



# <sup>Best</sup> *52 Staging Tips* *to Sell Your Home* by Toni Lefler

- ★ *Sell your home 87% faster if staged before listing*
- ★ *Receive your first offer in 26 days or less*
- ★ *Convince buyers in 90 seconds to buy your home*
- ★ *Attract digital presence—80% of buyers search the Internet*
- ★ *Appear Maintenance free—buyers prefer low maintenance*
- ★ *Present better—Realtors will show more often*
- ★ *Make a great first impression—Here's your chance!*

# Organizing Staging Move-In Makeover Feng Shui Consultations

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**After:** Larger furniture was moved from another room to better utilize the space. Now the main seating captures the spectacular water view.



**Before:** Furniture was haphazardly placed and the lake view—one of the selling points of the house, was difficult to see with this arrangement.



**After:** Furniture was angled, bold artwork, two chairs and a colorful rug were added to give the room pizzazz.



**Before:** The renter here was uncomfortable with this boring arrangement so she got permission to bring in some of her furniture and art to make it feel more her style.

# Introduction

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Why spend money to stage a home? When selling a car, we know to wash and wax it, remove all the personal stuff inside, make sure it runs well, and basically present it in the best way possible. Why hesitate to do the same with one of our biggest investments?

It is a known fact that less than 10 percent of buyers can visualize the potential of a home. Buyers shop with their lifestyle, belongings and financial ability in mind. They are mentally picturing what it would be like to live in your home. If you don't give them good visual anchors, you'll probably lose them in the first few minutes.

Sure, you could neaten things up a bit, but staging a home to sell is completely different from living there. Our personal space is, well, personal to us. We are used to the way it is and may not be able to envision other ways it could look and feel. We overlook flaws that could be glaring stop signs to buyers when we don't see through their eyes.

Staging is about packaging a product so it appeals to the greatest number of people, specifically one who will actually purchase your home. Sooner or later every house will probably sell, it's just a matter of when and for how much. However, professionally staged homes:

- ★ Sell 87 percent faster if staged before listing and receive the first offer in 26 days on average.\*
- ★ Present a great first impression — Most buyers make up their minds in 90 seconds.
- ★ Attract digital presence — 80 percent of buyers search the Internet before contacting an agent.
- ★ Appear better maintained — Most buyers prefer a low maintenance home.
- ★ Show better — Realtors are more likely to show them more often.

You know the old saying: *"You only have one chance to make a great first impression."* Here's your chance. Give me a call, and let's get your home sold with a great first impression!

All the Best,

*Toni Lefler*

*Empowering People • Inspiring Places since 1992*

\* Real Estate Staging Association (RESA)



# Staging Basics

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## 1. Before Shots

Take pictures or a video of the interior and exterior of your property. Imagine the view buyers will see as they tour your home—from doorways, down halls and from the curb. Seeing your home as others do helps to understand what's needed to properly present it for sale.

## 2. Declutter

Buyers need visual room to imagine their belongings in your home. Clear out clutter in rooms and storage areas. Remove excess furniture to make rooms appear more spacious—less is more when selling. Take these items to a temporary storage unit or sell or give away. Remember it's the house being sold, not your belongings.

## 3. Depersonalize

Create a neutral space and erase your personal imprint so buyers can easily imagine themselves in your home. Remove and pack all or most family photos, certificates, trophies, religious, political and other personal items.

## 4. Crystal Clean

Every nook and cranny should be cleaned to perfection and brought to order. A clean environment appears lighter, healthier and feels more cheerful, creating a clear, inviting space for buyers.

## 5. Maintenance-Free

Proper care of small items and personal property suggests that your house has been carefully maintained. Fix a leaky faucet, loose doorknob, burned out light fixture and other items needing attention.

## 6. Home Improvements

A fresh coat of paint and new flooring are the top two rated improvements sellers can make to their home. Choose a color that complements other homes in your neighborhood. If just the trim needs repainting, steam clean the entire house first. Make only cost-effective improvements that will increase the value.

## 7. Replace Keepers

If you wish to keep any items that are attached to the home or property, now is the time to remove them. For example, a chandelier, custom switch plates, or outside pagoda should be removed and/or replaced before buyers view your home. This eliminates any confusion over what stays and what doesn't.



*"Within a week after carrying out your recommendations, we have a contract on our home."*

Robert & Terry F., Homeowners  
Lighthouse Point, FL

# Curb Appeal

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*"How can I ever thank you.  
We had a contract on my  
client's home within a week  
after using your services."*

Kathleen W., Realtor  
Wellington, FL

## 8. Easy to Find

Make it effortless for buyers to find your home. Place big, bold numbers on both your mailbox and your house. Identify a unique feature about your home when giving directions. Choose something that is easily seen from the street—an unusual mailbox, yard art or large shade tree. Turn lights on at the front door and keep yard lights on at night for evening lookers.

## 9. Attention Grabbers

Post several bright colored flags in your yard near the street for an Open House. The gentle movement and bold colors attract attention, causing passersby to take notice, plus they give your home a festive feeling.

## 10. Healthy Landscape

Cut and edge the lawn regularly and water or fertilize so it's a rich green color.

Plant soft, flowing, round-leafed plants near the entry. Avoid cactus and other thorny or spike-leafed plants in this area. Create gently weaving pathways to your door and throughout the yard bordered by colorful flowering plants. Straight paths cause a quicker pace so people tend to miss their surroundings; curved walkways slow people down.

Place a fountain, birdbath or small waterfall in a garden near the front door. The gentle sound of water flowing has a calming effect on most people. Be sure to keep the water crystal clean.

## 11. Clear Driveways

Welcome buyers to their new home by leaving them a clear place to park in the driveway. Clear away extra vehicles—boats, trucks, motorcycles, jet-skis that may block the view of your home. Add to the safety of visitors by storing toys and bicycles so buyers don't trip over them. And store garbage cans out of sight!



# Architecture

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## 12. Front Door

The entry to your castle should be inviting. This is your symbolic handshake to visitors, so be sure it's attractive, clean and in good repair. Give it a fresh coat of paint and make sure the doorbell works. Your front door should be easily visible from the curb. If it is blocked by overgrown landscape, clear the way so lookers can see what they're buying. If the entry door faces a side of your property instead of the front, line the walkway with colorful flowers to guide visitors. Doors should open to the widest area of a home or room. If a door opens towards a wall, either rehang it so it opens into the widest area, or mount a mirror on the facing wall to create an illusion of more space.

## 13. Neutral Walls

Clean marks, fill holes and touch up paint where necessary. If an entire room needs repainting, choose a light neutral color to make rooms appear larger.

## 14. Window Views

Windows are the eyes of a home. They should be crystal clear, easy to open and close, with no cracks or screen tears. Give particular attention to sliding doors, bay windows and other large window expanses.

## 15. Focal Point

The focal point of a room is an architectural feature that naturally draws attention to itself, such as a fireplace, a magnificent window view or built-in bookcase. Accentuate these features by arranging furniture to easily see them while maintaining a view of the entry to the room.

## 16. Safe Paths

Walking throughout your house should be safe, smooth and provide ample space without feeling cramped. Remove items from behind doors and furniture that may block doorways and hallways. For sunken rooms, delineate the transition with an area rug on the lower level. For raised steps in unexpected areas, place plants near the edges or install a barrier around it. Secure area rugs with skid-free mats underneath or remove them completely.



*"The second person to see our home made a cash offer after you worked your magic."*

Anne Marie R., Realtor  
Boynton Beach, FL

# Living & Dining

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## 17. Inviting Arrangements

Arrange furniture so that the view from a doorway is the most inviting, drawing lookers into the space. Create conversational groupings that invite socializing. Avoid shoving pieces against the walls, leaving an empty hole in the center. Cozy arrangements give a warm inviting feeling to a room. Whenever possible, place the main seating with a good view of the entry.

## 18. Large Rooms

For a particularly large room, create two or even three areas within it. Comfortably arrange the main seating for easy conversation, in relation to the focal point (fireplace, outside view, etc.). Then place a chair, table and lamp in a corner for a cozy reading area, or position a game table at one end of a room.

## 19. Maintain Theme

Coordinate furniture, art and accessories in harmony with a room's theme. For example, maintain country items together in a room, without mixing other conflicting themes such as Oriental or contemporary. Eclectic themes can work well too, but you really have to know how to make it flow together.

## 20. Balance Height & Weight

The height and weight of furniture influences the balance and perceived space in a room. Position tall heavy furniture deeper into a room to allow an expansive view from the entry. Balance tall and/or dark heavy furniture on one side of a room with other tall items across from it, i.e., large artwork and a silk tree diagonally across from an armoire.

## 21. Even Lighting

Brightly lit rooms appear larger and more inviting. Avoid placing lamps on only one side of a room. For example, a sofa flanked by two lamps with no light on the other side of a room leaves a void of light. Arrange lighting on a diagonal or triangle to cast an even glow.

## 22. Dining Room

Unless a dining room is oversized, it can appear small with a large table and too many chairs. Remove extra leaves from tables and place only four chairs around it so the room appears larger. Place additional chairs in the corners or as extra seating in bedrooms.



*"Toni has a rare organizational ability with an artistic flair. She was invaluable when moving my father."*

Richard F., Senior Relocation  
Manalapan, FL



# Art & Accessories 5

## 23. Hanging Art

People tend to hang artwork entirely too high, making it appear disconnected from furniture arrangements. Hang art so it becomes part of a grouping. For example, mount art approximately 8" above the back of a sofa to create a unified feeling. Coordinate the shape of art to the shape of furniture. For example, hang round or oval shaped artwork near a round table. Similarly, hang large art on big walls and small art on smaller walls. This creates a sense of balance and order in the room.

## 24. Gallery Art

Create order by arranging a variety of artwork within an invisible frame. Lay out pieces on the floor first, maintaining the outside shape of a rectangle or square. Place large, dark colored art near the bottom of the grouping and lighter pieces towards the top.

## 25. Personal Art & Collections

Art and collections are personal representations of us. If there are political, religious or personal pieces of art (family photos), or a collection (dolls, figurines, etc.) throughout your home, store them away. These could easily distract and overwhelm potential buyers from fully appreciating your home.

## 26. Mirrors

To bring nature inside, hang a mirror to reflect a beautiful window view. It makes the room appear larger, lighter and gives a calming effect. If there's a blocking wall at the entry to a room, hang a mirror on it to give the illusion of a more spacious entry.

## 27. Simplify Accessories

Too many decorations detract from the room, making it appear unkempt. Place only a few tasteful items on end tables, coffee table and shelves for a more calming effect. Avoid scattering many small items throughout a room or placing an item just to fill an empty space. A lamp, a book and one decorative accessory are all that are needed to complete an end table. Group items according to theme, color, element or shape. For example, gather items of similar color and/or style on a coffee table or arrange a crystal bowl and two crystal candleholders on the dining room table to make a more powerful decorative statement.



*"Toni has a calm, objective eye, great suggestions and creative arrangements that amaze me—never boring and always inviting."*

Kim C., Homeowner  
West Palm Beach, FL



# Other Rooms

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*"A move involving Toni's services is gentler, quicker and much easier. I wholeheartedly welcome her into our home and recommend her to yours!"*

Susan M., The Carlisle  
Manalapan, FL



## 28. Foyer

The entry area should be calm, spacious and very welcoming. If there's enough room, place a vase of fresh flowers, a small lamp and an attractive accessory on a console table. Hang a beautiful mirror above it so buyers can see themselves in their new home.

## 29. Office

It is best if the desk faces into the room with full view of the entry. However, if that can't be done, place the desk against the wall opposite the door and hang a mirror on the wall above the desk to easily view the door while seated there. Store files and office supplies out of sight.

## 30. Bedroom

Place the bed against a solid wall across from the entry, giving occupants a full view of the room. This automatically places the bed deep into the room, allowing ample space to enter. Never place a bed so the feet point directly out the door, and avoid placing the head of the bed in line with the door—this closes down the entry to the room.

## 31. Bathrooms

Bathrooms are the most personal space in a home so it must be impeccably clean, orderly and smell great. Store personal items out of sight, hang your best towels, change the shower curtain and throw away clutter. It's best to close bathroom doors and above all keep the toilet seat down.

## 32. Closets

Remove and store at least half of your clothes from closets—packing away seasonal items, those worn only once or twice a year and excessive amounts of shoes, handbags, etc. Take seldom-used items to a storage unit and neatly organize remaining items so buyers can envision ample room for their belongings.

## 33. Garage

The garage often becomes a dumping ground with everything in it but vehicles. This is your opportunity to clear out and clean up all those unfinished projects. Make it as inviting as any room inside your home.

# Kitchen & Laundry 7

## 34. Nourishing Kitchens

The kitchen is where we nourish ourselves and our family. It is essential that this room is meticulously clean, well lit and clutter-free. If food (i.e. fruit or vegetables) or flowers are displayed, be sure they are fresh and attractive. A clean well-kept kitchen conveys a message of good health.

## 35. Appliances

Clean and simplify all appliances. Remove items from atop the refrigerator and magnetized notes, etc., posted on the front. Thoroughly eliminate evidence of food mess, grease and dirt in and on all appliances. Make sure every item works properly.

## 36. Kitchen Table & Counters

Spacious countertops are a cherished commodity. Make the kitchen appear bigger by moving small appliances, cooking utensils, cookbooks, etc., into cabinets or pack them in preparation for the move. Besides eating, the kitchen table often ends up being a place to do business, homework and other activities. Maintain a clean, clear, inviting area, free of papers and clutter. Place an attractive centerpiece on it. After all, it could be the very spot where an agreement is made on your house.

## 37. Cabinets & Drawers

Reduce the number of items in cabinets and drawers, then clean and neatly organize remaining items. This provides buyers with a more accurate estimate of space for their belongings. Use drawer dividers and other organizing products to efficiently use the space. (This applies to bathroom and storage cabinets too.)

## 38. Laundry Room

Remove items from the top of your washer and dryer. Store supplies neatly in cabinets too. Eliminate any old or seldom-used products. Again, you want to demonstrate more space with less stuff.



*"Your talents made the home look so different and so good, we raised the price and received a cash offer."*

Cathy S., Realtor, Jupiter, FL

# Odds & Ends

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*"I am so grateful for your dedication and hard work. I was amazed at how well your efforts, knowledge, and proficiency paid off. I didn't even recognize my own home!"*

Heather A., Homeowner,  
Wellington, FL

## 39. Personal Belongings

Seeing personal belongings can be a little unsettling for buyers. Put away all clothing, medications, financial papers and other personal items that can distract a buyers attention.

## 40. Furniture Condition

Although your furniture may not be for sale, the condition of it can influence buyer's decision. Remove or repair worn, broken items to convey a message that your belongings and your home are well cared for.

## 41. Quiet Pets

It is best to leave pets with friends or neighbors whenever possible. Many people are afraid of, put off by or allergic to animals. If it's not possible to vacate pets, secure them in a travel carrier until buyers leave.

## 42. Backyard, Pool & Deck

The back of your house is as important as the front. Create a refreshing, inviting atmosphere around the pool and jacuzzi. Remove worn or excess furniture, pool toys and tools for a clean appearance. Maintain crystal-clear water and a spotless deck area.

## 43. Vacant House

An empty house that echoes is unsettling and sometimes difficult to visualize furniture arrangements. Muffle the sound by leaving drapes, carpeting, area rugs and plants. Take photographs of each room before removing furniture. Enlarge and mount them on a wall in each room to inspire buyer's imagination.

## 44. Distracting Neighbors

If the property of a nearby neighbor is unsightly or is an unfavorable commercial business, install a fence or plant a hedge on the side of the house that faces the offensive property.

## 45. Start Packing

This is your opportunity to start clearing out items you no longer want or need, and pack seldom used items in the attic, basement, garage, closets, and cabinets.

## 46. Get Professional Photos

It's advisable to hire a professional photographer who is skilled in showcasing your home in the best way possible. Remember buyers usually start shopping online and good photos are essential to attract them.





# Showtime!



## 47. Shining Light

Fully open all drapes and blinds to let in sunlight. Leave lights on in every room, including closets and hallways, and especially in the foyer. Place candles particularly in the entry, living room and bathrooms. Be sure to extinguish them after buyers have left.

## 48. Soothing Sounds

Play soft music or gentle nature sounds in the background. Turn off the TV. If there are loud noises in your neighborhood, close up the house and turn on the air conditioning (or heating), regardless of the temperature outside.

## 49. Tantalizing Aromas

Burn cinnamon sticks, bake bread or cookies, simmer potpourri on the stove, or place a few drops of vanilla on a light ring to tantalize buyers' olfactory senses. Avoid pungent cooking smells such as fish, garlic and other overpowering scents. Eliminate unpleasant smells from cat litter (change it often) and pet bedding (wash it regularly). If a litter box is easily visible, move it to the utility room or garage while the house is being shown. If there are smokers, have them smoke outside and keep ashtrays out of sight.

## 50. Comfort Zone

Maintain a comfortable temperature throughout the house. Set the thermostat cooler in the summer, with fans on in every room. In the winter, maintain a soothing warmth without being stuffy. If there is a fireplace, keep logs burning to create a cozy, inviting atmosphere.

## 51. Refreshing Treats

Encourage buyers to linger and feel at home by gathering in the kitchen for a snack. Depending on the time of year, offer a pitcher of lemonade, iced tea or a pot of hot coffee, along with cookies or finger food. Set out colorful matching cups and napkins to complete the display.

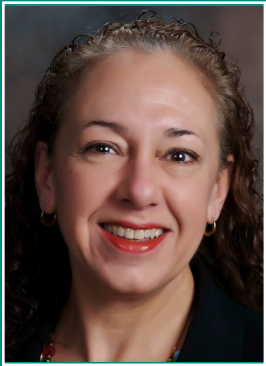
## 52. First Impressions

It is essential to put finishing touches on your home immediately before each showing. Sweep or vacuum floors, tidy magazines, close toilet seats, etc. This is your curtain call . . . make a great first impression.



*My thanks again for your most talented assistance. Your ideas, work ethics and vibrant personality have made it a pleasure for me to know you."*

Lee S., Homeowner,  
Boynton Beach, FL



Even as a child, I was organizing closets, cabinets, drawers and rearranging entire rooms. My mother was a bit of a neat-nut so I must have gotten it from her. When I moved into my own apartment, friends would compliment me on how I'd arranged my space and tease me about how nothing was ever out of place.

Fast forward to 1992, when I began my business as a Professional Organizer and learned Visual Coordinating. In 1995, I studied Feng Shui in Los Angeles and began teaching classes in Palm Beach County. During this time, I added home staging and senior relocations to my repertoire. I became a Realtor® in 2001 and hold the Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI) designation.

My natural instincts and diverse interests in the places we live and work has served many clients throughout the years. I understand how our surroundings affect us and can quickly analyze a space to determine what is needed for both residential and business environments. I look forward to doing the same for you.

**Life Changes!** That's something we can count on. Rearranging our surroundings to accommodate transitions can make changes easier and more comfortable. Energetically, our surroundings can support and empower us if we give the attention needed.

#### Staging and Organizing works when:

- ★ **Selling a Home**—Buyers see the potential for themselves
- ★ **Moving into a New Home**—Reduce stress and settle in faster
- ★ **Downsizing to a Smaller Space**—Bring only what you need and love
- ★ **Children Moving Out**—Recreate the room to suit you
- ★ **Aging Parents Moving In**—Accommodate their needs and yours
- ★ **Running a Home Business**—Find what you need when you need it
- ★ **Merging Two Homes into One**—Tastefully blend your stuff with theirs
- ★ **Inheriting Family Treasures**—Blend furniture and mementos harmoniously
- ★ **Needing a Change**—Appreciate what you already have with a fresh arrangement



**Before**

**Before:** Too much furniture haphazardly placed cluttered the room.



**After**

**After:** Some furniture and accessories were removed. Remaining items were attractively arranged into a comfortable, inviting grouping.





## Organizing

*Find what you need  
when you need it!*

## Staging

*Sell your home quickly  
at the best possible price.*

## Moving

*Reduce stress and settle  
into your new home  
faster and easier.*

## Makeover

*Rearrange existing  
furnishings to support  
your lifestyle & spice up  
your surroundings.*

## Feng Shui

*Adjust subtle energies  
to increase your health,  
wealth and happiness.*

## Virtual and On-Site Consultations Available

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