# HOME STAGING

## Experts set the scene to sell homes quickly and for top dollar

HOME MAKEOVER

By Janine Mackie

While we strive to give our homes personality, when the time comes to sell, we need to look at our homes through the eyes of prospective buyers.

The decision to make an offer or keep looking is often made within seconds of entering a home. Subtleties like the collection of toddler artwork on your refrigerator, dated furnishings or showing your home vacant can make for a bad first impression and cost you thousands.

Prospective buyers want to imagine themselves, not you, living in the house!

“Homes are sold based on emotion,” says John Carter of ***DEKORA,*** a West Vancouver-based company that works directly with homeowners and realtors to spruce up homes for sale. “If you want maximum value and a fast sale it’s critical your home is professionally presented to buyers.”

Selling a home is much different from living in a house. “It's like dressing up for a special event or job interview,” says Carter who shares partnership in Canada’s leading home staging company with Ron Sowden, a 15-year veteran of the film industry and Barbara Rae, a well-known B.C. businesswoman. “We want buyers to step into a home and say, “Wow!”

DEKORA creates inviting spaces with broad appeal

Their philosophy is straightforward: If you want to sell your home for maximum profit, make it shine like a show home. Every detail -- from clutter, cleaning, paint colours, floor coverings, artwork, furnishings, lighting, landscaping and repairs needs to be considered.

Well-known in California as “the secret weapon of real estate,” home staging is still a relatively new phenomenon to realtors and homeowners in the Lower Mainland.

A few extra touches like an attractive planter by the front door, luxurious linens in the bedroom and an exquisite painting over the mantel can turn home browsers into homebuyers.

Whether it's a condominium, family-oriented house, heritage estate or vacant property, sellers are clearly gaining an edge in the marketplace with DEKORA’s home staging services.

A basic staging involving some furniture rearrangements can cost just a few hundred dollars, while a full empty-house staging can be up to $10,000.

It’s an investment many feel pays for itself. In fact, a recent survey by Coldwell Banker Realty in the United States showed that staged homes consistently sell in about half of the time and often for a price as much as five percent more than non-staged homes.

“We look at the entire home and prioritize based on where the home seller will receive the greatest return on investment,” said Carter.

It’s quite doable for a homeowner to undertake the staging themselves and a consultation with DEKORA provides a detailed report of recommendations. The company also provides a free estimate with room-by-room pricing based on their team doing the work.

Busy lifestyles are ideal candidates for home staging!

“For today’s dual income families there’s no time to spend on fluffing up a home before putting it on the market,” said Terry Eng of REMAX Real Estate Services - Vancouver's top selling REMAX Real Estate Agent.

Eng recently recommended DEKORA’s home staging services to a couple selling their six-bedroom heritage home in East Vancouver.

“My clients wanted to show their home at its best and maximize its value,” explains Eng. “I knew if they called DEKORA they could gain a competitive edge and create an even more inviting home.”

DEKORA took down a few personal photos, put some furniture in storage, rearranged other pieces to make more space and added accents with rented furnishings. The visual impact was strong as were the results.

Within the week’s first set of showings, the home sold for maximum value and very close to what Eng recommended.

“The excitement we saw from buyers was amazing,” said Eng. “The team at DEKORA knew exactly what motivates buyers in this market and created a homey atmosphere that made the first impression the best impression.”

Vacant houses and condos often pose a challenge for

sellers and realtors. Staging a vacant home can breathe colour and life into an otherwise cold and empty space.

Staging a house is presenting the dream – showing it the way it could be!

DEKORA recently staged an unfurnished condo in Downtown Vancouver. In this case new furniture, inspiring artwork -- even lush plants were provided on a rental basis for an extreme makeover.

The result? “Multiple offers and it sold for more than the asking price,” said listing realtor, Stephen Burke, of Sutton Group - West Coast Realty in Vancouver.

For a house to stand out amongst the competition it must be in showcase condition. Before the audience arrives, the stage must be set. Call DEKORA at 604-875-4355 or visit www.dekora.com and be sure to ask for their remarkable testimonials. Staging works!

**DEKORA's**
**Quick List Steps for Staging Your Home:**

1. **Curb Appeal.** If the outside doesn't look great buyers won't come into the home.
2. **Unclutter.** Clear off the refrigerator, mantel, dresser and bathroom counter. The less clutter in a room, the bigger it looks and the more people focus on the home and not the “stuff!”
3. **Clean.** Make your home sparkle with extra attention! Organize closets.
4. **Neutralize**. Put away extra furniture, family portraits and decorations. Consider painting walls a warm neutral colour.
5. **Rearrange and Accessorize**. Carefully consider artwork and furniture. Change furniture grouping to create an inviting setting.