

Feature Business Of The Week

– Visionary Redesign –

“Home Staging: Changing the Face of Real Estate Sales”

Advertising Feature
by Dave Preston

In the wildly popular TLC television show *Moving Up*, people sell their homes... only to return a while later to the shock of what the new homeowners have done with the place. The stress can be nearly palpable as viewers watch the previous owner's eyes go wide upon learning that their green and orange backsplash above the kitchen counter is gone. Or the turquoise kitchen is now beige. Or the wood-panelled master bathroom, with its terra-cotta accents (which took three weeks of work to complete) has been ripped out and replaced.

It's all good fun and meant to show viewers the conflict with a situation that doesn't happen all too often: house sellers returning to their old home to see what's up. But the premise around the TV program is real: home sellers need to let go of the attachment they've created to their homes if they ever want to get the best selling price for it.

Enter Barbara Katnich, Staging professional, owner of Visionary Redesign and one of the few people around that will gently take sellers' hands and guide them through the Staging process.

“Home Staging is where I help home sellers prepare their home for sale,” says Barbara, who adds it's a fairly recent phenomenon in Canada. In the U.S. Staging is not a new concept and has been common practice for over 15 years. It is shedding new light on how to promote a home in the competitive Canadian Real Estate Market.

An Accredited Staging Professional, Barbara has taken special courses on Staging from the U.S. “It's very important to me to have the credentials because it does raise the bar in the Canadian market place.”

“It's been proven that Staged Homes sell faster and/or for more money,” says Barbara, who notes that many Realtors are taking the Accredited Staging course to better help their clients prepare their houses for sale. “If homes aren't Staged, it leads to an opening for price reduction. It doesn't matter what the market is. The homeowner will reap more money and not leave money on the table,” says Barbara, who Stages the interior as well as the exterior of client's houses.

“Most people have too much

clutter,” says Barbara. “You need to create an experience for prospective buyers to walk into a room and go, wow!”

Most buyers cannot visualize changes and often won't take a second look at a property if the first isn't appealing. With Staging, buyers can envision their own belongings in a house. The biggest selling point to buyers for a home that has been Staged, is the idea of a low maintenance move in.

Barbara knows well the emotional attachment people have to their homes when it comes time to sell. “When a home owner makes the decision to sell a home it becomes a house, and a house becomes a product. Like any other product in the market, it has to be showcased as a marketable property.”

“The way you live in your home and the way you need to sell your house are two completely different things.” Staging a house is like taking it to the level of a show home. “When you walk into a show home, it's sparsely decorated, so you can envision moving in and envision the lifestyle that living there would allow you to enjoy.”

“When I go into a home, I declutter, neutralize the colour scheme, depersonalize, lighten and brighten” says Barbara. As an example, a homeowner might have a lovely spoon collection on display but it isn't something that a potential buyer wants to see. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. No truer is this adage then selling real estate. Real estate professionals know that if a buyer can picture themselves living in and enjoying a property, it is as good as sold.

“They want to look at the architectural features, the space and the view and all of the options that living there has to offer them. People want move-in ready homes,” says Barbara, who sees education to home sellers as a big part of her job.

It may be hard for sellers to understand, but the point is to sell the house, not the belongings in it or your personal colour choices, and not Staging properly can affect the selling price.

The way buyers see a property determines whether that property is going to sell at target price, or linger on the market for weeks, or months, having to settle for less than it deserves. Taking the opportunity to have a Professional Home Stager prepare the property will put extra dollars in the owner's pocket, in



Barbara Katnich, owner of Visionary Redesign is a Staging professional that dedicates her career to helping homeowners prepare to sell their home for the value it's really worth.

less time.

Using figures from the United States, Barbara says, “Typically if someone invests between 1% to 5% of their list price into Staging and the upgrades required, they would reap between 10% and 30% back.”

“If the Realtor has done a good job in pricing it fairly, based on location and what the dwelling is offering, then it should sell for list price,” says Barbara. “There shouldn't be a lot of room for negotiating if the house is in good shape and presented properly.”

Staging involves using a client's existing furnishings and accessories but Barbara has had situations where new furniture was purchased (with an eye on the client's future home needs) or items have been brought in from family and friends. “With Staging, I'll meet with the home seller, do a walk through the house, then prepare a detailed report, room by room, including the exterior of the house, listing all of the things that need to be removed, repaired, cleaned and so forth.”

“Most places need to be neutralized and de-cluttered,” says

Barbara. “Some places are in really bad shape and carpets need to be ripped out, tiles, counter tops or walls may need to be repaired.”

“Some homeowners may choose to do the repairs and packing of accessories themselves” says Barbara. “If they don't, I have a bank of contractors that will come in and do the work.” Contractors include painters, carpenters, movers, cleaning services and landscapers.

“Once that is done, I will go in and Stage the furnishings,” says Barbara. “That's the last step where strategic placement of furniture and accessories creates that “WOW” effect when buyers walk throughout the house and around the property.

Barbara also provides Interior Redesign which is one-day home makeovers. This process involves the creative placement of furnishings by using your existing furniture, accessories and lighting to give your rooms a whole new look and feel. Most people already have what they need in their homes, but don't know it. “Where and how we place your furnishings will give

your room a look that will accentuate the warmth, beauty and function of its space.”

“People, especially when they're downsizing, have a very hard time deciding what will fit in a new site,” says Barbara. “I help people with move-in redesigns, downsizing redesigns and existing home redesigns,” says Barbara. “Most people don't have the vision to do the proper placement of furnishings to create a nice flow.”

Other services include personal shopping, where Barbara will go out and find new pictures, accessories or furnishings for her clients, de-clutter consultation, where people are taught how to better organize themselves, furniture makeovers, colour consultations and seasonal or occasion design as well as do-it-yourself projects.

Barbara works from Kelowna to Summerland and continues to do work in the Lower Mainland. She offers a free consultation where she shows clients how they can benefit from her services.

Barbara can be reached at 826-2600 or visit her website at www.visionaryredesign.com