

# What are pros, cons of using virtual staging to sell a home?

**T**oday, staging a home for sale can be done physically or virtually.

Physically staging a home usually requires hiring a professional stager to decorate a home by bringing in furniture and textiles, while virtual staging is a job for a skilled photo editor. Furniture and furnishings are added to the photos of an otherwise empty property; lighting fixtures may appear to be illuminated, and fireplaces roar with computer-generated coals and flames.

Even outdoor spaces may be virtually landscaped with flowerbeds, shrubs or green grass.

Both techniques achieve similar

results in that the property appears to be furnished, decorated or landscaped in photos. This is important because a majority of home buyers browse the internet and look through property photos before deciding which homes they want to visit. As a seller, you'll want to showcase your home in the best possible way so your property "makes the cut."

Most Realtors will tell you that it is more difficult to sell a vacant home than a furnished home. This is even more so when buyers are looking through photos of vacant rooms. Buyers need the furniture to visualize the space and see past the white walls. Stag-



ing — whether physical or virtual — makes spaces more inviting.

Over the past years, virtual staging has gained popularity. The main reason for that is economical. Physically staging a home can vary in cost from a few hundred to many thousands of dol-

lars, depending on the scope of the project. Virtual staging can be as little as \$100 per room, and the turnaround time is also fast. A home may be virtually staged in just two to three days, while physically staging a home takes more time and coordination.

However, virtual staging is not without its drawbacks. The main drawback is that the home may look good in photos, but when the buyer goes to tour the home and sees the empty rooms, it may be a letdown. There's a small risk that buyers may even see it as deceptive, since they may not realize that the home was virtually staged. It is always important to

disclose that photographs have been manipulated — with good intention — in this way. It may also be nice to offer "before and after" photos, showing them both the actual empty spaces alongside the virtually staged photos. That way, they can see the potential of each room and understand how they can be used.

With most buyers starting their searches online, property photos are important. Virtual staging is an economical way to enhance the way you showcase your home online.

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