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## Home staging can provide added edge in competitive market

BY YUDISLAIDY FERNÁNDEZ

With competition stiff in residential real estate sales, local interior designers are in high demand for their staging services, capable of turning an empty condo into a fully-furnished home in 24 hours.

Home staging gives real estate agents new tools and – possibly a needed edge – to market a home for rent or sale.

“People cannot visualize a home unstaged,” said home designer Monica Suleski, owner of Miami-based Eclectic Elements. “In this economy, people want to lowball you,” she said, so the way to get the best price is to make the house look good.

Staging services are commonly used by residential properties from mansions to condos, hotels and office spaces.

Ms. Suleski, who has been in the design business 20 years, says to prepare a home for sale or rent, professional stagers have to work with the layout of the home, eliminate clutter, and edit and arrange furniture to enhance the home’s appeal.

Designers focus on all the details, from the paint for interior walls to selecting furniture and lighting fixtures and decorative plants to dress up the space, she said.

Time also plays a factor.

With the rental market in an upswing, some real estate agents need homes to be staged within 24 hours, she said, because each day homeowners have a property Ne on the market they lose money.

To meet those deadlines, Ms.



Photo by Maxine Usdan

**Monica Suleski of Miami-based Eclectic Elements sees home staging as a way to make a house more appealing and garner a better price.**

Suleski has a warehouse where she keeps a large stock of modern and contemporary furniture. She also has a 20,000-square-foot showroom at 2227 Coral Way.

With a team of 20 designers working by her side, Ms. Suleski transforms properties in Coral Gables, Miami Beach and Bal Harbour as she stages properties ranging from \$200,000 to \$20 million in value.

But it’s not just developers and real estate agents who are keeping interior designers busy.

Ms. Suleski works with local production companies and networks, renting them luxury furniture for their programs such as Telemundo soap opera El Cartel and BET’s reality show CollegeHill.

While real estate agents are skilled at buying and selling

properties, not all have an eye for design and know what features of a house to accentuate.

“It has a huge impact on rent and buy because so many people are not visual; they need to see final products,” said Dina Goldentayer, a real estate professional with Keller Williams Miami Beach Realty. “It speeds up the time it takes to sell a property. When a space is empty, most people can’t picture themselves there.”

Ms. Goldentayer, who specializes in high-end residential properties in Miami Beach and Sunny Isles Beach, said she often encourages sellers to stage a residence before going into the market.

For owners seeking a quick sale and with zero budget for renovations, she said, furnishing the house can be more economical and help make the sale.

“The owner doesn’t have to renovate, but instead can dress the place without costing as much money or effort,” she said.

If the buyer wants to keep the furniture it can be added to the sale price, she added.



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