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Articles	Departments	Events	The Scene	Relocation Guide	Subscribe Free	Newsletters	eBrochures	Contests
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- [After Hours](#)
- [Assignment Shop](#)
- [Business Basics](#)
- [Business Class](#)
- [D.C. Digest](#)
- [From The Editor](#)
- [In The Green](#)
- [Leading Question](#)
- [Marketing Matters](#)
- [Office Politics](#)
- [On The Job](#)
- [Ranked](#)
- [Shop Talk](#)
- [Sold!](#)
- [The Power Players](#)
- [Tools of The Trade](#)
- [Welcome To The Workforce](#)

Articles > Past Issues > 2011 > April 2011 > On The Job

On The Job

Staging a Comeback

Author: Kristie Aronow

When properties are wasting away on the market, one woman in Southwest Florida is eager to help turn distressed digs into handsome homes. *Xiomara (see-oh-mahra) Martinez is the founder and CEO of HomeX Décor, a professional home-staging company. (Home staging is the act of turning properties that are unappealing, whether it is from wear or from bad taste, into something that people can fall in love with, she says.) Martinez has been in the business for 16 years, and she has been a real estate investor since 1994. But she pulls from her experiences as former owner of a construction company and her work in merchandising to help run her current business. She lives on Marco Island with her daughter.*



What are some of the first things you look to fix as a stager?

One is the curb appeal. If it's neglected, then you know the inside is neglected. The living room is the second most important for me because that's where the people come in. They step into the living room and if they don't like it, [then] they automatically step-out.

What are some tricks you use to help beautify a property?

The first thing I do when I get a house is fix the outside front. It doesn't necessarily mean that you have to make a big change; just clean the dead trees, dead plants, put in a little mulch [and] clean the front door. Those are the little things and then adding a little plant. Once I do that, then I step in and I'll go to the individual rooms depending on what they need or what the customer requires.

What challenges do you face as a stager?

Page 1 of 2

< < 1 - 2 > >



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