners (not sellers/buyers) said if they were to change their flooring it would be to hardwood. To further save money, we decided to use the owners' existing furniture augmented with modern touches.

CSP® stagers are trained to provide effective and efficient plans to sell any house for the most money possible in the fastest time.

So, what was the result after all the changes were made to the house? It sold for 98% of list price in just five days. The owners were relieved and thrilled with the results as exemplified by their testimonial.

The day of staging, Laurie and her staff came in like storm troopers, working hard the entire day transforming our house into a more spacious, attractive, and modern home. Working their magic, bringing in beautiful modern lamps, tables, paintings, rugs, and accessories, completely changing the dynamics of each room. We could not believe it was our house when we came for the inspection! Staging with Love This House made such a difference. We were sorry we hadn't done it sooner. We highly recommend Laurie and Love This House to anyone putting their house on the market!

—Lisa and Jake Azimi

Stager Note: Imagine if they had contacted us three months prior—less stress, less expense, and very likely they would have secured more equity! **Don't use staging as a last resort; it is the single most powerful service for property sales that provides measurable value.** ■