

## OPEN HOUSE

# SALES SUCCESS: Staging becomes home-marketing necessity

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*Creators Syndicate*

“Staging” a home for presentation to prospective buyers is increasingly important in today’s market.

Many buyers are still holding off with their home-seeking quest, waiting for prices to really bottom out. Competition is tight for those remaining buyers who are actively looking for a home.

Staging a home simply means making changes and improvements that will maximize its appeal to prospects who inspect the property, thus giving it an edge on other competitive on-market homes. Here are a few tips suggested by professional designer Elaine Williamson:

- Vintage accents can add appeal, she said. French burlap is no longer for sack racing. This Earth-friendly fiber is being utilized for chic pillows imprinted with a vintage-stamped design or a family initial. Accent chairs can be seen covered in gray linen and imprinted with vintage “document” script writing.
- Consider updating the wallpaper. With a decreasing

demand for faux finishes and walls painted in solid primary colors, wallpaper is making a comeback in a big, fashionable way. From bright and bold to subdued and elegant, today’s wallpapers are easy to apply and easier to remove, making updating and improving the look of a room easier than ever.

- Add timeless art pieces. When considering items to occupy wall space, ditch the quick fix, “matchy-matchy” picture. Mix mediums and styles. To add depth and character to your pieces, forgo the glass frame cover that can be distracting — it casts a glare that detracts from your interior design.

- Change or add appropriate colors. While neutrals have made a strong showing in home-staging design this year for primary design elements such as walls and baseline furnishings, boldly colored accent pieces provide a space with visual interest and appeal. Brightly colored and/or patterned pillows, rugs and other accessories will bring an otherwise bland space to life.

- Simplify the positioning of furnishings and accessories.

With a strong desire to ease and reprioritize homes and lives, paring down furnishings and accessories is the best way to exemplify a sense of control over one’s surroundings.

- It is important to streamline the lines of staged furniture, and the bulkiness as well. Often, stagers place too many items in a room by way of accessories, pillows, throw rugs and personal photos. Pick and choose the most important items and then pare down from there.

### **Q: What is the HomeSteps program all about?**

**A:** It’s an initiative program offered by Freddie Mac, which gives home buyers 15 days to buy HomeSteps homes without investor competition.

On Sept. 17, the program was expanded so any home shopper can buy a HomeSteps home as a primary residence during the first 15 days of the property’s listing without competition from investors. HomeSteps is the real estate sales unit of Freddie Mac and markets a nationwide selection of Freddie Mac-owned homes.

