

Do I Really *Need to Paint* Before I Stage?

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your furniture with you, but the walls will be left behind for them to deal with.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself: Are the walls in good shape? How fresh-looking are they? They may be neutral, but are they clean and free of marks, chips, and cracks? How long has it been since they were painted? Is the trim clean and in good repair (no dents or signs of wear)?

Ultimately, you want your buyers to feel like they could move into your property tomorrow and do absolutely nothing for the next five to eight years. If they are walking through your house taking note of which colors they need to change or what needs to be repaired before they can move in, they will be subtracting these amounts (at four to five times the real cost) from their offer price; assuming, of course, that it even goes that far. With all the colorful distractions, your property may not even make it onto the list of contenders.

A few gallons of paint can make the difference between your home being sold successfully and sitting on the market. Professional real estate stagers include a full color consultation when they initially tour your property. (We

will also recommend exceptional painters at reasonable prices). Once you have decided to sell time is of the essence. Making property sale-ready is vital to maximize the return on investment. Don't gamble with your equity; before listing, call a certified staging professional* to help secure the best offer ever. ■

It's a good question, and one we hear over and over again. The basic rule of Staging 101 is that it's important to *stay neutral* when choosing a paint color. Your property should appeal to your target audience and a wider range of potential buyers. Neutral wall colors can be elegant and sophisticated and not offensive in the least. You may find the word "offensive" an interesting term to use when talking about paint, but the last thing you need is a buyer's negative emotional reaction to your wall colors. Red dining room walls are great for living but not for selling. Strong colors are a personal choice and they hit the buyer as soon as he or she walks into a room, often evoking a strong reaction. A neutral wall color will quietly sit in the background and allow buyers to really look at the space, the windows, the floors, and more. Buyers know that you'll be taking

