



A Home Staging Company serving New York City and the Hamptons



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Donna M. Dazzo Profile

In 2007, Donna Dazzo combined her life-long love of and talent for interior decorating and design with over 20 years of experience in project management and marketing, and formed **Designed to Appeal**, a home staging company serving New York City and the Hamptons.

Donna's design work and staging skills have been featured on HGTV's ***Selling New York*** and Bravo's ***Million Dollar Listing New York***, as well as in ***The New York Times***, ***Hamptons Magazine***, and ***The Chicago Tribune***.

A self-described "residential real estate junkie and HGTV addict", Donna helps homeowners and real estate agents to quickly maximize the profit from a house or apartment, whether for rent or for sale. Donna is always investigating the latest interior design and real estate trends from her home in New York City and her Hamptons retreat.

Donna is an HSR Certified Professional Home Stager and Interior Redesigner, and a Staging Diva Graduate. Donna has studied Interior Space Planning at Parsons School of Design and has an MBA from Fordham University. Donna is a member of the Real Estate Staging Association which voted her one of the Top Ten Luxury Home Stagers in the United States in 2019.

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Services Offered

Home Staging Consultation

❖ Consultation

All owner-occupied homes, before being put on the market, can benefit from professional advice and an objective eye. A consultation includes:

- Walk through of the home and yard with “buyer’s/renter’s eyes”
- Completion on-site of a handwritten, detailed 10 to 20 page Action Plan for each room and outside
- A proposal follows of staging and other services to obtain a quick sale or rental at the highest price
- Recommendations can be implemented by DIYer homeowner or us

Home Staging

❖ Staging of Occupied Homes

Working from the Consultation Action Plan, we implement what is necessary to get the home in show-ready condition:

- Clutter elimination, organizing and storage, or a referral to a professional organizer
- Implementing and/or arranging for enhancements and repairs and updates such as painting, plumbing fixtures, lighting, flooring, window treatments, and landscaping
- Room makeovers using existing furniture and decorative accessories (bedding, towels, artwork, decorative items)
- If necessary, renting or shopping for additional furniture, and shopping for decorative accessories

❖ Staging of Vacant Homes

Transformation of a vacant house or apartment into a home includes:

- Evaluating what furniture and decorative accessories are need to fit the home and target buyer market
- Working with a furniture rental company with whom we have a relationship, we choose furniture, lamps, area rugs and artwork
- Carefully selecting from our inventory and renting to you or purchasing for you accessories such as bedding, towels, decorative items and some artwork
- If necessary, implementing and/or arranging for enhancements and repairs and updates such as painting, plumbing fixtures, lighting, flooring, window treatments, and landscaping
- Waiting for the furniture delivery and properly placing the furniture
- Placing all of the decorative accessories and hanging the artwork

Additional Services

❖ Interior Redesign

Interior redesign involves many of the same techniques as home staging such as using what furniture and accessories the owner has, however it focuses on improving the home for the homeowner, rather than the buyer, with an eye toward future resale value.

❖ Quick Staging for Photo Shoots

Because over 90% of buyers start their search online, our goal is to make the rooms more attractive in photographs and videos.

❖ Quick Fix Before Open House

- Properly make beds, fluff up throw pillows, store away toys and last minute items
- Quick clean kitchen and bathrooms
- Anything else necessary to get your home ready for the Open House

❖ Marketing of Hamptons Rental Properties

- We take appealing photos of the home and yard and prepare eye-catching descriptions of the property
- We then place the photos, descriptions, amenity list, rental rates, etc. on two, high-trafficked “vacation-rentals-by-owner” websites

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Featured In/On

The New York Times

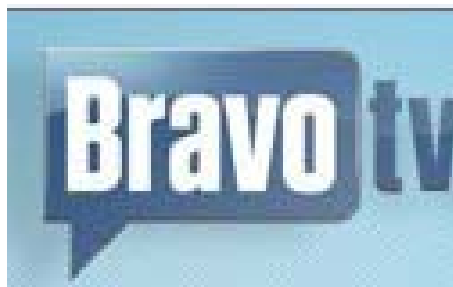
HAMPTONS
Magazine



Dan's Papers



Market**W**atch



Chicago Tribune



Do I Need to Clean Up My Attic Before I List My House?

Sellers should focus on the rooms where people spend the most time, but if you have the budget and time, staging the attic can offer a bonus for buyers.



By Ronda Kaysen

Sept. 18, 2021

Q: I am about to put my house on the market, and would like to feature the large, open, unfinished attic for potential finishing and use. Presently, it has unpainted plywood flooring. Do you have any suggestions for how to best stage this space, with minimal cost and work?

A: Resist the urge to throw time and money at an unfinished attic. Instead, focus your energy on the rooms where you spend the most time: the living room, kitchen, bathrooms and bedrooms. You want a buyer to walk through your front door and immediately imagine living in your home. By the time they get to the attic, they should be making plans for how they'll decorate the living room and primary bedroom.

“The point of staging is to have a buyer walk in and absolutely fall in love with the space and feel like, ‘I’m trading what I have now for something better,’” said [Donna Dazzo](#), the owner of [Designed to Appeal](#), a home staging and redesign company that services New York and the Hamptons. “That’s where your dollars should go because you need to engender that feeling.”

If you’ve fully invested in the main living areas and still have some nickels in your budget (and energy in your tank), go ahead and turn your attention to the unfinished attic. Assuming the attic has stairs leading up to it and not a pull-down ladder, simple staging could give buyers a visual sense of its potential.

You could fashion the space as an exercise room with a yoga mat, exercise ball and weights. Or, create a faux bedroom with an air mattress set atop a few cardboard boxes hidden beneath a duvet. “It gives the buyer the sense of how to use the space,” [Ms. Dazzo](#) said.

If you’re feeling inspired, paint the floors, walls and ceiling white, adding a pop of color with a framed poster or area rug. Or give the space a bohemian vibe with lush plants, a rattan chair and a standing lamp. “If you can use the staging to distract from the fact that there is so much to do, it does help people get excited about the property,” said [Kirsten Jordan](#), an associate broker with Douglas Elliman. Another option: get an estimate from a contractor for what a renovation might cost and include that detail in the listing.

It's Showtime! Staging a House for Sale

When you put your house on the market, it may start to feel less like a place to live and more like a set to be decorated.



Trisha Krauss



By **Ronda Kaysen**

Sept. 28, 2018

Note: This article has been abridged from its original version (<https://nyti.ms/2lIPgHY>)

I'd invited my real estate broker over to help me decide whether I should sell my house and buy a larger one. As she toured my home, telling me what would need to be done to make it more appealing to potential buyers, I began to see that readying a house for sale is not unlike decorating a stage for a play, and perhaps just as hard. Consider these two basic rules of home staging.

One: Your house should not appear to be lived in by real people who own stuff.

Two: Buyers, who by their very nature apparently lack imagination, are wowed by “greige,” a color neither gray nor beige, but one where personal flair goes to die. (In other words, paint all your walls a pale shade of greige.)

And so, I began to see my house not as the place where I live my life, but as a set to be dressed so someone else could briefly live out a fantasy as they wandered through it.

And then maybe pay me a lot of money.

Home staging has become big business. What was once an indulgence for the luxury market has trickled down to the middle market, with sellers shelling out huge sums to transform their living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms into (greige) resort-like retreats meant to wow a potential buyer into not noticing that the living room is oddly shaped, with no logical place to put a television, or that the bathroom window looks out on the air shaft from the neighboring apartment building.

A 2017 National Association of Realtors [survey](#) found that 38 percent of brokers staged an of their listings, up from 34 percent in 2015, with almost half of those brokers reporting that staging a home increased the selling price.

“You’re creating a dream for the buyer”, said Donna M. Dazzo, president of [Designed to Appeal](#), a New York City home-staging company. "We're just emotional creatures and buyers and we're shopping based on emotion."

But the dream doesn't come cheap: Staging an empty property costs around 1 to 3 percent of the list price, depending on the region of the country, according to the [Real Estate Staging Association](#). Sellers typically pay for the work. Even those who don't spend thousands of dollars on a wholesale transformation do spend weeks cleaning, clearing out clutter, repositioning the furniture and, of course, tossing around the throw pillows, all to make their home feel like an idealized version of itself.

6 Things You Don't Actually Need on Your Coffee Table, According to Home Stagers



by ANTONIA DEBIANCHI | published SEP 27, 2020



♡ SAVE 💬 COMMENTS



The beauty of coffee tables is that they aren't just for coffee. They're multi-purpose living room staples, serving beauty, function, and comfort. They're also a piece of furniture that always manages to accumulate piles of stuff.

Start the new season on the right foot with a coffee table makeover. From food and drinks to office supplies and beauty products, here are the things home stagers say you should eliminate from your surface ahead of a sale—or on decluttering day.

Magazines

You may be a Demi Lovato superfan, but do you really need to keep her *Cosmopolitan* cover issue on your table months after you've read it? According to Donna Dazzo, president of Designed to Appeal, old magazines should be the first to go. "They just look sloppy," she says. "If they're thumbed through and have bent covers, it's time to find a magazine rack if you intend on keeping them."

Food and drinks

This one's simple. Having an old protein bar wrapper or mug from this morning's coffee on the surface just looks messy. Not to mention, **Dazzo** says your drink could stain the coffee table and create a ring.

"If you have someone over for drinks or wine, it's okay to keep some snacks or appetizers on the table with some coasters for drinks," she says. But when it comes to daily use, don't leave your lunch leftovers around in your living space.

Children's toys

When you have kids, it's hard to find a place in the house that's not covered in toys. If there's one space to avoid it, let it be the coffee table. **Dazzo** says it's easy for Legos or doll clothing to be cluttered about on the table because it's at children's eye level. Scooping up these tiny toy pieces can go a long way and make your living room feel refreshed and peaceful.



Antonia DeBianchi

CONTRIBUTOR

Antonia is a lifestyle, food and entertainment writer from South Florida. She received a Journalism degree from Boston University and loves everything about city-living. When not writing, you'll find her in the kitchen aspiring to reach Barefoot Contessa status, walking on the beach, or watching endless rom com marathons.

FOLLOW ANTONIA



Note: This article has been abridged from its original version.

BRICK UNDERGROUND

SELL

What not to skimp on when getting ready to sell your NYC apartment

BY MIMI O'CONNOR | JULY 26, 2018 - 2:00PM



A living room makeover helps showcase this apartment in a better light.

Designed to Appeal



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earing up to put your place on the market? You no doubt want to get top dollar for your apartment, and you've probably guessed you're going to have to spruce things up a bit before hosting that open house. (If you didn't plan on it, be advised your competition likely is.) Still, we assume you don't have limitless funds to whip the place into shape. So what should you spend your money on?

We talked to industry experts to find out what you shouldn't skimp on when trying to sell your apartment. Here's what we learned.

Staging is a good investment

If you feel especially challenged in the interior design department, if your furniture is ragtag or dated, or if you just want your sales effort to have some extra oomph, hiring someone to stage your home could be a sound investment.

"When someone comes to look at your home, they're most often trading up," Dazzo says. "If you don't present a lifestyle to them, they're not going to be excited when they walk in the door. Buyers are aspirational. You've got to present them something clean and new."

Dazzo's rates start at around \$10,000 for an empty one-bedroom, which includes furniture rental. Interior Marketing Group, which works with properties listed for \$4 million and more, charges 1-3 percent of the listing price.

You definitely need a fresh coat of paint

A new coat of paint on the walls goes a long way when it comes to getting your home ready for its close-up.

Think your walls don't need it? Think again, says Donna Dazzo of [Designed to Appeal](#), a home staging company serving Manhattan and the Hamptons.

"Walls get dingy over time. If you move artwork you'll see where it was hung. Walls get scuffs and scrapes," she says. "[Buyers] don't want to do any work. They want a space that's clean and fresh, and paint goes miles to do that. Sometimes people tell me they want to bring in furniture but not paint and I say that's like putting on a nice dress over a dirty body."

A rough estimate for painting costs is about \$1,000 a room.

It's worth it to fix the floors

After painting, Dazzo recommends improving the floors. For hardwood floors, she says to refinish, or at least buff. Does she think it's worth the hassle of moving out while it's done? Yes.

If you have wall-to-wall carpet and can remove it, do so, she says. "People get an 'ick' factor when they walk in and see wall-to-wall carpet," she says. "I've gone so far as to replace old wall-to-wall carpeting and put in a Berber rug in beige."

Note: This article has been abridged from its original version.



Aired April 25, 2012



The only problem is it needs a little bit of furniture, which is where his designer comes in.



A kid's room will really add to the value of Michael's listing.



selling
New York

Episode: A Family Affair (air date December 29, 2011)



In this episode of HGTV's *Selling New York*, home stager and President of Designed to Appeal, Donna Dazzo, tells homeowners Stacy and Noah what they need to do to get their home in show-ready condition in order to sell it.

"When a buyer walks into this room, we want them to feel like this could be their bedroom. And they really can't do that when your family photos are there. You really want buyers to imagine themselves living here", Donna explains to the homeowners.

"When you're selling your home, it isn't your home anymore. It's really like a product that needs to be marketed".

To view Donna's full video clip, go to <http://budurl.com/SellingNY>. Scroll down until you see "Donna Dazzo" highlighted in blue. Click on the video underneath.



RESA 2019

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TOP 10 HOME STAGER OF THE YEAR- LUXURY VACANT USA

DONNA DAZZO



Frequently Asked Questions

What is home staging and how does it differ from interior decorating?

Home staging is the art and the skill of making a house or apartment attractive to the target buyer or renter so that it sells or rents quickly and for top dollar. With interior decorating, you are designing to the tastes, preferences and lifestyle of the specific people living in the home. Unlike interior decorating, home staging is about decor that appeals to the typical buyer's or renter's taste and preferences. It is the art of creating emotional connection points throughout the house so that when a buyer or renter steps into the house they feel as if they were home. Home staging emphasizes the best features of a property while improving or downplaying the less marketable features.

Do I have to spend money if I wish to stage my home?

There are three phases of home staging:

- **Using what the owner has:** often the only thing needed is to de-clutter, organize, edit furniture and accessories, and reposition existing furniture and accessories for better balance and flow.
- **Adding furniture and accessories:** the homeowner can rent or purchase strategic furniture and accessories, such as bedding, lamps, artwork, etc. that are carefully chosen by the home stager to enhance the decor.
- **Doing simple but dramatic updates and changes:** the home stager can recommend things such as quick repairs, repainting, updating lighting and plumbing fixtures and cabinet hardware, and has access to reliable resources, such as painters, landscapers, etc., to help the homeowner accomplish these tasks.

*Home staging is an **investment**, not an expense! Statistics show that an investment in **staging increases profit** in two ways: it increases the value of the property, and by decreasing the amount of time on the market, the owner saves on mortgage payments, taxes, utilities, etc.*

The real estate market is strong - why should a home be staged?

Yes, in a hot market just about every house or apartment will sell or rent, but the question is when and at what price. Even if it did sell or rent quickly and at a good price, it doesn't mean it was sold or rented at its fullest potential. Imagine having multiple bids on a home instead of the couple you might get without staging.

The real estate market is soft - who would want to spend money in a down market?

The softer the market, the more you must differentiate the property from others crowding the market. Wouldn't it be great to get a bidding war going because your property looks so much better than everyone else's?

Remember, staging is an investment not an expense. It can increase profit in two ways - by increasing value and by reducing expenses (mortgage, taxes, utilities) by decreasing the time the home is on the market.

How much does staging cost?

An investment in staging can cost as little as a few hundred dollars for a consultation to a few thousand dollars for staging services, furniture and accessory rentals, and minor repairs and updates. The fees also depend upon the size and condition of the home, how much work the owner is willing to do themselves, and the price point of the home.

Remember, staging is an investment that can yield a potentially significant return. Contact us at Designed to Appeal for a complete description of services and fees.

Who pays for the staging - the owner or the realtor?

In some cases the realtor pays for the initial consultation. Some will reimburse the owner for the consultation fee only once the home is sold. However, many owners and realtors look upon it as another fee just like a home inspection or a real estate lawyer.

If staging is not brought up by the other party when the home is listed, it is strongly recommended that one of the parties gets the dialogue going. Owners should keep in mind that realtors might be afraid to suggest staging because they think their client would be insulted, and they don't want to endanger the relationship. Realtors should keep in mind clients want to sell or rent the home probably more than they do, and would be willing to seek the objective advice of a professional home stager.

Why can't the realtor or owner stage a home?

Realtors should spend their time doing what they do best marketing and showing their listings to potential buyers and renters. Homeowners would rather know their realtors are doing this instead of spending hours rearranging furniture, shopping for accessories, and managing repairs.

Owners can't stage their own homes because they've stopped seeing all of its flaws. Most homeowners don't have the buyer's eyes that a professional home stager will when walking through the home. The owners have gotten used to walking past the overgrown bushes in the front yard blocking all of the light from coming into the windows. The dated wallpaper and lighting fixtures have been in the bathroom so long that they seem to be part of the family.

And owners will be overwhelmed enough with the stress of finding a new home and moving that they won't have the time or energy to focus on making their home look appealing.

Why can't buyers or renters just look past the decor and envision themselves living there?

Only 10% of buyers or renters can visualize the potential of a home. Most buyers and renters cannot look past a cluttered or unappealing room. And while most of them start out looking for a home based upon logical criteria, for example, 4 bedrooms, family room with a fireplace, they end up purchasing or renting based upon an emotional connection they feel when they're in the home. When a house feels like home, they will reprioritize their list. They may be willing to give up the fireplace because staging has transformed the property into a dream and they can envision themselves living there.

What if I have a vacant home to sell?

Remember, only 10% of buyers can visualize the potential of a home. Vacant homes sit on the market even longer than poorly furnished homes. Vacant homes can appear cold, sterile and boxy. That's why builders always furnish model homes.

And with no frame of reference in the form of furniture and accessories, the buyer has no idea if their furniture will fit (empty rooms actually appear smaller than furnished rooms), or what the purpose of the room is (an office or extra bedroom?). Buyers also tend to focus on the little defects because there's nothing else to look at.

And not to be overlooked is the perception by buyers of a vacant home: empty houses = desperate sellers. They've already moved out and now have two mortgages to pay, so they must be willing to settle for less.

At Designed to Appeal, we will spend time evaluating what furniture and accessories are needed to fit the style of the home and the market it's in. We will find just the right furniture and accessories to rent or purchase. We'll be there to arrange it all properly when the furniture and accessories are delivered, and we're there when the home is successfully sold and everything needs to be moved out.

What should a homeowner do to prepare for a consultation or staging?

There really is nothing a homeowner should do to prepare for a consultation. Unlike most people, professional home stagers can see past a person's clutter and furnishings. Trying to get organized or clean up will waste the homeowner's time and only cause stress.

If a half-day or full day of staging services is going to follow a consultation, we may request that recommendations we made in the consultation such as de-cluttering, painting and repairs be done before we come in to rearrange furniture or add accessories.