

Squab Guest Blog



Samantha Mansell Chrysalis Home Staging



Five Steps to Preparing Your Home for Viewings

Squab Removals talks to Samantha Mansell, a Warwickshire based interior designer and home staging expert. Samantha is the owner of Chrysalis Home Staging. She kindly shares a few 'tricks of trade' giving her top tips on how to present your home so that it is attractive to the majority of people viewing it. It's important to remember that even though your home may be beautifully decorated to the highest standard, it is your personal taste and may not be quite so appealing to the home viewer! People can use their imaginations much better with a 'blank canvas' so decluttering, de-personalising and using neutral colours form the backbone of this advice. Following Samantha's 5 Steps on Home Staging may help you to sell your home quicker, and even increase its sales value.

Step One - Organise

Clear out those household cupboards, shelves, wardrobes because any clutter or mess, sends out a signal to viewers that your home may not have sufficient storage space. Clutter extends to all those items that are crowding window sills, book cases, desks, kitchen units and so on – all the usual culprits! Remove any accessory of a controversial or personal nature, even family photographs should be (temporarily) reserved for bedrooms only, when presenting your home for viewings. Never is there a better time than now to have a sort out, if you are about to sell your home! Either bin it, or make sure you definitely want it (be tough about this!) – you can start packing the items away that you want to keep and hey presto, you've made a start on your home move! You will also be amazed how much space you can create, which is all good preparation for selling your home. The other point, is to complete any DIY tasks you may have started, so no patchy plaster work, no holes in the wall, no grubby paintwork – the list goes on!

Step Two - Neutralise

Having sorted the clutter and completed the DIY, this part is about creating your blank canvas which entails a little more than simply painting all your walls magnolia. Pick a base colour which you will use throughout the house, such as pale green, pale yellow, soft taupe, or mushroom, or even a pale shade of dove grey. This colour should be used as an accent in all rooms, such as a wall colour in the living room, soft furnishings in the dining room, accessories in the bedroom. This will help make the house feel connected. Next choose an off-white shade which compliments your accent colour. This is the colour you should use to paint the ceilings and most of the walls. You can choose different off-white paints for different rooms to suit the colours you are using and it's always advisable to take natural light into account, knowing when to use warm or cool tones. So while, we talk about making everything neutral, don't feel you have to paint everything beige or magnolia, because you can still be very creative within a neutral scheme.



Step Three – De-personalise

This follows on from the decluttering advice. Your home viewer needs to imagine themselves living in your house, so the less personal the decor in the house, the better. This is where removing photographs, and any posters that may be adorning walls etc. comes into play. There should be no personal stamps of interest, nothing offensive or aggressive, no propaganda, and sorry, I know you love it, but no children's artwork! When you think of artwork, think of how a lovely hotel does it. Use framed pictures and paintings, and canvases – never posters and blu-tack! Then make sure you hang them somewhere suitable. One big mistake is to get the scales wrong. All too often, people hang a small print or canvas on a large wall. The other point is that artwork does not have to be expensive. Even large canvases can now be picked up for around £25 (smaller ones are even cheaper) and they can be used to great effect.

Step Four - Accessorise

So by now, you have de-cluttered, organised, neutralised and de-personalised your home ready for staging. You're nearly there! Now you need to accessorise. We have talked about wall hangings already, so now it's time to address soft furnishings and other accessories. Texture is how we make neutral colour schemes interesting. So think wool, mohair, silk (or faux silk), faux fur, knitted, tweed and so on. A fabric should make you want to reach out and touch it. Lamps, lights, candles, bowls, vases, ornaments and artificial flowers can be bought quite cheaply but they should be good enough quality to look chic. Think about symmetry too. Two matching vases of dried flowers either side of a fireplace, works well for example. Accessories can very often look better placed in odd numbers like threes or fives. They can also be used to cover things up; a neutral throw can cover up a faded old floral sofa.

Step Five - Revitalise

Finally, having completed all the tasks above, now is the time to inject some life into the room. By this, we mean adding fresh potted plants and beautiful smelling flowers, opening the windows to allow fresh air into the house – if it is cold outside, then do this earlier for a short period before bringing the house up to a normal temperature. It needs to be a comfortable temperature. Banish any damp, musty smells from bathrooms, laundry, kitchens and pet bedding. Scented candles carefully placed in rooms can be very useful, but make sure they are natural like lavender, rose or thyme and nothing too sickly like vanilla, cinnamon or seashore. The word 'natural' is very important. Never use plug in air fresheners – they may even set off allergic reactions in people. Your home should be clean and tidy (even the windows should have been recently cleaned). If you have a dog, then make sure he doesn't bother visitors, and if you have young children, maybe arrange for them to go round to a friend's house while the viewing takes place. Turn on the lights and lamps, even in daylight.

We've all heard the stories of how the smell of freshly brewed coffee and freshly baked bread helps a home to sell, well embrace this! Finally, turn on some background music so it is softly playing in the kitchen or living room. It adds atmosphere but should not be too intrusive; even your music should be impersonal so no heavy metal! Something calming and non-descript is best.

So now, you've done all this, sit back have coffee, take a few deep breaths and listen to the calming music before the doorbell rings and your home viewers arrive!

If this sounds too much, then you can employ the professional skills of home staging experts.

Chrysalis Home Staging can do everything for you, so if you would like information on the service please call **0121 647 6709** (Mon-Fri 10am-5pm) or email: enquiries@chrysalisinteriordesign.com
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