



JOAN O'MEARA
The Key to Your Home

REALTYCHECK



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Set the Stage for Selling Success!

Joan O'Meara offers insights on 10 Top Tactics for Staging your Home

[a great companion to Q1 2014's insights on the Top 10 Techniques to add Value to Your Home; see Q1 Newsletter at joanomeara.com].

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Putting that best foot forward holds value like no other when it comes to real estate in the areas of Rye and Harrison. With savvy Buyers who come educated and ready to join our sought after neighborhoods, homeowners can't afford to turn off potential Buyers by missing critical steps in presenting their home. With a current increased Buyer interest in new construction, staging can be even more critical in this competitive market. And for those homeowners who are looking to sell this fall or next year, now is the time to start the process.

1. Seek and heed expert advice

A great place to start is with your agent or prospective agent. What's their experience with staging and home prep? Gain valuable insights such as: the agent's top tips, where to start, what is most current. *Insider Insight: Hearing some professional ideas of what's best for your home will help you decide whether you need a professional stager.*

2. Keep an eye on the Joneses

What do properties on the market look like currently? This will give you a benchmark for how your home would show comparatively. Start with noting staging tactics that would work well in your home, and see what else jumps out at you. Consider current features that are being highlighted in other homes, condition of properties, and even move-in readiness. *Insider Insight: Sometimes I direct my clients to a home that is exceptionally staged and one that isn't as honed. This helps a Seller instantly see the value of staging.*

3. Create a plan Staging, like other aspects of a successful real estate transaction, requires planning. Whether you want to stage in tandem with the advice of your real estate expert, or if you plan to hire a stager, a detailed staging plan will help you maximize the efforts and include all the steps to best showcase your home. Armed with a checklist and photos (pre and post staging), you will be poised for greater success. *Insider Insight: Walk through your home like you don't live there. What can you modify to make a room look larger, more inviting, and less personalized to your family?*

4. Less is more Although traditional staging conjures up images of bringing in new furniture or accent accessories, it is essential to see what you can wean out first. All through the lens of a prospective Buyer, try to remove items that may detract or deter the prospect from feeling this could be their dream home. And by purging and putting things in storage

now, your eventual move will be easier and less stressful. *Insider Insight: Besides personal items, I often suggest to pull out those items that Sellers aren't using and may in fact have no intention of keeping after the move. These are perfect items to get rid of now. Secure a storage unit if needed or contribute items to a local charity. And remember, donations are tax deductible; just request a receipt.*

5. De-personalize where you can

Flowing right from "less is more," some of the first items to pack and store for your next home are your personal items. Family photos can hinder a prospective Buyer from envisioning this home as their own. *Insider Insight: Label your boxes and keep in mind that you are only temporarily putting away your photos. Envision enthusiastically unpacking them in your new home!*

6. Clean inside, clean outside To glean the expert guidance of your stager or real estate agent, together walk through every inch of your home to establish what 'clean' would translate to for staging your home. Then you can choose if you want to do it yourself or hire a cleaning service. *Insider Insight: Don't forget the closets, basement, attic, outdoor storage areas. Places you typically don't even see anymore could be a real turn-off for Buyers.*

7. Clear and de-clutter counters Another critical spot to focus on is any counter: an important spot to make less personalized. Move your personal accessories into a box with the goal of leaving only a few, streamlined accessories to decorate the space. *Insider Insight: An uncluttered, well-staged kitchen instantly communicates "well maintained" to the Buyer. Clean kitchens are inspiring, inviting and desirable!*

8. Tackle the small improvements first

Small details can translate to big impact when staging. Start with the outside—paint or replace your mailbox and house numbers, and make sure locks work effortlessly. Inside, ensure that doors and drawers work properly, and clean and paint trim and baseboards throughout. *Insider Insight: Once you've handled the small details, keep them up by routinely checking and sprucing up as needed.*

9. Take sample photos View sample photos of your home on your computer. Using your smart phone, photograph your rooms and then closely review them one by one. Since many prospective Buyers start their search on the computer, it's a smart step to your final prep. *Insider Insight: If your intuition is questioning a photo detail, bounce it off your stager or real estate agent—you may just be onto a minor adjustment that will make a major impact!*

10. One more view It's time to go back to the Joneses and check out a few more open houses. Then step back into your house and consider how a Buyer would view your home...step by step. It's a great time to once again grab a box and de-clutter just a bit more. *Insider Insight: I will walk through a Seller's home and rattle off my insights and recommendations about what else can go. Considering the number of homes I've been in with clients over the years, I am happy to share my insights.*

By heeding the advice of a stager or experienced real estate agent, a Seller truly can set the stage for real estate success as they make an immediate best – and more streamlined – impression on prospective Buyers.

7-10 SECONDS:

That's all it takes for most Buyers to form an opinion about a home!