

The Home Inspection – A Necessary “Evil” Or A Powerful Tool?

by Stephen Ruback

While modern chemists can make nylon out of corn cobs, making a silk purse out of a sow’s ear still eludes us. A home money pit may appear as nice as a silk purse but function more like a corn cob in the wrong place.

Would you rather know before you bought a house what it’s condition was, or wait until after you’ve moved in? It’s really that simple. Remember the movie “The Money Pit”? The real cost of that nice looking house turned out to be much higher than advertised. Some deals are better left on the table.

If all home buyers and sellers were experienced construction engineers, familiar with building standards, use of materials, identification of destructive conditions and took the time to apply all this knowledge in their purchasing process, they would be in a knowledge position to do their own inspection. How many home buyers meet that description?

Then there’s the emotional component. The property is still the seller’s baby, filled with memories. They have trouble focusing on the flaws, and are even likely to deny them. The buyer is supposed to fall in love with the place.

Every skilled sales professional does whatever they can to recognize and work with their client's emotional needs. Even if the buyer had all the knowledge and experience necessary to perform their own inspection, they would fail the emotional test. You’ve probably heard the statement: “A lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client.” Would you buy a used car by phone, sight unseen?

The same logic applies to a thorough home inspection before closing the deal. An independent perspective is a very powerful asset.

The “As Is” sale may appear to be a special case. Unless the home is definitely intended as a tear-down where home condition really doesn’t matter, all the conditions above still apply. A young couple bought a house to refurbish. They were working with a limited budget, and had great hopes for future profit. It seems the local termites had an entirely different agenda, and had digested so much of the structure that the intended rebuild became a tear-down. Lots of legal wrangling finally produced a resolution. The seller lost, the buyer lost, and both agents lost. The lawyers and the termites won. A thorough inspection may have been a better idea.

Sellers work to achieve the highest possible sale price and buyers work the opposite side of the street, with neither of them necessarily holding a complete picture of what is being sold.

It can be a real challenge to smoothly engineer a mutually acceptable deal. Just because a highly talented Realtor® can make the process look easy doesn’t necessarily make it so.

The home inspector is part of the process to help discover those potentially nasty surprises before the deal is done. A thorough home inspection is a tool you can use to insure you receive the best value.

Even when the deal doesn’t make – you saved your bacon.

A thorough home inspection provides several benefits.

- Identifies potential maintenance problems and expenses, avoiding nasty surprises and resulting hard feelings.
- Clarifies functionality of the house’s critical systems.
- Identifies a wide range of conditions considered to be safety hazards.
- Provides an extra opportunity for you to demonstrate your concern for the buyer’s needs.
- Offers an informed independent perspective, free of emotional bias.
- Gives the buyer’s agent reasonable information on which to base final price negotiations.
- Allows the seller some useful information for determining a reasonable price.

The home inspection is a critical tool for peace of mind and avoiding ugly surprises. The savings you will make are typically many times more than the inspection cost. A thorough inspection is clearly a critical and powerful tool – far from “evil”.

When you do find out how to make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear at a reasonable price, let me know.

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In addition, he has earned a BS in engineering from Trinity University, is an author of several books and teaches a variety of self empowerment courses in the Houston area. For more information, he can be reached at 832-489-1071.