

# Staging tips for quick sales

## Stimulating buyers' taste buds, noses raises chances of purchase

BY [BERNICE ROSS](#), FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2008.  
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Today agents no longer sell just houses -- they sell "lifestyles." In fact, lifestyle marketing is all the rage now. If you want to sell your listings faster, today's column will show you how.

Agents and sellers have always realized the importance of making a property look its best prior to putting it on the market. Properties that are in excellent condition normally sell faster and at a higher price than those that are in poor condition. Today, having your listings "look good" is not enough. When buyers decide to purchase, they are often unaware of the subconscious triggers that motivate them to take action. In fact, the strongest buying triggers are tied to our sense of taste and smell. Thus, when you stage a property, don't settle just for making it visually appealing. Instead, tap into all five senses using multisensory marketing. Here's how to do it.

### 1. Visual buying

Most real estate professionals do a good job in terms of visual marketing. We post virtual tours on our Web sites, create brochures with multiple pictures, and, in most cases, present the property in the best possible fashion. This is a solid approach, as approximately 40 percent of the population is visual. In most cases, visual buyers prefer houses that are light and bright. Open floor plans with high ceilings are also desirable. To best serve your visual buyers, make sure that the house is as bright and attractive as possible. Also, have the sellers clear out as much clutter as possible. This is one time when "less is more."

### 2. Auditory buying

Approximately 40 percent of the population is auditory. These people process information most easily when they hear it. Sounds are extremely important to them. When another agent contacts you about showing one of your listings, find out what type of music the buyers enjoy and have it playing when the buyers view the property. If the buyers value peace and quiet, do whatever is necessary to minimize any noise within the property. If there is background noise that you can't eliminate, you may want to consider installing a small fountain. Your goal is to create an auditory background that will be perceived favorably by auditory buyers.

### 3. Kinesthetic buying

For those who are kinesthetic, touch and other physical sensations are the most important. It's critical that your listings are always at a comfortable temperature, no matter what time of year it is. Kinesthetic individuals love to curl up in front of a warm fireplace. In terms of staging, it's usually great to have a fire going in the fireplace, provided it's not too hot outside. Also, pillows are extremely important in conveying a relaxed atmosphere. Place plenty of extra pillows and throws on the sofas, beds and any other relaxation areas.

### 4. Taste buying

Frank McKinney, the most luxurious spec builder in the country, defines the "Three C's of luxury marketing as being champagne, caviar and chocolate." McKinney's niche is building houses with price tags of \$30 million and up. While most agents are not going to be serving champagne and caviar at their showings, using taste can be a strong motivator in making a favorable impression. For example, on a hot day, have a variety of cold drinks available for your open-house visitors as well as some fun snacks. Hot chocolate is excellent on a cold day. The only caveat is to be sure that your buyers do not walk around the house eating and leaving a trail of crumbs that stain the carpets.

### 5. Aroma buying

The most often neglected and yet perhaps most powerful motivator for purchasing is scent. Aromas are one of the quickest ways to tap into the brainstem areas (i.e., the reptilian brain) that controls most buying decisions. Use this powerful motivator by baking cinnamon rolls or chocolate chip cookies. (Put the oven on

150 degrees so that you get the aroma, but not a complete baking. One agent started talking to an open-house visitor while she was baking cookies and forgot about the cookies until the oven caught on fire!) Other pleasant aromas include freshly ground coffee, fresh bread and fresh flowers. Vanilla is also a very popular scent. Also, be especially diligent in removing offensive smells. Nothing will kill a sale more quickly than a musty, stale or dirty smell.

What constitutes "home" is more than just the sticks and bricks. It's the emotional appeal that the home has to the buyer. One of the best ways to make sure that your listings are as appealing as possible is to stage your houses using a multisensory approach.

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