



Pre-Listing Inspections: A Sure Sell?

by Steve Rodriguez

It's no news that it's become a buyer's market in many markets across the country. In my area (Kansas City) there are over 16,500 homes on the market and foreclosures are up 55 percent from this time last year.

What can agents do to get these properties moved and a big paycheck in their pocket?

Get a pre-listing inspection.

I know we've all heard about them and most everyone has their own opinion, ranging from, "There must be something wrong with the home if the seller has already done an inspection on it," to the outdated idea that a buyer, not the seller, is responsible for the inspection.

Or how about the weird rationalization that the buyer will get their own inspection, anyway, so why should the seller go to the trouble and expense to get their own? Or even the belief that pre-listing inspections are more trouble for the listing agent than they're worth because the buyer's and seller's inspectors will each find different things, which could blow up in the listing agent's face.

Now I'm not talking about the traditional idea of performing an inspection of the seller's property simply for the benefit of the seller. I'm talking about something completely different.

And what's so different? The positioning and marketing of the inspection.

Most of us know that pre-listing inspections aren't for the meek or weak agent. They represent a shift in thinking from the traditional to the rational and are often a tough sell to many seller's who believe that the buyers are responsible for the inspections, which results in their heavy resistance to the pre-listing inspection idea and, many times, its rejection.

However, in my opinion, pre-listing inspections should be the rule rather than the exception.

They reveal any hidden issues to the seller before the home gets placed on the market, which later translates into the buyer knowing its true condition before they submit an offer.

This valuable information only makes all offers stronger and now the deal is unlikely to snag when the buyer gets their own home inspection (which they likely will, so please don't mislead your sellers into believing that they won't -- it's just a bonus if the buyer's pass it up).

Also, by getting the pre-listing inspection the seller has also enhanced the likelihood of a successful closing by creating a feeling of honesty and trust since they've disclosed, conceded, or repaired all the necessary items.

Another seller benefit is that the items needing professional attention can be corrected at a time that fits their schedule and at a more reasonable price since the costly rush charges associated with repairing these items as a consequence of the buyer's inspection are avoided.

So let me explain why and how this new pre-listing inspection works by stealing a page out of our local auto dealership's playbook:

When you go into an automobile dealership today they have two types of used cars:

1. The plain old used car
2. The "Certified Pre-Owned" car

Now what does Certified Pre-Owned mean in the mind of the consumer? It means that the Certified Pre-Owned Vehicle has been inspected and it meets the company's rigid guidelines for quality and excellence.

And will consumers pay more for Certified Pre-Owned Vehicles? Absolutely!!!

So let's say you have a listing on a street in a great neighborhood, but there are already a lot of homes for sale on that street. How do you not only stand out from your competitors, but also swipe their buyers?

Actively market your listing as a "Certified Pre-Owned" home.

And how do you get it "Certified"? By having it professionally inspected before it goes on the market!

As you know, home buyers want a home that is in tip-top shape regardless of the age. That's why having a pre-listing inspection makes complete sense. Since this pre-listing program requires the seller to confirm that there are no major systems in need of immediate repair or replacement and that there are no known safety hazards (which is what requires the seller to address the important things found in the inspection), the home is now more marketable and will help the sellers get their maximum selling price.

Finally, there is one secret all sellers need to know:

1. Buyers make their decision to purchase a home based on emotion and justify that decision with logic. And another thing is equally true:
2. Buyer's can fall out of love with a home just as quickly as the fell in love it.

So why jeopardize the sale (and your hard earned commission) by waiting for the buyer's inspector to develop a long list of unexpected repair items?

Making the repairs in advance of the sale and then properly positioning and marketing the pre-listing inspection will sell your listing for more money, in less time, and with less hassle!

So Do You Think There's A Downside To Getting A Pre-Listing Inspection?

Think there's a downside to getting a pre-listing inspection? If you do, please share your thoughts by emailing Steve Rodriguez at info@bulldoginspect.com!

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