

TruTalk Episode Four Catch Staging

[00:00:00] You are listening to the TruTalk Podcast, the place for real insights on real estate with real people. In today's episode, we're talking to Kris Bhend and Tiffany White of Catch Staging.

Welcome ladies. Well, thank you, Matt. Appreciate it. Thank, happy to be here. Uh, first question, have you ever been on a podcast before? No, I have not. First time. Oh, I love it. All right. This is good cuz this is my, I'm a veteran. This is my fourth podcast, , so I would consider myself a veteran. Uh, okay. Today we're talking about one of my favorite things that I discovered.

very up close and personal this year. The benefits of staging and your amazing [00:01:00] staging company, which is, give me the formal title, it's Catch Staging Consultants, right? Or is it just CATCH staging? Catch Staging and Consultant. Yeah. Or consulting. Right? Yeah, but it's really just catch staging. That's our handle.

Yeah. Yeah. Catchy name. Okay. Um, did we, did we catch your eye? Yes. Yes. You caught my eye. Thank you. So this past year I sold a house and Tiff, of course, you helped me with it and it was an amazing experience, but part of that experience was seeing Kris pull up in her pickup truck with all the stuff. And I want to talk about that, you know, here in a bit.

But let's just talk about how. You know, catch staging came about and what's the origin story for your little venture? Sure. Well, let me start, like I said, it all started in 72. . . Totally kidding. I wasn't born yet in the younger one. Oh, whatever. Braggadocious. . Um, okay, so, [00:02:00] so Kris had been a stager many moons ago, and I, of course am an agent, a broker, and I had used Kris and.

we just hit it off. We really hit it off and she was super talented. Still is. And um, we kept in touch and then I just became more and more of a listing agent and decided to stage all my listings mm-hmm. as a service to my clients. Mm-hmm. . And then, um, we just decided to start a company called Catch Staging.

And it, and the rest is history that it is, yeah. And can I just say this? It's a, um, staging company with occupied. I mean, we'll do vacant, but the, the real hole in the market was staging occupied homes. Yeah, I guess that's a good point. Um, mine was an occupied home and we had to stage it. We'll get to that in a second.

So, Kris, do you have a background in interior? Does sound like, how did you guys get to this point? Yeah, I just grew up in construction. My dad was in construction. We [00:03:00] flipped houses. I just, my whole. Go to houses, tour them, architecture. Every city we go to, all those historical tours I'm in on all of those.

Oh yeah. Yeah. I just love it. Naturally talented. Yeah. And I've built 10 houses of my own. Wait a minute, you built 10 houses of your own. That seems like its own podcasts right there. Yeah, well that's why my family loves that I'm doing this now cuz it fills my itch of continuously redesigning homes, . So at least they don't have to move.

So Tiff, you've mentioned that you decided for all your listings you were gonna stage. Yes. Are you saying you don't ask them about it? Like what, what, how stern are you when it comes to this? How, how much do you put your foot down and say like, we need to stage your, your home? Well, listen, I mean, it is a service and it's all about making people feel comfortable for sure.

But, but I think, um, once I show before and after photos or, um, we go through the numbers of, [00:04:00] okay, if we do this, this, and. We could likely sell for this, this, you know, it's, um, but it's, at the end of the day, it's, it's their comfort level, it's their convenience, it's their life. Um, so do I present the option?

Absolutely. So it's not, it's not a must strong arm kind of situation. Most of my clients absolutely take advantage of the service. Um, it is, it. . It's actually really amazing. I mean, most of 'em say they don't wanna leave once we get finished with the staging process. Like definitely an hd hd Absolutely. TV show where they fix up the house.

Yeah. And then you decide you don't wanna sell it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And so again, it's really fun. I mean, we try to make it fun and less nerve-wracking process for our, our clients. Well, let's talk about my experience. So my experience was, as a complete surprise. We went under contract on a new home and we had to sell my house of 23 years.

So as you know, people could, [00:05:00] might imagine that's a challenge. Like I have a, a house that, you know, has been mine for a long time and is full of two little tiny children and lots of guitars and we had to figure that out. And so it was a no-brainer because I trusted you and whatever you. that I needed to do to sell my house.

I was gonna, I was gonna do, but I have to be honest, when we made all the changes, we, we got all of a lot of our stuff out of the house. We got it set for staging, and then you and Kris came in and staged. It was an amazing experience because I had been working on that house to get it in that shape for 23 years.

But when the staging was complete and we had the professional photos that were done, Those photos because I'm very sentimental and you know, that's the house where my kids were born and where, you know, I got married, you know, I met my wife when I was living in that house. My whole life has taken place in that house to have those pictures of that fully [00:06:00] staged house and that those pictures show it as like the ideal version of.

of, you know, what the house can look like when I'm walking through the house after you guys staged it. I totally get it. like, it doesn't look like the house that we typically live in. It looks like the house of the future, and it shows what the house is going to look like for the new owners, and it was very transformative and it was.

I mean, those pictures are a treasure for us. Like, we'll, I, I, I go back and look at 'em all the time, and the staging plays a key role because it doesn't have like messy kid stuff everywhere. Yeah, yeah. And everything's in perfect, pristine condition. That's right. And I'm the biggest fan. So, I mean, what do you see from, from clients?

What do they say? Yeah, that's the goal. Go ahead. Yeah. That is the goal. Um, because when you're living in a . . It's kind of like the commercial where we go nose blind thing. I say we go house blind, we can't see. We don't see the clutter. Or see that little red and black thing [00:07:00] that's just sticking over there in the corner that we shoved there.

You know, a dog toy, the kids' toys. Yeah, just life, right? Yeah. Yeah. And so we're trying to show your home in its best light cuz this is a product that we're selling that is the. That is the, we want to show the product in the best light. You know, what kind of cool architecture do you have? Do you have an awesome view?

Like that's where we wanna take the buyer's eye. That's, we want them to fall in love. Yeah. And there's no way to prove you get top dollar, it's be tough to prove that, but from my perspective, like it's, it's a, it's a given, like Right. The house that shows better is gonna sell and is gonna be more attractive.

The difference, and, and, and you guys know this, like the difference from having, let's say you get three offer. the difference when having three offers and five offers because of staging to in your world mm-hmm. is mm-hmm. like night and day. So, I mean, bet it's, it's such a great service and having lived through it, I mean, it's kind of a no-brainer.

So I hope people understand that. So, , [00:08:00] what is the typical, like how does the process work for staging? What's the, what's the day like? That's, that's my question. All right. So first of all, you saw me pull up with my truck Yes. Kind of skipping ahead. So I have to start with Pilates cuz it takes some muscles to carry all that stuff.

For sure. In and out . Exactly. Um, so we go to the house the first time, as you know, fresh eyes looking for things. Are going to show it off in its best light. Mm-hmm. . So we take all the stuff that you need to remove. Um, if we have a small room, what are we gonna do with that room? Do we have an awkward space, a really big loft that we need to, you know, give it a function so Right.

That it makes someone be like, oh, this is exactly what I'm gonna do with this room. Right. Then once we leave there, basically we come up with a game plan of what we wanna bring into the house. We have a huge w. Full of stuff. And since we specialize in occupied homes, uh, vacant homes are [00:09:00] easy. Right? We could go in, we can make it look like something out of a magazine.

Mm-hmm. , because it's all fresh. It's all empty. Canvas, empty, empty canvas, nothing there. We can go with whatever colors we want, , but when we have to work with Grandma's purple couch, that's a different, that's a different story, man. Yeah, we'll get to that in a second. I've got so many questions about that.

you, but Kris, you skipped over one of my favorite. Parts of this process. You guys went around and you put stickers? Oh, yeah. We put stickers on every single thing in my house to tell me what is gonna stay and what has to go. We do, we do, and we, we literally like had to go and buy a storage facility just to based on, oh, we, oh, oh, okay.

We need, we're getting rid of. And there was even some things like I thought, oh, that's for sure. Say like my office with the desk and everything's black mat and I, and I said, oh, we're leaving this. And Tiff goes, Nope, get that outta here right now, . And she was right because it showed so much better on the other side.

It didn't look like. [00:10:00] a man's Mac, black, Matt Black office that has got guitars in it or stuff like that. It looked like mm-hmm. , the office that the new owner was gonna have in their house. Mm-hmm. . Exactly. Yeah. Because we are appealing to everybody. Yes. And we use the stickers because it's easy. Right. This is an overwhelming process, can be getting ready to sell your home.

And so if you just have to walk in a room, follow our stickers, sometimes like, you know, we write little notes to you. Yes. Maybe made it's so easy that, or. Yeah. Makes it easy. Yes. Yeah. And there's, there's one aspect of this I really want to bring out. We, my wife and I, were sitting back, you put outdoor furniture at our house, which we didn't have in this particular area, out on the patio.

And we were sitting there and we, it occurred to us why this is so familiar when you go and stay at an Airbnb, it's all staged perfectly. Like it looks like a beach resort or a mountain house or whatever, like we're used to this. This. Oh, look, it's perfectly done. Like it's designed this way to be inviting for us, and that's what it felt like living in our own home.

Like, oh, [00:11:00] everything's stay, just like being on a vacation . That's right. That's, that's what we're trying to create. We need those buyers in here. All right, so I remember that day came where you switch everything out. So you, all my stuff is out. And then you have, when it's an occupied home, you don't have the blank canvas.

But if I, if the, if the client has done their job, like I did. You did. Like if the client has done their job and got all the stuff with stickers out of the house, then you come in and you've got the plan. You went and designed it. Right? Do you have like a warehouse where you keep all this stuff and like how many houses do you have at a time and are you constantly acquiring?

I'm very curious about all these things. That is, are great questions. Not often do we get these questions. We do. We have a huge warehouse. . Um, and it's growing by the minute it seems . Yeah, that would be my fault. Yeah. I'm the shopper. And so do you have to constantly be on the lookout for items that, or do, do you see items everywhere?

Like, oh, I'm at a so-and-so store on South Boulevard, and I say, oh, that we gotta have it like, Just constantly, sometimes. I mean, we hone, [00:12:00] we, we work with a lot of neutrals, but, but we also have to work with some colors to bring in the continuity for the rooms. Like I said, grandma's purple couch.

Yes. Um, we try to turn tone that down because, you know, not everyone can get a storage unit and we, we just work with what is there.

Mm-hmm. oftentimes we'll put it in the garage, but, um, but yeah, so our, we have a huge storage room and we have a good. And we go back to that storage facility and we just start tagging our own things of what's gonna work. We have to, there's a lot of juggling because we don't just have one job. We have lots of jobs and, um, and they're coming and going and what else?

Yeah, I mean, it's just, I mean, we high five each other so much. , I mean, it is so fun. It's gotta be fun. I have to be honest. Like seeing you pull up in the pickup, like I was, I had to come in and do mortgages that day. So I mean, it looked like that was a lot more fun to be, yeah, to be honest with you. So I wanna talk about the difference between, let's say you have an occupied house and it's [00:13:00] set up and staged, but somebody's living in there.

Back when we sold my house, the time was compressed. Like we'd go in the market and try to have it under contract. Now we're kind of living in a more normal market. What, what's that? Like you, you stage in a house and it might be on the market for weeks and they have to live in it. Staged, like how does that work?

Yeah, that's exactly how it works. Yeah, they do. They live in it. Staged. Mm-hmm. . And every time there's a showing that comes. They know the drill. They make it try to, I mean, they try to make it look like no one's living there. That's always like, you know, the goal, like it's a model home. And, um, yeah. And all of our clients are very conscientious, very respectful.

Mm-hmm. , I mean, they, they know, they take care of our things so. , and it's not like it's over cluttered with staging. That's the whole point is you've got what in there, what actually works to the eye, but not too much. Right, right. Yeah, no, absolutely. Because we're selling the house, so we don't want them caught up in the things we want to feel great.

Which is why like one of the tricks Tiff was talking about was color, right? So we, we the same color [00:14:00] throughout the whole. I mean, when you walk through a model home, that's exactly what happens. Yeah. And the photos. And the photos, yeah. Mm-hmm. . All right. So that's one of my questions. So that's by design.

You want to be as neutral as you, you want to take away. . And I think that's part of what I learned about my office. Like my office had a lot of personality.

Yeah. You were trying to take that personality away. You don't want it to be so specific. You want it to be as kind of neutral and not, I don't wanna say boring, but you want to neutral, I guess is the word.

Well, we're appealing to, you know, the farmer in Montana that may come, the guy from wall. , you know, that comes from Manhattan and literally everywhere in between. Yeah. And so, yeah, that's why we just use kind of neutral, tried and true appeals to everyone. Like, it may not be their exact style, but they'll walk in and they can be, they can appreciate it.

Yeah. It'll be like airy. Um, and because buyers, you know, we wanna make it easy for 'em, sometimes they cannot see through [00:15:00] a green paint or a taste specific, um, piece of. . So, um, you'd be surprised. I do hear, I hear what they're saying when I'm walking through the home, so we wanna make it easy for 'em. So you mentioned light air.

Yeah. And I know that's kind of, as my wife would say on trend right now, , but do you, do you think that that will always be the way? Like do you, would you foresee a day when we would like, want to have darker, lush tones in the staging world? Or is there always gonna be. this way. When you say, well, it's funny you should ask because 2023, a lot of the tones are those deep tones.

Um, and that's okay as long as is, it's not the entire home. It might be an accent wall. Mm-hmm. , it might be a, um, you know, a piece of furniture that we can work off of mm-hmm. , um, with those pops of color. But overall, um, overall, it's a very psychological process for the buyer, and they do prefer light, airy, spacious.

Yeah. Would you not agree my [00:16:00] friend? A hundred percent. Thank you. people can always, I think imagine like darkening a space up. Yeah. Yes. It's hard to imagine light lightening a space up. Absolutely. I've had buyers walk into a home and it's painted green and I, no, can't do this. All right. And it's just paint you, you bring up a good issue.

All right, so when you are listing a home and it's got, let's just say some eclectic paint choices. , do you, do you repaint it? Like how, how far are you willing to go? We advise and we recommend, and we have wonderful painters, and paint is so easy. It's a fast process. It's relatively cheap. The return on your investment is huge, and it's got the biggest impact for your button, right.

Changes the whole feel it. It is amazing to me that with all the HGTV and home improvement stuff that people have watched, I'm sure you still get comments

like, oh, I don't [00:17:00] like that house. The colors are all wrong. And you have to combat that like you know you can. That's one day like you're done. Yeah.

That's the easiest thing in the world, right? That SRUs paint can be on in a second. What are you talking about? Right. But just like you mentioned now there's a little bit more competition, there's more homes for the buyer. . Mm-hmm. , right? Mm-hmm. . Yep. So what is the most fun part of the job and when it comes to staging?

I mean, besides being together, . Yeah. This one right here just cracks me up and we are polar opposites. Um, but the process, I mean, yeah, like, you know, , I mean, your home was awesome, but just seeing where it was. Mm-hmm. to like living with two little kids. Mm-hmm. and a bit two busy humans. Mm-hmm. , um, to, to the pictures.

Yeah. I mean, the process is just so awesome. It's rewarding Yeah. Every time. Yeah. And then it never disappoints the success rate. Yeah. It, it completely works. But it's also, I can imagine the payoff that you get is every house is different and you get a new project every [00:18:00] time. It's not the same. Yeah.

They're, yeah. Never a lot. Personality is different. I mean, sometimes a lot more handholding. Yes. Some people are like, oh, do what you want. I get it. Um, it, it just, yeah. So every time is different. And so favorite part honestly, is probably just having someone awesome to go through it. Um, and then just that we are people pleasers and people, people, people.

Yeah. You know, and it's a people business. It's the best part. Yeah. It's never the same. Yeah. And she doesn't mind that I'm late all the time. . Yeah. Yeah. Listen, I, I, it allows for I lot out loud Starbucks. I'm on my hand as a look. I share business with people who are late all the time too. So I know you're paying Kris

Um, so what's the, what's the toughest part? We talked about how fun it is, but what's the toughest part? . Well, it's a people business. , like we said, , right? , same answer. That's right. So it's managing, it's people managing and it can be emotional. Yeah. Are you with me on that? [00:19:00] Absolutely. Yeah. It's an emotional thing, right, Matt?

Yeah. It, it is. Um, when you're talking about somebody's home that they're, like, like I was so sentimentally attached to. Yeah. It's uh, it's tough to see it like

taken into the hands of somebody else. Yes. But it's also super fun cuz by that time, if you're listing the house, you are, you know, you're selling the house, you're trying to move on from that house.

And so, you know, it's part of the process. Absolutely. The memories go with you, but it's now going from your home to a product. Yeah. So that, that transition can be tough sometimes. Yeah. But it's tricky. How many houses can you have staged at once no more? Right? Like, what's the capacity? Like I, I'm so fascinated by just the logistics, like, have you thought about getting a bigger truck?

I mean, there are days I'm getting a truck now. Yeah. . Yeah. I didn't wanna say that. Are we gonna, cause then all of a sudden everyone's best friend when you've got a a, a truck. But yeah, you can't let that get out. Yeah. Sorry. Cut that everybody. Yes, [00:20:00] exactly. Exactly. I mean, I think at the height we had around 40 and that.

Plenty to manage. I thought you were gonna say four. Oh, . Remember? Some are, you know, summer's just hard. Yeah. And others are much more intense as far as furniture and, yeah. So, you know, there's different levels. Gosh, you do have a big warehouse. We manage, we manage it. Wow. That is fantastic. Um, so how do you stay organized in with, with all that?

Because, Do, do you ever switch things out of one house and put it in the other house? Like, oh, this is perfect for this and you, are you changing it once you get a house stage or is it all set? Well, so you're assuming that we're organized, right? Um, I don't, have you seen her truck? Have you seen my purse?

Um, I works too. Yeah. No, a lot of old fashioned Uhhuh. , yeah. Um, that when we go into a house, usually, you know, Generally a few days or at least a week before we stage, we give them some time to do their part. Mm-hmm. . Um, so [00:21:00] I will hold back some things in the warehouse if I know like a hundred percent, like yes, it would look good in this house, but oh my gosh, it's so perfect to work for this house we have coming up, but we don't really switch it out.

Um, but that's part of how we've structured our, I. Is that it's all pretty interchangeable. Yeah. And if we know that, like we have one, one great picture that we call Gloria, and we have like six Glorias because they, she works so many places. You know what I'm saying? Sorry. Yes, 100%. Do we not love Gloria?

We, yeah, Gloria. And so, you know, we have a lot of things that, that work. You know, we just, like the pair of shoes you love, you wanna get a couple pairs. That's same with us, but these things work, but they also blend into the background and don't take away from the showing that's right. Of the house. I'm sure.

That's right. That's, that's interesting. So what are the trends that you try to stay, like what, what are the trends right now in staging? Like what, what are you trying to do specifically? Like, , what is it that other [00:22:00] than light area, is there anything else? One of the things I noticed is that you guys put art over our toilets, and that was a big game changer, , because we had never thought about that.

And then when Courtney and I were like, uh, we need art over every toilet. And so now in the new house, we, we have art over every single toilet. That's awesome. Who wants to look at a toilet? I don't know what I've been doing with my life all these years, right? Yes. Nobody wants to look at that. Yes, there's art.

What else? That's funny. What, other than art over toilets, what are the big, can you think of anything? Uh, the colors, the color trends, Elle, you know. Yeah. Right. Yeah. So we'll start using some of the color trends. Far as a pop of color. Yeah. Here or there. Yeah. Yeah. Um, while we do stay neutral, you do have to stay on trend.

That's why our inventory is always changing and shifting and, you know mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. but not too trendy. Correct. Yeah. We are not going trendy. You don't wanna be on the forefront of the trends can be taste specific. Exactly. We really wanna, [00:23:00] wanna stay clear of the taste. . Do you, if you have like a, like let's say somebody has a house, let's say it's in South Charlotte, but it's like on a golf course and they've lean, leaned into this sort of resort vibe.

Are you gonna lean into that with staging? Is that something that you want to do or you want to still always remain just completely neutral? ? Oh, gosh, that's a good question. We just, we, we try to take it back to as neutral as possible. Mm-hmm. , uh, we have to embrace what they've got. Mm-hmm. , because otherwise you're not, you're messing with the continuity, right?

Mm-hmm. , but we have to kind of bring it back into the middle. You know, our job is to market to as many people as possible. Mm-hmm. to have it appeal to as many people as possible. So, um, it's a great question. And another thing we do and, um, because I'm the, I have the benefit of, of seeing what's on the market through my realtor site, is I do see what our competition is.

Um, and so sometimes that might bring us some insight. Um, if, if they have a sunroom and our competition doesn't, you know, we [00:24:00] really wanna highlight the things that are gonna make us. . Um, so there's some, there's a real, a good amount of thought put into this. Wouldn't you say so? Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Makes sense.

So, but if it, if they've gone with like, mountain lodge, you're not putting antlers up on the wall. Yes. See, that's a note, that's a taste, a little taste specific. Gotta get re reuse to those words. Taste specific . Okay. We're gonna, we're going to do, do finish with a little this or that. Ooh. And we, sorry, by the way, if we, if we want to do something that's not on this list, if you have some ideas, that'd be great.

Okay. All right. So gray or. . Do we, do we say it together? Like what's, no, I want to hear like if you argue about it, like what do you think? Which, which do you choose? Gray or beige? I'm gonna say beige. Yeah, I was gonna say grayish. Like really? Yeah. That nice In between? Yeah. Yeah. Over gray. But let's not go back to the gray was two 18.

2018. We're gonna, we're steering outta nineties bays. You. Yeah. I feel like [00:25:00] my first house. Yes. You know? Mm-hmm. , but those were the pinky beiges. Yeah. So we're doing the gra now. We're doing the s I call that, um, food Lion Vanilla ice cream. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. That should be my house that you guys staged at one time.

Every single room was painted Food Lion vanilla ice cream. That's nice. Exciting to you. You can name paints. Well, you're very welcome. You can patent that if you want. All right. Um, hardwoods are lv. It depends on the price point. I don't mind Lvp. I mean, hardwares always. . Yeah. Hardwood is the answer, right? I mean, listen, but not everyone sells a \$2 million home or a, that's true.

Million dollar home. If all you can do is l v P, there are some beautiful LV MVPs out there. There, there are. And I, you know, in our downstairs renovation in my house, we had L V P and it was great. The toddlers spilled. Yeah. And you just wipe it up and it's a great product. Fine. On to the next world. Yeah.

It's a great product. All right. Um, whitewash or traditional brick. [00:26:00] I'm a total whitewash. I'm gonna go with the whitewash too. Anything whitewash or painted any paint on brick? I'm, I'm on board. Yeah. By in the south. Come on. I brace if I see a, um, non painted brick, I'm not a fan. Yeah. I love painted brick.

Me too. It's A two B painted. Yes, that's fine. Uh, navy or green. Green. I'm a green girl. A hundred percent green. If you've seen, you know, our Instagram, that's my house. It's black, white, and green. , I, I know the answer to this one. Light and airy versus dark and moody. You're gonna choose light and airy every time you got to.

All right, so ladies, what is the footprint for catch? Well, I mean, what kind of, you know, geography are you covering for your service? Thank you for asking that, Matt. So we are both Carolinas, we'll cover both Carolinas, all agents, all. Um, I think we've probably helped at least 40 or 50 agents in this past year alone.

Absolutely. Um, so we're super busy and friends to all. Awesome. [00:27:00] Okay. We're gonna have all the information on how people can contact catch. We're gonna have all the particulars in the show notes. Thank you guys for coming. You are so welcome. Thank you for having us so much. Isn't this fun? Easy, easy, lemon squeezing and I'll have you back for a future podcast.

Thank you. Awesome. Thanks for having us. Thank you ladies.
Thank.[00:28:00]