



## Agents can use home inspections to their advantage.



**The Saturday Star (South Africa)**  
September 17, 2011

The Consumer Protection Act has brought a new awareness of the way full disclosure up front affords protection for homebuyers. For this reason, more buyers now insist on a house inspection before finally committing to the sale.

Home inspection reports are part of the new reality facing South African estate agents. For many agents this is a tremendous challenge, as home inspectors have often been viewed in the industry as "deal killers" - nitpickers who will put a buyer off by highlighting the property's negative aspects.

However, by embracing, rather than resisting, the reality of home inspection reports - by becoming part of the sales process - wise agents will be able to seize the opportunity, control the home inspection process and also use the home inspection report to streamline the sale.

A home inspection report, commissioned by the seller, provides the estate agent with the ability to control the sales process and to deal with the buyer's objections up front. The agent is also able to place objections in perspective. For instance, a buyer may become alarmed a crack in the wall, which may, in reality, be easy and cheap to repair.

By having access to a home inspection report, the agent is able to build credibility with the buyer by providing a full independent and qualified opinion on the physical condition of the house. The agent then becomes the trusted adviser of both seller and buyer.

Agents who don't embrace the new reality of home inspections, will inevitably come up against competing agents who do.

They may then easily be perceived as untrustworthy and not open about the property they are marketing.

By advocating the need for a home inspection report up front, the estate agent will then normally also enjoy the opportunity to recommend a home inspector they trust and respect.

The accreditation, training and attitude of the home inspector are obviously all important factors in this regard.

Ethical home inspectors walk a fine line between providing an objective, factual report on the condition of the property while at the same time being acutely aware of the dynamics in which the estate agent operates.

Overly negative, nitpicking or incompetent home inspection reports are the last thing an agent needs.

Therefore, it is all the more important that the agent has the opportunity to control the process and recommend a home inspector who will do his job well and inspire confidence among all parties but not recklessly or needlessly produce a negative deal-killing report.

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