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# REAL OR RENDERED?

## STAGING COMPETITION

Over the past five years, browsing properties online has become a much more immersive experience. Potential new homes are often advertised with a huge gallery of photos and even the occasional virtual tour. Sometimes furnished by the vendor, others - as empty houses.

But according to The Home Staging Association, an empty property is less equipped to tap into the emotional side of buying a house. If a buyer can see themselves raising a family or enjoying a glass of wine by the fireplace, they are more likely to connect with the space and see it as their future home. An empty property only shows a shell, and most people can't visualise how that will work for them.

### REAL OR RENDERED?

So, it is clear that staging empty properties will help to sell a home faster, but should you be looking at traditional or CGI staging?

As the world leans ever further into digital technology, you might be tempted to choose a rendered staging platform, placing the scenes on your online advertisement so people can visualise themselves living there before they've even set foot in the property. There are certainly some benefits to this method, such as:

**Flexibility:** The CGI can be updated with the seasons and used in multiple advertising spots, giving it further visual impact.

**Cost:** It is cheaper than traditional staging and can be shared across social media for free.

Despite this, it is rarely enough to sell a home on its own and there are many disadvantages, including:

**Lack of interaction:** Buyers can't physically walk through the rendered space, forming that emotional engagement.

**Lack of trust:** Many buyers expect a digitally rendered property to offer an idealised view and won't rely on it as a trustworthy source. There is also the risk of buyers physically viewing the property and feeling disappointed / confused that it doesn't live up to their expectations of the CGI dream.

**Lack of confidence:** Potential buyers are more hesitant to make an offer as they question the property's true potential. Even if they do eventually make an offer, it will take them longer to make that decision.

So, how does this compare with traditional staging? While properly staging a property can cost more initially, it tends to have a greater return and impact, making that larger outlay an investment, not a cost. And whilst buyers will still have to visit the property to make that emotional connection - the benefits are incredible:

**Properties sell faster:** That emotional connection is a powerful thing, leading to people putting in offers much more quickly.

**Properties sell for more:** Traditional staging can imply a higher value, showing potential buyers that the property is ready to move in. The Home Staging Association reports that staging

can boost perceived value by between four and six percent, but some properties have seen offers of more than 15 percent above the asking price. The same report shows that staged properties have more viewings.

**There's no guesswork:** The mental load of working out where things will go is taken away from the buyer – they can see the best potential layout in front of them. While CGI images can attempt to do the same, when the buyer visits the property and finds it empty, they may feel disillusioned and disappointed.

**There's no need to compromise on property price:** Thinking of cutting your asking price to encourage a sale? Staging the property will likely cost less than that and can be more effective at getting a sale, saving you money in the long-run!

### EXPECTATION VS REALITY

The biggest drawback to rendered images is that reality rarely meets up to the expectation it sets. Melissa Yeadon from Swealthy Staging explains:

“CGI’s the fastest way to create confusion and a negative psychological state in a potential buyer (and as we know, a confused mind rarely buys!) Our aim at Swealthy Staging is to create ‘that’ environment where people walk in and say ‘WOW – I want to live here’, and honestly, we’re so proud to say that we do exactly that”.

Physical staging addresses potential sticking points. If a buyer likes a property but they can't work out where their dining table will fit, staging will show them exactly how it could work. This means they walk away with all their questions answered, promising a positive impression and showing them that the property is the right one for them. **It works on that emotional connection, making it more than just a visual tool – it's an investment that all sellers and buyers can benefit from.**

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