

Present home in its best light

Staging is key step in preparing to put house on market



DESIGN DILEMMA

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Regardless of your home's price range, getting it ready for sale is the most important aspect of the real estate deal, says veteran agent Judy Columbus of Judy's Broker Network in Brighton.

"The No. 1 tip for selling your home is to properly prepare it for the market," Columbus says. "There is no second chance at a good first impression."

Unprepared properties in today's market will sit, and the key to selling your home quickly for the most amount of

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KATE MELTON

Jamie Columbus, an associate broker with Judy's Broker Network in Brighton, adds the finishing touches to the dining room in this Brighton home to prepare it for sale. "The No. 1 tip for selling your home is to properly prepare it for the market," says Judy Columbus of Judy's Broker Network.

Dilemma

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money is to show it in its best light, she says.

Even the grandest of homes needs proper staging. Judy Columbus' daughter, Jamie, associate broker at the agency, has been busy with homeowner Sue Reed to get her 4,700-square-foot English Manor style home at 2755 East Ave. in Brighton ready for the market.

For the past month, Jamie Columbus worked with Reed on decluttering the home, highlighting architectural details and updating the décor.

She offers her staging service at no extra charge and provides her contacts of contractors for her clients, working within each client's budget.

Curb appeal is extremely important in making that first impression, Judy Columbus says.

"People get an idea of what's going on inside from the outside," she says.

Tips for preparing your home for sale from Judy's Broker Network

- If the rooms are packed full, initiate the decluttering process by storing or disposing personal properties.
- If a home has large grounds or a pool, the agent should have a schedule of maintenance costs on hand for potential buyers.
- If the hallways are dark, hang mirrors and increase wattage in existing fixtures.

Little touches go a long way in curb appeal, Jamie Columbus says. For the East Avenue home, one of the shutters had fallen off and a flagpole was rusted. Those were relatively easy to fix as the flagpole was cut down.

Inside the home, contemporary furniture that did not match with the historic feel of the home was moved out, large collages of family photos were taken off the walls and cut crystal bulbs were installed to bring the home back to the glory of its 1925 era.

"I love it," says Reed. Having raised three children in the house, "stuff" accumulates, she says. Working with Jamie Columbus shows the home's true potential.

Reed is still in the process of moving and decluttering and plans to have

the home ready for an open house on July 18.

In addition to making the home aesthetically pleasing, the Columbus team suggested that the home be inspected, putting the seller in the shoes of the buyer, who is looking for possible defects.

"No surprises," is how they are marketing the home. The agents are anticipating any buyer's objections by fixing the problem first.

"It makes the sale go smoothly," Judy Columbus says.

The current market is price- and condition-driven, Columbus says. To have an edge as a seller, the home must show well.

"Buyers are very well-informed," Columbus says. □

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