



How Interior Design Impacts Home Sales

What sellers need to know before they put their house on the market

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“It’s like going on a blind date, that first impression can only happen once.”

That is how Heidi Ross, owner of the [Showhomes home-staging](#) franchise in Memphis, describes the selling process.

“And just like on a date, you want your home to be clean, decluttered and make sure everything showing is adding value and not taking away,” said Ross.

According to Ross, proper interior design and home staging is the easiest way to separate a home on the market from competition. In Memphis, she has seen that homes that are staged are selling three times as fast as those that are not.

Shelley Barndollar, who owns the Showhomes in Houston, agrees with this assessment, and offered a few specific strategies for those looking to get the most out of their home's design while selling.

“My biggest tip is to not make things too specific,” said Barndollar. “Try to be as neutral as possible in palate to appear to as many buyers as possible- not everyone likes the same colors or furniture and you need to make sure buyers can envision themselves living there. Take your own ego out of it.”

Similarly, real estate brokers, even though they are not often designers by trade, are seeing the necessity for a house to have good interior design if it is going to get people in the door and staying long enough to fall in love.

Kim Colaprete, Managing Broker of Team Diva Partners with Coldwell Banker Bain in Seattle, says her team has a certain standard of interior design before they will even consider selling a property.

“From our perspective, we always have an expectation that sellers will do a certain level of staging, because we do an incredible amount of marketing and it has to be worth it for the seller,” said Colaprete. “A home has to be prettied up enough first if it is going to sell well these days.”

Colaprete has seen it all when it comes to homes on the market, and says that while doing professional home staging is great, there are other things one can do to make a home more appealing to potential buyers.

“The first key is to make sure that the inside of the home photographs well, that is how you get people to walk through the door with your marketing,” said Colaprete. “There are no hard and fast rules for this, but a ‘less is more’ approach and opening things up tends to make a room photograph better. Although, we always make people paint over yellow walls- I hate it, it photographs poorly and makes me cringe.”

The truth is most people do not live like they show a house. So, Colaprete says, you have to ask yourself ‘does the décor and layout feature the best parts of the home?’ Or is it like this because it is easier to live in?

“Functionality is less important for us in real estate,” said Colaprete. “To sell, you just need to make buyers feel welcome to hang out in the space. When a home is too persnickety design-wise it makes people feel awkward, when all you want is to make them feel warm and stay as long as possible so they fall in love with the space.”