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A Home Staging Company serving New York City and the Hamptons

Top 10 Mistakes Sellers Make When Presenting Their Homes for Sale

Do you know the **Top 10 Mistakes** home sellers make about how they present their homes to prospective buyers? And most home sellers also make the overriding mistake of believing that buyers "can see past this".

Well, it's simply not true. ***Only 10% of prospective buyers can visualize the potential of your home.***

This week I focus on the first Top 5 Mistakes. I will share the remaining five with you next week. And as you will see, ameliorating these mistakes costs little or none.



1. Paint Problems - too often prospective buyers can't get past the ugly shade of green that the house is painted or the purple in the bedroom. For both the exterior and interior it is best to stick to neutral colors, EXCEPT 1) you can use a bright contrasting color like red for a front door, and 2) DON'T use white on the interior walls as it's stark and cold (it's fine for trim and ceilings). Paint issues involve both color and the condition of the paint. Paint is one of the most inexpensive ways to freshen up any space. Walls and floors are the "bones" of any interior space and both should be in good condition.



2. Dirty or worn carpet and/or floors - .as just stated, walls and floors are the "bones" of the house or apartment and should be in good condition. If carpets are old, outdated and badly stained, it's best to remove them. Sometimes a beautiful hardwood floor awaits underneath. If not, replace with inexpensive wall to wall carpeting. Hardwood floors in bad condition should be refinished. You don't want to give your buyer a mental checklist of repairs they need to do so that they either walk away or bid lower.



3. Pets and their "accoutrement" - you may love your pets, but not every buyer will. Leaving your pets in the house while it's being shown is a BIG mistake. Removing them but leaving behind pet bowls, kitty litter boxes, leashes and dog cages is also a BIG mistake. Remove all traces of your pets including hair and odor.

4. Personalized Decor - displaying family photos, children's artwork, trophies, awards, collections and your prized deer head on the wall does NOT allow the buyer to imagine living in your space. Plus these items are also a distraction. You want the buyers to look at your house, not your children's baby photos.



5. Dated or worn hardware and fixtures - if floors and walls are the bones of the house, then hardware and fixtures are the "jewelry". Outdated or tarnished door handles on kitchen and bathroom cabinets, and outdated lighting fixtures and faucets are a turn-off to prospective buyers. Replacing these can update the look of a bathroom or kitchen very inexpensively. And don't forget to replace scratched doorknobs on doors and broken or non-matching light switch plates.

6. Dirty, Cluttered or Untidy Interior or Exterior - Despite what sellers might think, buyers cannot see past dirt and clutter. It's extremely important that both the interior and exterior of the home, including the yard, be clean and tidy. Kitchens and bathrooms need to be whistle-clean.



7. Dated or Inappropriate Window Treatments - Anything dated in a home is a turn-off to a potential buyer and window treatments are one of them. If the drapes are from the early to mid-90s, chances are they are too heavy and too dated. Remove them and replace them with panel drapes on a rod - inexpensive ones can be found at Target and JC Penney.

8. Bad Furniture Arrangements - Furniture that doesn't highlight the room's best features are doing the seller a disservice. For example, a fireplace is usually THE focal point in a room, and the furniture should be arranged around it so that the eye is drawn to the fireplace. Also, furniture should not block the flow of being able to walk through the room. It should not block being able to open a door. Lastly, the furniture in the room should define the purpose of the room. In the picture below, is this a guest room, an office or a game room?



9. Blocked Lighting/Dirty Windows - Buyers treasure natural light and sellers need to do everything to maximize it. Trim back or remove overgrown bushes and trees that are blocking the windows, clean the windows, open up the drapes, and even remove the screens while the home is on the market to let in more natural light. For more tips to lighten and brighten a home, click [here](#).

10. Too Much or Too Large Furniture - Think LESS IS MORE! Remember that the purpose of furniture when selling a home is to define the purpose of the room (e.g., dining room, not home office or children's playroom) and to show what will fit where (e.g., king size bed). It is not meant to show that you can provide seating for 15 in your living room and every seat has a side table to rest drinks on and the bedroom is large enough to hold 3 dressers. Also, the size of the furniture needs to be in balance with the scale of the room and the other furniture in it.



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About the Author: Donna Dazzo is president and owner of *Designed to Appeal*, a home staging company serving New York City and the Hamptons. *Designed to Appeal* helps homeowners and real estate agents sell homes quickly and profitably, by expertly creating an environment that buyers want to live in. *Designed to Appeal* also helps homeowners **not** looking to sell with interior redesign, which involves using mostly what the homeowner already has. Donna writes frequently on home staging and interior decorating and design topics