

Working with an Equipped CSP®

Written by Yolanda T. Tillman CSP Elite, with Christine Rae



What do the words *qualify, fit, prepare, ready, train, educate* have in common?

Webster's definition says they mean to provide the necessary materials or supplies, provide a feature or ability, or to make ready. In the real estate arena, this is what you will get when you work with an *Equipped CSP!*

Think how it can help your client.

Summer, 2017, Washington, D.C.: There were many properties on the market and lots of upwardly mobile millennials looking for their special place. Millennials are today's buyers; however there are things to consider when selling to this demographic. During the prestaging consultation, it is imperative updates to the property be addressed.

Fact: Many D.C. properties are outdated. Millennials want move-in ready homes, so, staging recommendations need to include fresh paint and lighting, updated kitchens and bathrooms, and removing excess furnishings. Sellers may not understand what needs to be done, who to call, or what the costs involved will be, let alone have a pool of contractors they can trust. Working with an equipped real estate stager benefits you and your clients because we have specialized training, know what to look for, what buyers are looking for, and have the resources to get the work done while increasing the seller's ROI.

I recently met with a client who was selling her deceased parent's property; after my prestaging consultation she was impressed with my wealth of knowledge and that I took the time to explain in detail how the three-step staging process works. I also explained the services I could provide at preferred rates and she hired me immediately.

A lot of preparation was needed before I could work my magic. We started with organizing the removal of the entire contents of her parent's house—over fifty-five years of belongings. Wallpaper was removed, repairs made and the whole house was repainted; you can imagine it was a very stressful and emotional time for her.

To show the true value of the property and ensure great photographs, it is important to have properties staged prior to marketing. Without showcasing, property does not show well in person or online. Buyers want turnkey properties, and 97% of them are looking online.



(Be sure to read the client testimonial for more.)

Agents should also be mindful of the preparation time required to get a property fully ready for the public! In this case, we were under the gun because the agent booked the photographer the morning of staging day, and couldn't change it. To facilitate that deadline, my team and I had to work through the night until 5:00 a.m. to meet that commitment! It was exhausting, and definitely more stress than necessary when a simple phone call would have prevented it. So please, before marketing, agent tours, open houses, or photographs check with the stager to ensure all major repairs and showcasing are completed.

After two days of preparation, my client's beautiful family home in the prominent neighborhood of Hillcrest, Washington, D.C., received multiple offers! Potential buyers were very pleased with the property itself and with the staging. It was listed at \$515,000 and sold for \$545,000! That's \$30,000 over the asking price. My client, without a doubt in her mind, said to me and others that if it had not been staged it would never have sold for that price. Oh, by the way, the buyer of this property is a female millennial—one of the fastest growing buyer demographics!

Real Estate Stager



CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

As a novice seller, I began the process of selling my parents' property. Several "stagers" sauntered through the house pointing out what to dispose of and what should stay. Several days later they emailed me their quotes with little detail. They were so impersonal I decided not to stage. Then I found Yolanda Tillman. She made an appointment like the others, but the similarities stopped there. At my parents' dining table, she presented a process we needed to follow. We discussed my budget, the pros and cons of staging, statistics of the effects of staging, plus the value of decluttering vs. staging. Yolanda said, "The cost of staging is less than your first price reduction." She told me, "Buyers are looking for turnkey properties." She noted what was important for me to do in the *CSP's Room Ready Handbook*; the list of priorities room by room was a great help. This was so different from my previous staging estimates. I was not "just another property." Yolanda listened and considered my values and budget, presenting a professional contract to meet my needs. Ms. Tillman and her impressive staff were courteous, prompt, and went beyond expectations to finish on time. When I shared pictures of the staging with a friend who was familiar with the house, they said, "Wow, which room is this?" Tiera Interiors, LLC transformed my childhood home into a marketable commodity! Three days after listing, the purchaser submitted a contract based on *viewing the staged house on the Internet*. Thanks to Ms. Tillman and her staff, and much to my surprise, the house sold for \$30,000 over asking! Very thrilled.

—S.Purcell

I was inspired by the Diana Ross song, "Reach out and touch somebody's hand. Make this world a better place if you can," and I created my own version for agents and their clients to strongly consider when securing staging services: "Reach out and touch an *equipped CSP stager's hand*, together we can make this real estate industry a better place. YES CSP can."

My client was so moved by seeing how staging plays a huge role in selling property that she has trained for her real estate license. Guess who her number one stager will be? Me! ■

Yolanda T. Tillman is the owner of Tiera Interiors, LLC, in Washington, D.C. You can read more about her and her business at www.tierainteriors.com.