

4.3 THE HOME INSPECTOR PRESENTATION

Now that you know the general principles of the seminar, let's look at the particulars of your home inspector presentation.

So what do you say at a first-time buyers' seminar? Here is a script you can consider. We modify it, depending on how much time we are expected to speak, and whether there are visuals. You may also have to modify things to accommodate your local conditions.

My name is John Smith from ABC Inspection Company

List Topics You Will Cover I will cover three points in the next ten minutes. They are

1. What is a home inspection?
2. How much does it cost?
3. How do you find a good home inspector?

Explain a Home Inspection

1. What is a home inspection?

A home inspection determines the condition of the home you are about to buy. This is key: You get an inspection of the home you are *about to buy*. In other words, you don't inspect every house you are interested in. While it would be great for our business, it's costly to you.

You have already been preapproved by a bank. Jill from XYZ Real Estate will have already helped you find the perfect home, and you will have made an offer conditional on the results of a home inspection. That's where we come in. The best way to explain our service is to walk you through a typical home inspection.

We would meet at the home. Jill would likely be there to assist us. By the way, this is not the time to show your relatives through the house. All of your attention should be focused on the inspection. You should follow the home inspector through the inspection and ask questions as you go. Take notes if you like, but the information will be compiled for you in a comprehensive report at the end of the inspection.

Go Through Each House System

The first thing we will do is look at the roof. Now, I did say that you should follow the inspector. The roof inspection is an exception. I see a few people breathing a sigh of relief. We have found that getting up onto a roof is much easier than getting back down. Being rescued from the roof by the fire department is not an ideal way to introduce yourself to your new neighbors.

When we are on the roof, we look for the following things:

- Is the system doing its job?
- Is the system near the end of its life?

The roof is doing its job if water is not getting through, but it still may be very old. An asphalt shingle roof lasts about 15 years. If yours were 14 years old, it would be nice to know that it was on its last legs.



The next thing we look at is the structure. We step back from the house to take in the big picture. Here is a tip. Many major structural problems are quite evident, even to the untrained eye, if you step back far enough. When you look at houses, take a moment to step across the street. If the house is leaning, you have a problem. You don't need us to tell you that. We then look more closely.

The next thing we do is look for evidence of water seepage into the basement. If it seems like my presentation is out of order because I am still outside the house but talking about the basement, let me assure you that we are OK. Most basement dampness problems are the result of surface water in the form of rain or melting snow from the roof or from the ground around the house. As a result, we pay close attention to the gutters and downspouts and to the grading around the house. It's interesting to note that damp basements are the number one problem with houses in this area, whether brand new or 100 years old.

Now let's head into the house. We begin in the basement. This is where we look at the systems of the house, such as the electrical, heating, plumbing, and so on. For each system, we determine whether it's performing its intended function, and we determine if the system is near the end of its life.

Once we finish with the heart of each system, we trace it up through the house. We do this because the newest part of these systems is usually in the basement. In older homes, the systems get older as you go up through the house. Take the plumbing system for example. You may have new copper pipes in the basement, but there may be old galvanized steel pipes on the second or third floor. It's easy to run pipes through the basement or first floor, but it is much more difficult to get new pipes up to a second or third floor.

We finish the inspection in the attic, where we look for appropriate insulation and ventilation and evidence of water leakage.

We are finished with the inspection, but we are not finished with the job. At the end of the inspection, we document all of the conditions that we identify in a comprehensive inspection report that we provide to you on-site.

2. How much does a home inspection cost?

The inspection fee for a typical home will vary from one company to another, but fees will generally range between \$300 and \$500. Our inspection fee, for example, is \$425 for a typical home.

3. How do you find a good home inspector?

I'd like to say that the only way to find a good home inspector is to hire me, but there are many excellent home inspectors in our area. There are also many that are not so good. Your real estate agent is a good referral source. He or she will likely know the home inspectors in your area. Ask friends and relatives that have recently purchased a home. Most importantly, ask some questions when you call the home inspection company. In addition to the questions about their background and experience, you should ask the following questions:



- “How long does the inspection take?” Depending on the area and on the type of home, the inspection may take one-and-a-half to three hours. For example, in our area most homes take about two-and-a-half hours. If the inspector says that the inspection takes half an hour, you should wonder about the quality of the inspection.
- “What kind of report do I get and when do I get it?”
- “Are you licensed or a member of any professional association?”

When we get to the question and answer period, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.

4.3.1 FOLLOWING UP

We use the **three-hit rule** as a follow-up technique for most of our campaigns, including seminar presentations. Here is how you might apply this rule to the first-time buyer seminar. We may not apply it to the attendees, but we do use it with the other presenters.

Follow Up with Real Estate Agents

The first hit is to call the real estate agent, the mortgage specialist, and the lawyer or title company representative. You will presumably have met and interacted with these people. You should be able to determine whether they are in a position to refer business to you. You may also consider whether there is any way you can help them. Offering to do presentations for their organization or prospects is one way. Offering to contribute technical articles to their newsletters is another. In many respects the best way to get something from people is to give them something.

What do you say when you call? It can be as simple as asking if you can send them some information or if they would meet you for lunch. Ask questions about how they build their business. You may get ideas for your business and may see an obvious way you can help them. The next two hits could be sending marketing material and then following up on that.

You probably have a relationship with one of these three already because you were invited to be a presenter. Focus on the two you did not know before the seminar.

Follow Up with Attendees

Ask for a list of attendees with contact information. You will have to decide to what degree you will follow up with attendees. If your main goal is to meet the agent and banker, you may choose to spend your time and energy on them instead. Which investment in follow-up is likely to yield the greatest return? If you do decide to follow up with attendees, you might send a brochure, call to verify that they've received it, and then offer to send an interesting report that presents a solution to a problem with houses. You might offer to add them to your mailing list for your newsletter, if you have one.



*Real Estate
Investment
Clubs*

This is a twist on the first-time buyer's seminar. It is an interesting one because each attendee may buy many homes, not just one. This audience is looking at homes as a business and in many ways is easier to deal with than homebuyers because investors are less emotional. The presentation can be similar, but again, think about what your audience wants. Because a real estate investor may be interested in the lowest maintenance and highest durability, your presentation may focus on bulletproof homes.

You may search out local investment clubs and offer to make a presentation at one of their regular meetings.

4.3.2 GETTING INVITED AS A PRESENTER

*Create Your
Own
Opportunity*

The best way to find an opportunity is to create one. Suggest a first-time buyer's seminar to an agent or mortgage lender who has never heard about this concept. Make sure your offer is from their perspective and clearly show them the benefits they will receive.

Or, mention in your agent newsletter that you are willing to participate in first-time buyer's seminars. Then proceed to outline how the first-time buyer's seminar works. You may be enlightening the agents. Do the same for the banks. Follow the letter up with a phone call.

