

Styling your home





Styling Tips

With Belinda Grundy

You don't get a second chance to make a first positive impression.

Before you bring your property to market you have a real opportunity to enhance the value of your home.

Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to draw in as many competitors and potential purchasers as possible, so your property sells in the shortest amount of time, for the maximum dollar?



1. Once You Have Decided to Sell - Adjust Your Thinking

This is perhaps the most important step in preparing your home for sale.

When you decide to sell it is imperative that you see your home as a honey pot and the selling process as a means of attracting buyers to the honey pot.

You don't want anything in your home to detract from buyer interest.

Your home is a significant asset and the purpose of a sale is for you to maximise your return.

Your task therefore is to emotionally engage potential buyers with your home. Potential buyers will have a checklist of what they want in a property, and if you are to gain the highest price; you have to cater to what the potential buyer wants.

Now this can be a difficult task. We love our homes and when we love something, it's hard to see how others can see it differently. It hurts when strangers see flaws in the things we love. But selling a home is not about you – it's about attracting buyers.

Before you place your property on the market, you can engage the services of a pre-sale property styling expert such as Belinda Grundy from BG Property Styling who will tell you what potential purchasers will see in your property.

It may be uncomfortable, but someone like Belinda can give you the opportunity to see your property from another perspective and make changes before your home hits the market. You can gain a sneak peek of what the potential purchasers are going to see, and have an opportunity to fix them.

Alternatively, you can do it yourself.



2. Pre Sale - Survey the Market

You've made the decision to sell - now you have to understand the market and what contemporary buyers want. Remember this is not about you – it's about them! To get the best possible price you need at least two buyers to emotionally engage with your property. Remember you are in the business of selling a lifestyle dream.

a) Register your property specifics for alerts on real estate websites of comparable properties

It's really important to understand how your property sits in comparison to others. If you want top dollar, your property has to look top dollar. From a styling and presentation point of view, looking at comparable properties will help you come to a realistic assumption on price.

b) Attend open for inspections

By attending open for inspections you can really see the value of marketing and how important lush photography is in making a property appealing. Think about how your property stacks up and what you may have to do to get it up to scratch.

c) Consider your target market

- Who are you pitching to?
- Who buys in your street?
- What are the features of the local area?

d) Quiz local agents about who is buying in your area

A good agent will know:

Who bought in the street?

Are the local school numbers going up or down?

What did they buy for?

How many children have they got?

What do you see happening in the area - infrastructure, new shops?



3. Preparing Your Home for Sale - Do You Need to Renovate?

It's important to look at the sale of your home as the sale of one of your most important assets and what can you do to enhance the asset?

If your property is your principal place of residence, it's a tax-free asset. If you invest in this tax-free asset you will get a return tax-free as well.

Keep this in mind when you find yourself thinking "Oh, I can't be bothered resurfacing the driveway", or "The buyer can do it". The next buyer will profit from what you didn't do because they didn't pay the price you could have received.

What's worth doing is anything that will attract as many competitors and potential purchasers, as possible. If you have a property that looks unrenovated, or looks like a project - you're definitely cutting down that target market to about 10. When you have an open for inspection and people can see the catch up or project work - they have to do - it sends a negative vibe through the actual property.

However, if the property is well presented and renovated and agents can talk about this property excitedly there will be lots of interested people and a buzz in the air and the pool of people interested will increase to 100.

What's worth doing?

a) Maximise street appeal

First impressions count and will determine if a prospective buyer gets out of the car. Street appeal pulls all those rubbernecks in. Make sure that your street appeal is fantastic.

You must give the impression, "This place is loved and well looked after." If the driveway's cracked, the render's cracked, there's no mulch, the grass is not lush and green, and the lighting's barely there, it does not give a good impression for the rest of the home.

Great street appeal raises the bar. It attracts and draws people in and gets more people more interested. Invest in front landscaping, paint the front of the house, fix up the cracks down the walls, pressure clean - whatever it might be, the property needs to look appealing and loved, so people come in.

People will drive past the property and say to themselves, "I've got five bookings I've got to fit in this morning. I'll go and do some research during the night over the week, and then I'll work out what I want to do on Saturday." You want them to come back.

b) Outdoor entertaining areas

Everyone loves the deck going onto the garden. It would be worthwhile investing in the deck that feels like an extension of the house - it's going to add far more value than what it actually costs. Brand new timber

looks stunning. Building an outdoor entertaining area so it actually feels like an extension of the house, is going to add far more value than what it actually costs.

c) Paint

Do a full paint – it's not cheap, but as far as return on investment, it is one of the cheapest and most effective returns. Even if you adore the pink feature wall in the kitchen, paint over any feature walls in a neutral colour.

d) Create an extra bedroom

If you can create another bedroom – do it. For a few thousand dollars you can put in another wall and create another bedroom. Suddenly, you're in a different, larger target market.

e) Create a "wow" room

It could be the outdoor entertaining area or the master bedroom with a view – whatever it is - there has to be a 'wow' room. That is where the focus needs to be made.

f) Think about how the property will be seen at night

Selling a home means people will be driving home 24 hours a day. Make sure your exterior lighting is great, dusk til dawn. If someone pulls up at your property at 9 o'clock at night, is it going to look its best? It's always good to get some strong up lighting in any feature trees. It's always good to have lighting around the building numbers on the exterior wall but it's usually quite unique to each property.

g) Make sure the number of the property can be seen

Buy new shiny numbers and put them on the wall. The property must be easy to find and the GPS must work.

h) Update light fittings and door ware

i) Resurface concrete drives



4. Preparing Your Home for Sale - The Final Touches

a) Make sure the floor plan flows

The layout of furniture is very important in terms of how potential purchasers experience the property. When you are in display mode all that matters is enhancing people's ability to seamlessly move through the main living areas.

b) Declutter. Declutter. Declutter

The most important task of all – DECLUTTER. Remember, selling a home is not about you; it's about how you make your property as attractive as possible to a potential purchaser. Take away all personal items and photos. Ask yourself: What am I going to need for the next 6 weeks?

Pack away:

- Kids toys.
- All of the things we leave out on the benches.
- Everything outside of that, so for example, if it's summer, send all the winter stuff offsite.

Anything that tells a story about who's living there or who owns the house is actually a distraction. Personal photos distract sellers, they start to create stories about the owners rather than focussing on engaging in the property, enjoying it, and imagining themselves and their families in there, and imagining where they would put their photos.

Remember if this is all too much for you, call in the experts to assist you in the process.

c) See a sale as an opportunity

For any unwanted items utilise eBay traders, who are listed on eBay. You can send them photos of things you want to sell and they'll manage the sales process and charge a commission for it, so they work directly for you.

d) Hygiene sells

The cleanliness standard must be like a five star hotel. Get the professionals in to give the house a top to bottom clean, and especially focus on kitchens and bathrooms. We all get used to a certain standard of living, but when you are selling, it has to be of the standard of a world-class hotel.

e) Get the bins out

Pressure clean the bins. Make them a house, get them out of the way. We don't want bins in front of the house, more often than not, the bins hang out the front of the house.



5. Putting the House on the Market

a) Hire furniture

It's just something you have to do to give your house a contemporary feel. Look at it as an investment in an outcome. It's not a cost. It helps the efficiency of the sale and gets the house off the market quickly with maximum profit.

b) Do an entire perimeter walk with a critical eye

Mulch - but do not use the Redwood chip of the '90s. Its time has passed. Get the wood out from underneath the deck. Wash the house, clean the carpets and all the windows, inside and out.

c) Think about the pets and the odour

Hard to pick if you live with beloved animals but it can be the first thing a potential purchaser notices. Rising damp is not pleasant. Eliminate all odours and consider opting for pets to go to a friend's for the period the house is on the market.

d) Get the best photographs

You can kill by styling sometimes. You want to place the furniture so it enhances that "wow" area or view, or whatever those "hero" shots are. Make sure the "hero" shots are good. You want to show space, versatility, and almost a neutral look.

e) Consider moving out

This may seem like a drastic step but it ensures that the property is always ready to be seen.



6. If it's all too much - Hire a Project Manager and Stylist

Property presentation specialists are there to help share the burden of preparing a property for sale. They can help you:

- Plan
- Organise
- Style
- Move

Phase One

They will do a comprehensive Initial appraisal, which can take two hours for a four bedroom home.

The specialist will take a very detailed look from the street, examine every room, talk to you, talk about the target audience, discuss how to get the home ready for photography, talk about the budget, talk about expectations and the time frame, the whole thing.

By the time the consultation has finished, you will know exactly what they've got to do, have a rough estimate of how much it'll be and how long it'll take.

The property specialist will then supply an executive visual report of all the suggestions, the investment and expected return.

Clients can then make a choice as to whether they:

- proceed
- do the work themselves
- or engage the specialist to do the coordination.

Phase Two - Planning and quoting

The property specialist can do all the work for you – get on site, brief, create scope of works, do the bookings, troubleshoot, handle the questions and manage all the trades, in consultation with you.



About Belinda

Working in Sydney and the Southern Highlands of NSW, Belinda Grundy from BG Property Styling is a highly sought after property makeover expert on Pre-Sale Property Styling and Downsizing. She works with clients to create as much profit as possible. She says, "It's an investment on getting your property sold in an efficient amount of time, and also for the maximum dollar". Belinda is someone who can walk into a property and see opportunity for enhancement in value and potential purchaser appeal.



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