

A home sellers guide *to home inspections*

By Dan Howard
for TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

Under the best of circumstances, selling a home is usually a very difficult process fraught with more hurdles than an Olympic track. Selling or buying a home is not entertainment or remotely pleasant. Understanding the sales process is the best way to guarantee success with a minimum of stress.

There are circumstances where all that matters in the sale is the price. If you do not care about how much money the home sells for, don't waste time, money or energy on most improvements.

Foreclosures, short sales and fixer uppers are examples of these types of homes. The bottom line in these sales is the bottom dollar. Buyers assume the cost of repair and the risks of poor quality properties in exchange for the opportunity to make a profit by fixing the property. Seller effort can be minimal in these sales with the exception of swallowing hard when signing a sales agreement at a distressed price.

On the other hand, there are many buyers willing to spend more money on a home in exchange for better quality and peace of mind.

For those buyers, proper preparation and positioning of the home during the sale can bring a seller more money in a shorter time on the market. In these instances, a little work or expense can bring back much more in a sales price than what was spent on the improvement.

PREPARING THE HOUSE FOR SALE

Put yourself in the place of

potential buyers and walk through the property. Correct the items that either look bad or can derail closing the sale of the home.

The home inspection is not the only inspection that will be a part of the sale. There is often an occupancy inspection, dye test, and appraisal. Some homeowner's insurance companies have requirements that must be met. Each if these inspections can identify issues that are a barrier to closing or could scare a buyer into cancelling the sales contract.

Consider having a pre-sale home inspection. Correcting the issues before listing a home has the advantage of allowing the seller to make any needed repairs under less stressful conditions and avoiding the deal falling apart. These pre-inspections can make a property more attractive for potential buyers. That can be important when a buyer is considering several properties

TIPS FOR CREATING THE BEST IMPRESSION ON PERSPECTIVE BUYERS

- Create the very best possible environment for a buyer. Their frame of mind is very important. First impressions can make or break a sale.
- Have the home as clean as possible. Clutter or dirt communicates that the sellers don't care about the home. You do not want a buyer associating your house with the word "yuck!"
- Get rid of the source of bad odors. Do not think that adding a

plug in air freshener in each room solves odor problems. Buyers often react to an abundance of these as "cover ups" and create a negative feeling.

- Replace missing or burned out light bulbs. Buyers react to low light and they often wonder if burned out bulbs are a clue that there is something wrong with the wiring.
- Do not lie or even fib on Real Estate disclosure forms. Even a single untruth can break all trust and end the deal. Many buyers really need a high level of trust when buying a new home.
- Leave a note if something is not working. Something as simple as a garage door coming off its tracks can be traumatic. This can lead a buyer down the emotional path of "what else is wrong?"
- Leave the instructions if you have unusually complicated equipment. Whether it is a microwave or heating system thermostat, a lack of directions is frustrating. Fear of not being able to operate a needed system will be a concern for a prospective buyer.
- Do not leave pets in the home during property showings or the inspection. They are a distraction and leave the buyer with concerns about waste from the pet.
- It is usually best for a seller to not be present for a showing or the home inspection. If you are present, give the buyer time and room to become comfortable with the home. You need the buyer to picture themselves in the home. Focusing on the seller's presence makes that process more difficult.



The time a buyer spends in a home for an inspection is typically the longest time the buyer will spend in the home until after closing. It is the time they either fall in or out of love with a home.

There is not a "pass or fail" given by the inspector for an inspection. The "pass or fail" is totally in the mind of the buyer based on the experience and conditions of their time spent in the home.

SUGGESTIONS TO KEEP THE BUYER AND INSPEC- TOR ON A POSITIVE TRACK DURING THE HOME IN- SPECTION.

- Do not take out a gun and place it on the kitchen counter or threaten to beat up the home inspector. By the way, both of those have happened to this inspector.
- Leave instructions if there are hidden access panels, thermostats, light switches or other hidden features.
- Clear a pathway to the main systems and living spaces. Mov-

ing a seller's personal items takes away from the inspector's attention and waiting for items to be moved is a negative experience for the buyer.

- Do not play "hide and seek" with the inspector by doing things like putting furniture, carpet and other obstructions in front of defective areas.

Most importantly, buyers react on a whole slew of levels. Often, spending a little time, energy and money to make a better impression gets the best results. Consider a house showing as a buyer's "first date" with a home and the inspection process as courting.

Go to www.EnviroSpect.info/SellersGuide for more information about preparing a home to sell.

Dan Howard is the owner of EnviroSpect. For environmental consultation call 724 443-6653. For more information visit their website at www.EnviroSpect.com. Email questions to: Dan@EnviroSpect.com. Like us on Facebook or connect @DanHoward251.