How to stage a home on a budget

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When you show your home's best features by staging it effectively, you help increase your final selling price without breaking the bank. As our infographic below shows, the following five golden rules of home staging will help you show off its best assets:

The five golden rules are:

1. **De-personalize:** While your family photos are beautiful and your kids' drawings on the fridge are adorable, buyers want to be able to picture themselves in the house — and that means putting away your photos, clearing your closets from unnecessary clutter and using matching hangers to give your closet more visual impact.

2. **Maximize:** Declutter and maximize the area in your home. Stuffed closets make your closet space look insufficient, so consider storing excess belongings offsite.

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You can also quickly improve your bedroom's aesthetic by using gender neutral colors when accessorizing so that the color scheme appeals to more people. A headboard, a cohesive color scheme, and a few decorative items also improve the look of a bedroom, while removing extra clutter (office furniture, power strips, televisions, etc) will make the room feel more relaxing.

3. **Sanitize:** No one wants to move into a dirty home, so clean your home to make it much more

appealing to prospective buyers. Clear your countertops to make the space look larger, and enhance the open feel with white bath and hand towels on display. Clean dirty shower doors with a solution of one part muriatic acid and ten parts water. Bathrooms and kitchens are the two essential areas of the home, and they can make or break a deal.

4. **Modernize:** A dated-looking home means a lower offer, so modernize your home wherever possible. Small changes, like replacing gold fixtures or brass and wooden cabinet hardware with nickel, chrome, brushed silver, or stainless steel, will go a long way towards updating your home.

You can quickly update the look of flat appliances such as dishwashers and refrigerators by using stainless steel stick-on coverings or specialty appliance paints. While you're in the kitchen, go ahead and declutter your cabinets, drawers, and oven- buyers will look inside every nook and cranny. Also, you can make your kitchen space look larger by removing rugs.

5. **Neutralize:** Keeping a neutral color scheme can help your buyers envision themselves in your home, especially in a statement-making area like the dining room. Set the table simply to create visual interest, and add a vase with fresh flowers for a beautiful focal point. Add lighting and emphasize any natural light your home gets using a mirror and subtle lamps.

Don't forget to adjust your window treatments to maximize your staging. Keep your curtains neutral or choose ones with subtle designs; sheer curtains also let in more light so that your home looks more appealing. Set the rods as high as possible and use thin rods to maximize the space.

A few simple tweaks can increase your home's selling price by hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars. Use these guidelines to stage your home effectively so that you get the best possible price on your house.

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