

# Sellers Benefit From A Home Inspection Too

By Stephen Ruback, *Professional Inspector* [TREC

License #6030]

How many deals fail to close due to unexpected surprises from the buyer's home inspection? After all the work it takes to bring a deal to the contract stage, even one is too many. What would it be worth to you as the seller to save all that lost time and aggravation? Such disasters could be avoided most of the time by a simple expedient – have your home inspected before or when it is listed, so you know ahead, in appropriate detail, what significant things need to be done, and have a little time to do them before the contract hits the table. You might even call it planning ahead.

Some common excuses:

**“I don't really want to know the condition because, then, I would have to admit it on the disclosure form....”**

We're not selling pianos to deaf mutes here – the bigger and uglier the surprise, the more likely it will be a deal breaker. Shoving a dead pig under a rug doesn't make it go away.

**“I might have to pay to fix it....”**

As the seller, you will end up paying to fix it, either up front, by lowering the price or offering an allowance. The seller always pays one way or another. What does it cost to lose a deal? How much is your time worth? What is your cost for extra months on the market? Are we squeezing dimes to blow dollars here?

**“My house is fine, there is nothing that needs to be fixed, after all, I've lived here for years.”**

While living in a house, you become used to its idiosyncrasies. Act oblivious at your own risk. Perhaps the prospective buyers won't notice the badly corroded water heater, ancient AC, rotted trim and siding, or observe that part of the roof is gone, or discover the hidden Aluminum wiring just lurking in wait to start a fire.... after all it has such a good floor plan. How good are your communication and education skills? Do you know a good lawyer?

**“It costs too much to hire an inspector.”**

How do you negotiate the price of a house? In one dollar increments, hundred dollar increments, five hundred dollar increments or thousand dollar increments? Many people easily blink away thousand dollar increments when the negotiating gets serious. A few hundred dollars for a thorough home inspection, for the seller, is a real bargain for its value. How much does ignorance cost? Ignorance may be free up front, but in the long run it is always very expensive.

That's why a professional agent is also important – it is their expertise and experience that can save the seller from the folly of their ignorance.

**“There just isn't time, we have to start showing it right away.”**

There is never enough time to do it right the first time, but always plenty of time to fix it later – at a higher cost. How many people, when confronted by poor food or service at a restaurant, actually complain to the management? How many just never come back, and tell their friends? Attractive houses that are ready to occupy always sell faster than those that need work.

**“The buyer will hire an inspector, so I don't need to.”**

Could there be some truth in the old saying “A lawyer who represents himself in court has an idiot for a client.”? If the house is in great condition, the buyer and seller are truly excellent at [and devoted to] communicating with each other, and both are interested in a fair and balanced deal for both parties, it can work. If it's a tear-down and property condition doesn't matter, it will work. The rest of the time, such ignorance is a lot like hiding an adult alligator in your bedroom closet – at best it will die and stink up the place, though more ferocious alternatives are much more likely.

**While planning ahead,** interview and select a good real estate inspector ahead of time – *before* showing the house. That will help you enhance its sales potential up front with appropriate repairs, and give plenty of time to gather real cost information for optimum negotiation of known problem areas not repaired, before an offer hits the table and time is of the essence.

*Stephen Ruback is a licensed Professional Inspector; member of TAREI [Texas Association of Real Estate Inspectors] and HAR [Houston Association of Realtors]; approved by TREC [Texas Real Estate Commission] as a Professional Home Inspection Instructor, and on the faculty of Leonard-Hawes Real Estate School.*

*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 through Leisure Learning. For more information, he can be reached at 832-489-1071.*