

THE 2 TYPES

OF REAL ESTATE
AGENT IN THE
WORLD

PRESENTATION & STYLING

TIPS YOU CAN
USE WHEN YOUR
HOME IS ON
THE MARKET

THE EASIEST WAY

TO INCREASE
THE PERCEIVED
VALUE OF YOUR
HOME

PHOTOS OF YOUR HOME MATTER

IN REAL ESTATE

THE ULTIMATE REAL ESTATE MARKETING CAMPAIGN



THE GUIDE YOU NEED TO HELP YOU GET YOUR MARKETING RIGHT ... THE FIRST TIME!



THE ULTIMATE REAL ESTATE

MARKETING CAMPAIGN

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***The Ultimate Real Estate Marketing Campaign* is the guide you need to help you get your marketing right ... the first time!**

The process of selling your home can be hard work. Some properties can be on the market for months - even a year or two! There can be an endless number of open homes where you need to clean up your house week after week, pack up the kids for the morning and drive off, hoping that at least someone—anyone— will step through your front door while you're gone.

Fortunately it doesn't have to be that way.

The first step is to choose a real estate agent who knows that we live in a visual world and that this requires images of the highest quality when selling a home. Congratulations — this first part is already taken care of, as you have wisely chosen to speak with an agent who meets these criteria.

The second step is to present your home as well as it possibly can. This might require some hard work on your part, but our experience tells us that this step always delivers an excellent return on investment.

To help you with this *The Ultimate Real Estate Marketing Campaign* includes some cheap and easy styling tips you can use to help you achieve the best possible sale price for your home.

The third step is to engage the services of a first-class real estate photographer, such as Shane Cullen Photography here in Kalgoorlie Boulder. Just as you wouldn't hire a chemical engineer to design a bridge, or a general practitioner to perform heart surgery, so too you shouldn't use a photographer who normally shoots weddings to try and photograph your home. You want a specialist because you want it done properly the first time.

Who are we?

We are Shane Cullen Photography, owned and operated by ... Shane Cullen a Photographer that specialises in Real Estate & Architectural Photography based in Kalgoorlie Western Australia.

There are two types of real estate agent in the world — here's how to pick the right one

As real estate photographers, we've met a lot of different real estate agents, and we've found that there are two different types:

1. The Low-Quality Agent.

Some agents don't see that marketing is all about the return on investment, and so when it comes to photography they take the photos of the home themselves. But this creates a low quality marketing campaign, and positions the home as appealing to bargain buyers rather than value buyers.

Other agents recommend the cheapest photographer they can find. Maybe it's a case of those agents being cheap and expecting their vendors to be cheap, too. However, a good quality agent will take the time to explain the benefits of a first-class marketing campaign, and will insist on quality because they know it is in the best interest of their client to do so.

The way an agent presents their marketing campaigns tends to reflect their overall commitment to their job, but it also says much about their commitment to deliver the very best for their clients.

The end result is that the homeowner does not get the best possible sale price for their home, resulting in a loss of potentially thousands and thousands of dollars.

It can also take longer to sell the home, and that too can be an expensive and frustrating element that you just don't want to deal with when you are trying to move.

2. The Ultimate Professional.

If you list with a real estate agent who is the ultimate professional, they will engage the services of a high-quality photographer who owns and operates their own business and takes great care with all that they do.

Why does the ultimate professional work this way? It's because they value their clients and are prepared to work hard and invest wisely in order to deliver a great result for everyone.

But it's what the images say about this agent that is so important. It's clear from the effort they go to in order to prepare the perfect marketing campaign that an agent who is the ultimate professional will also deliver better service, a higher degree of care, superior selling and negotiating skills, and of course happier clients.

These are the things you are probably looking for in your real estate agent - it would certainly be important for me if I was selling my home.

So if you haven't yet decided which agent you'll engage to sell your home, consider the advantages that the "ultimate professional" could bring to you and your family in terms of the time on market and the sale price of your home. The choice you make could have a very big impact, in a very positive way.



This is the easiest way to increase the perceived value of your home

You can increase the perceived value of your home (how much it looks like it should be worth) by working with your agent to put together the perfect real estate marketing campaign.



Cleaning a home and styling it appropriately is a simple and effective method that ensures that any home for sale has greater appeal to an increased number of buyers.

However, in order to have potential buyers come through your home you need to give them a reason to take time out of their day to visit your property.

It is the photos you use in your marketing campaign, first and foremost, that either grabs the attention of a potential buyer or turns them away.

You only have 8 seconds

It's widely known in the real estate industry that in the first *eight seconds* of viewing your home, buyers will know if they are attracted or not. The

rest of the time spent inspecting your property will be based on those all-important first impressions.

It is therefore critically important that all of your images look absolutely top notch. And it's not just that the photos must be technically good. It is also important that your home is beautifully styled for each shot so that each image in your marketing campaign looks like it could belong in a home magazine.

When we meet a person for the first time, we form critical first impressions in those first few moments of meeting. That's probably what you did with your real estate agent and that's exactly what will happen when prospective buyers come to your home.

Looking for value: ugly vs classy

Let's say you're walking hand-in-hand through the restaurant precinct in town with your partner, looking for somewhere nice to eat. You're after fantastic food, great service, and a romantic place to spend the evening. Your partner suggested trying something new for a change, so you walk past each venue and give it the once over.

You don't know what the food is going to be like, but if the restaurant presents well and looks inviting, well, that's a pretty good start. The place with the beautifully prepared table setting and fine cotton tablecloths is probably going to produce tastier food than the one with the plastic tables and the sign that doesn't work properly, or at least that's what a lot of people are thinking.

Now let's suppose that each restaurant has a menu on display near the front door, and in comparing the ugly restaurant with the attractive one, you notice that the dishes are priced the same. You find it hard to believe this could be possible, but the expensive-looking, classy restaurant has the same meal prices as the poorly presented place next door.

So which one are you going to choose? It's not a hard decision. When you have two choices, priced the same, but one obviously looks like it has better *value*, then you are probably going to choose the one that looks like it *should* cost more than the other.

Whether people are buying a meal, or a home, they're still looking for the same thing: they want to get the most value for their dollar.

So when they are clicking through the listings online, or in a magazine, if there are two properties similarly priced, the property with the dark or ugly images is going to lose every time.

This is how to increase the perceived value of your home

You see, we live in a visual world, and a lot of assumptions are made about a restaurant — or a home that's up for sale — based purely on what we see when we walk past the front door, or see the photos.

When a home is marketed with magazine-quality professional photography, it suggests a home with better value because it looks like it should be worth more than the home with the ugly, horrible photos. That's something that any real estate agent or homeowner can use to their advantage.

Now imagine what a higher sale price could mean for you and your family.

Instead of coming in second at the auction for your dream home, maybe you could afford to be the highest bidder.

Perhaps you could invest that extra money into your child's education.

Or how about taking a holiday after you've moved house?

The flow on effects from achieving the highest possible sale price for your property in today's market are enormous. But you'll only get there with a great real estate agent and a fantastic marketing campaign!

Don't sell your home short.

You owe it to your family to give yourself every opportunity to achieve a premium result, and that starts with the one thing that impacts upon almost everything else in your marketing campaign — the photography of your home.

Presentation and styling tips that you can use to achieve the best possible price

Prior to your photography session or an open home, it's worth taking the time to thoroughly prepare your property inside and out. You want your home to look its absolute best, and that's because a well-presented home is your best chance at achieving the highest possible sale price.

So go through this checklist, tick things off as you go, and let's create a "dream come true" result for you and your family.

Outside

- ☐ Mow the grass and trim the edges (including the nature strip if it's a jungle).
- ☐ Clean the driveway. Remove fallen leaves.
- ☐ Weed flower beds.
- ☐ Trim bushes for easy access to entrance and for tidiness. Wash the house, de-cobweb etc. from the outside.
- ☐ Clean the windows outside as well as inside.
- ☐ Keep the garage in a neat and tidy condition.
- ☐ Keep the back door clutter-free.
- ☐ Clear any rubbish or junk lying in the yard.
- ☐ Consider setting up a table and chairs on a verandah or patio to suggest an outdoor leisure space.



Kitchen

- ☐ Clean taps and fittings to make them shine.
- ☐ Polish counters, cabinets and other furniture around your kitchen.
- ☐ Clean the floor. If it is high-gloss type flooring, make sure it shines!
- ☐ Cupboard doors must be cleaned thoroughly.
- ☐ Clean all the surface equipment in your kitchen.
- ☐ Clean the casing of the refrigerator and dishwasher and any other equipment.
- ☐ Make the stovetop shine.
- ☐ Shop appliances (toaster, juicer, mixer etc) away in cupboards to enhance the impression of cleanliness and bench room. It will make your kitchen look bigger.

Bathroom and Toilet

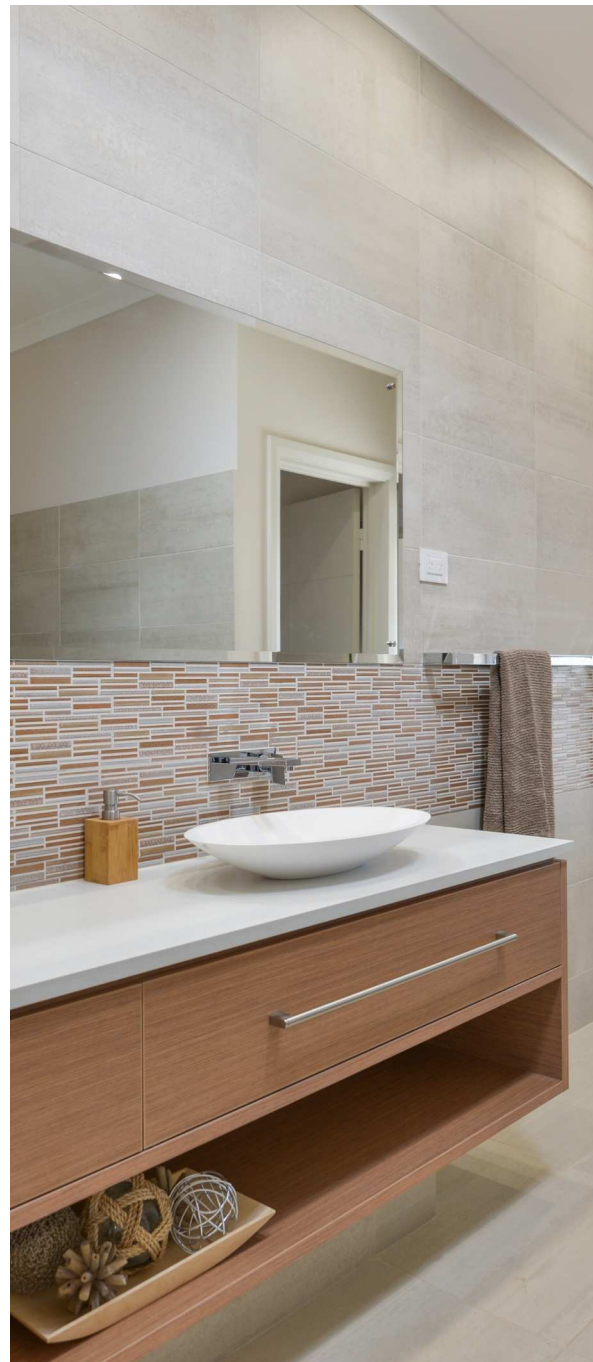
- ❑ Clean and polish all taps and fittings.
- ❑ Clean and polish basin and bath.
- ❑ Clean and scrub shower recess.
- ❑ Clean toilet seat and inside toilet.
- ❑ Hang up your best towels and hand towels etc.

Laundry

- ❑ This is frequently one of our dingiest rooms – try to lighten and brighten it by decluttering and potentially even repainting.
- ❑ Polish the tub.
- ❑ Clean the surface of the washing machine.
- ❑ Put dirty clothes away.
- ❑ Put ironing board away.
- ❑ Find new homes for any randomly dumped items.

Bedrooms

- ❑ Make beds before leaving your house each day.
- ❑ Ensure windowsills are clean and curtains are washed.
- ❑ Keep your wardrobes and drawers tidy.
- ❑ Be open to prospective buyers wanting to inspect the entire bedroom.



Living Room

- ☐ Keep it tidy.
- ☐ Remove all clutter.
- ☐ Make sure curtains and drapes are washed and tidy.
- ☐ Potted plants that have not been taken care of should be removed.
- ☐ Buy new plants if required and cluster them together to minimise clutter. It's a cheap investment for an ultimately far greater return.

Dining Room

- ☐ Keep your table well-polished.
- ☐ If your table is ugly or in disrepair – cover it with a good tablecloth.
- ☐ Place flowers or attractive candles on the table.
- ☐ Keep this area clutter-free.

General

- ☐ Place potted plants wherever required. It adds glow and vibrancy to your house and also makes it look like a prosperous place to live in.



- Provide the house with good natural light. Let as much natural light into your home as possible (except perhaps when the Western sun is belting down on a stinking hot summer afternoon!).

Cosmetic Improvements

In addition to all of the above, consider:

- Repainting walls.
- Re-doing the furniture, or even putting some in storage if your home is currently stuffed to capacity.

Ask yourself – would you want to buy anything broken, dirty and in disrepair? No one wants to purchase a problem unless they get bargain basement prices!

Colour Schemes

If you're uncertain about which colour schemes to choose, stick to neutral. Or, if you yearn to be more daring, check out the latest home decorating magazines for contemporary trends.

Even if your tastes range to a combination of salmon-pink walls with a puce trim, try to remember – we're not selling your home to you!



Here's your five second 'Where do I look for what to repair again?' checklist!

- ☐ Floors and ceiling.
- ☐ Bathroom and kitchen fittings.
- ☐ Lighting and ventilation.
- ☐ Doors and windows.
- ☐ Paint – both on the inside and outside.
- ☐ Drainage system around the house.
- ☐ Condition of driveway and walkway.

The Sweetest Sight – a SOLD Sign!

If you're serious about selling your home quickly and for top dollar, and if you put into place the majority of the styling suggestions listed in this guide — then you are going to be streaks ahead in the real estate game.

You will have given your home that critical extra advantage to attract a greater pool of potential buyers who'll **JUST HAVE TO BUY IT!**

So if you're muttering away while fixing that creaky cupboard, or polishing the stovetop, or placing a bunch of fresh flowers in a vase, or replacing the cracked light shade... just picture that **SOLD** sign being hammered outside your home! Your efforts will pay off many times over!







Can magazine-quality photography help you?

There is enormous power in the use of great photography. There was once a buyer (we'll call her Sue) who talked about seeing photos of a home which attracted her attention. Sue thought the home looked great, and she started making notes about the address to add to her list of homes to visit the following Saturday morning.

However, she soon realised that she had already been to that particular house with another agent but had quickly decided that the property was not for her. When the home was on the market a couple of months earlier the previous real estate agent had used their own ordinary photos, and they made the property look small and dark! And so when Sue visited the home, she had it in her head that the home really was dark and ugly, and after a quick look around she decided that the home really was as bad as it looked in those photos.

Or so she thought.

Now Sue was being drawn to it again, but this time with a different opinion of the home. The new real estate agent had brought in a high quality photographer, and the new photos they had taken made the home look bright and spacious, and not the small, dark property that Sue thought it was.

Returning to the home for a second open day, Sue went in expecting something better. The photos had given her a fresh perspective, and she saw the

home in a different light. This time she was able to see how ideal this home was for her and her family, so they put in an offer and bought the home. What a turn around!

This was a sad lesson for the owner of the home, who could have sold their home two months earlier, and would not have gone through the disruption and frustration of having their home on the market for so long. It was also unfortunate for the previous real estate agent who missed out on a sale, simply because they used photos that did not sell.

The moral of the story is that people will look through a property with certain preconceived ideas based on the photos they have seen.

If a home looks ordinary in the photos, the buyers will expect to find an ordinary home and to pay an average price.

But if it looks great, then buyers will expect to pay top dollar. And when you're selling your home, that's exactly what you want!

“ ... The photos had given her a fresh perspective, and she saw the home in a different light.

Courtesy of Forbes Magazine:

Photos of your home matter in real estate

Before the days of the Internet and online real estate listings, a buyer's first impression of a new home for sale was often the "drive by." An agent would see the new listing in his real estate book and would call or fax the buyer with the address. The buyer would then go to the address and drive by to get a first look. Or, if a buyer was just starting to look, he would read a brief description of the home in the Sunday paper and decide whether or not to attend that day's open house.

Either way, curb appeal mattered because it was usually the first glimpse a potential buyer would have of a property. If there were weeds, dead grass, peeling paint or rusty nails that stood out, the buyer's first impression of the home was tarnished — no matter how great it looked inside. That's why real estate agents worked closely with sellers on curb appeal before going on the market.

Curb appeal will always be important, but today, buyers are busier than ever and may not have the opportunity to do a drive by (unless they're seriously interested). Instead, the first impression buyers most often get of a home is from the photos in the MLS listing, which they automatically receive in an email from their agent, or the pictures that accompany an online listing. With limited time and countless listings to review, buyers will quickly move on if photos don't reflect well on a property.

Proper equipment

Properly lit, high-resolution photos are the only type



of pictures that should be used in a home marketing campaign. Like any other sales effort, it's important to put your best foot forward. If an agent takes property photos with a smartphone, it's often a red flag to buyers. Smartphone pictures are fine for informally sending photos quickly back and forth between agent and buyer, but they can't measure up to the quality of pictures taken by an experienced photographer with a good camera.

Don't have photos of the property yet? Don't list the home until you do. With so much information available online these days, you only have a few seconds to grab potential buyers' attention. If they do an Internet search or check the MLS email and your home is listed without pictures, there isn't anything for them to look at. Buyers will likely move on and probably won't come back.

Staging and prep

Because of the importance of a good first impression, sellers and their agents should spend as much time and energy on the photo shoot as they do on creating curb appeal or staging an open house. This means planning the shoot well in advance, sometimes as much as a week.

As a seller, you know when your home gets the best natural light. Make sure the photos are shot during those times. Have the home fully cleaned and in top shape before the shoot, too. As with an open house, clear out all the children's and pet's toys and fully declutter the home. Imagine the photo shoots retailers and catalog companies do to showcase their products. Would they release a

catalog with photos of stained living room furniture or with improper lighting? Of course not — and neither should a seller. A home is a product for sale, just like any other, and should be marketed as such.

Lasting impression

Often, after buyers have toured your home, they return to their computers and look at the property again online. This time, they can put together the floor plan and understand how the home flows and how each room relates to the next. High-quality photos that show the home well will keep them interested, perhaps even encourage them to go take another look. On the other hand, if you cleaned your home before the open house and got the buyer in the door, but then they go back and look at dark photos online or see imperfections, you can easily turn them off.

If you or your agent don't have a good-quality camera and real estate photography experience, consider hiring a professional who does. While it's another expense, consider this: When you put a home on the market, you're competing against lots of other properties. If those properties are highlighted with attractive, well-lit photos and yours isn't, you're going to have more trouble getting potential buyers in the door. This could cause your home to sit on the market longer than it would have otherwise — making what would be seen as a “fresh” property look stale.

This article was originally featured at:
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/zillow/2012/11/20/photos-of-your-home-matter-in-real-estate/>

What will happen on the day of the photo shoot?

Here's an outline of what you can expect from Shane Cullen Photography on the day of your photo shoot:

The photographer from Shane Cullen Photography will arrive at the property within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time. If we think we might be earlier or later than that, we will call to inform you or your real estate agent of our expected arrival time.

Assuming that we are photographing the entire property, we will often work through the interior of the property first to ensure that everything is suitably prepared for the exterior shots. Although some homes have unique requirements, we will generally photograph the main living areas (lounge and dining), kitchen, bathroom, and master bedroom, taking multiple angles in rooms as needed. There are also times when we will photograph all of the bedrooms, though you are welcome to advise us on your preference with this.

When it comes to shooting the front of the property,



we will photograph the home from its best angle. Where possible, we will also present the front of the property so that it looks as good as it possibly can. Any assistance you can offer to ensure the exterior of the home looks great would be greatly appreciated. For instance if rubbish bins generally sit next to your property in full view from the street, it would help us if you could hide them in the garage or somewhere out of sight.

After the shoot

Once we have finished photographing the property, we take the images back to our office and individually process each photo. We are very, very careful with our processing, and we incorporate some unique methods to ensure a top-quality result.

For example, if it is an overcast day then we will do a sky replacement, giving you a nice blue sky. Or if the grass is looking a little brown we will make it look green again.

In fact, we will spend just as long, or longer, processing all of the images as we do on-site doing the photography.

Delivery of the photos

After processing, we will deliver all of the images to the real estate agent via email, and they will then go through the images with you to prepare the ultimate marketing campaign.



Who relies on Shane Cullen Photography?

Some people appreciate quality and style, and they recognize the value in spending a little more to achieve a better end result.



There are some people who will not purchase the cheapest item they can find, but rather they educate themselves and source the "thing" (whether it's a product or a service) that will deliver them the highest value. Maybe the "thing" will last longer, or look better, depreciate less, or provide a better return on investment.

When it comes to real estate agents choosing a photographer to work with them, the type of agents who use Shane Cullen Photography are those who seek to deliver a successful result for their clients no matter what the investment is in terms of cost. These agents know that beautiful images are one of the key ingredients that will deliver that success.

Why? Because these agents know that if their properties look great in the photos, then they are going to attract a flood of people to their open homes.

Whilst other homes in the area will have just a couple of parties through on open days, these real

estate agents will have a crowd. And by attracting so many potential buyers, they are far more likely to achieve a brilliant result.

When it comes to the homeowner, the type of people who rely on Shane Cullen Photography are the people who know that it's worth presenting their "castle" in the best possible light. Whether they are doctors, plumbers, single mums or sports stars, these are the people who want to be proud of the way their home looks online and in any other marketing material.

When friends and relatives interstate or overseas ask to see what the photos of their home look like, they want to be happy to show them. They won't settle for average images. They want the best, and they want to be able to show their family and friends just how fantastic their home can look.

These are the people who rely on Shane Cullen Photography.

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