

YOUR HOME



TIPS AND TRENDS TO HELP MAXIMIZE HOME BUYING AND SELLING

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New Homes Go High-Tech

The booming Internet and home digital entertainment industries are having a big impact on new home construction. According to the National Association of Home Builders, 34 percent of builders offer structured wiring for digital communications and entertainment as standard or optional amenities in their homes.

And a recent study by the Internet Home Alliance (IHA), a technology and networking trade group, finds that built-in wiring and technologies have become key features of newly constructed homes. The survey asked more than 400 people who either own newly constructed homes or plan to purchase one which technology options they prefer. Pre-wiring for cable or satellite TV and home security systems, which a majority of respondents indicate should come standard in newly constructed homes, were the most popular built-in home technology options.

Most consumers say they consider making additional technology purchases for their homes independently from their home builder. The most common technology in this category is a wireless home network, followed by a built-in home theater and a central vacuum system, the IHA reports.

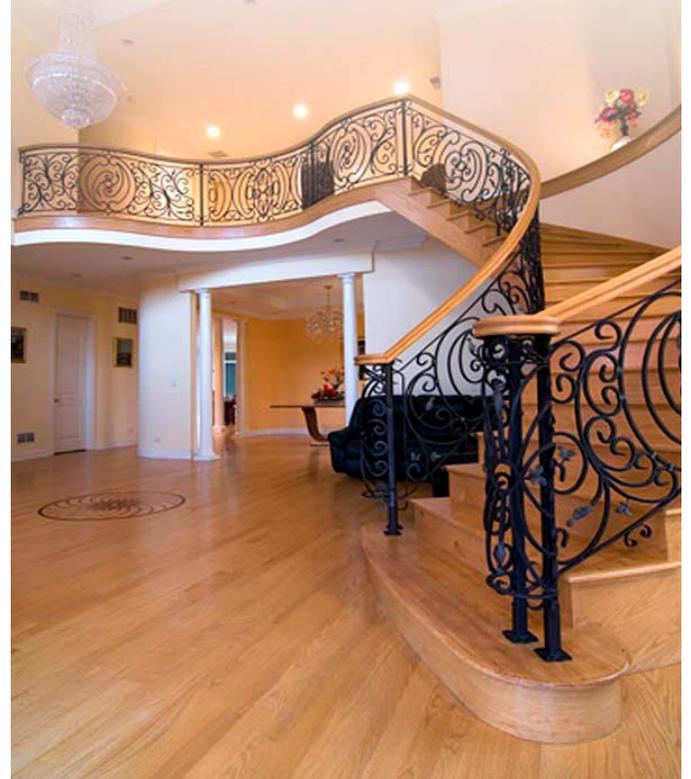
A majority of survey respondents consider home features such as multi-zone heating/ventilating/air conditioning systems, energy management systems, built-in home theater systems, high-speed Internet connections, home control/automation systems and lighting controls to be "somewhat important." Respondents were no more than neutral when asked about the importance of including Web cameras and Internet-enabled refrigerators in their new homes, however.

Cut the Clutter

A cluttered home can be a frustrating inconvenience to live in, but it becomes an even bigger problem when you are trying to sell your house. Homes that are filled with too much large furniture, knick-knacks and papers tend to appear smaller and are generally less appealing to potential home buyers.

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) recommends that sellers work to make their homes look as spacious as possible by removing excess or very large furniture. Closets, dressers, desks and tabletops should be cleared of all non-essential items. Likewise, basements, attics and garages should be free of clutter to give buyers the impression of space. A short-term investment in temporary storage space is a good option for storing any excess items until after the home sells.

NAR also suggests that home sellers remember to: keep all counter tops clear of papers and other items; not let dirty dishes accumulate in or near the sink; not leave laundry in or near the washer/dryer. Cutting out the clutter will not only make your home more salable, it should also help keep you organized in preparation for your move.



KEEP IT COMFORTABLE, EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU



**CRS: WORK
WITH THE BEST**



Winter heating bills have skyrocketed in many parts of the country, thanks in part to rising oil and natural gas prices. And while energy conservation is a worthy and pennywise goal, be careful to monitor your thermostat settings during the home sale process.

Strive to keep your home neither too hot nor too cold. Potential buyers who make appointments to see your home or visit during an open house should feel comfortable. A chilly or stuffy house may cause potential buyers to question your home's monthly heating or cooling costs.

The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-conditioning Engineers recommends the following indoor temperatures: 68 to 74 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter and 73 to 79 degrees in the summer. Ask your friends to tell you if they are comfortable with the climate in your home. If they tell you it's a bit too cold, don't hesitate to turn the thermostat up a few degrees during showings and open houses. After all, a small increase in your month's heating bill is worth it if it helps speed the home sale process.

Choosing the right REALTOR® is the key to a successful and profitable home sale. Agents who have the right credentials will help both the seller and the buyer feel at ease throughout the entire transaction.

A REALTOR® who is a Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) will help you make smart decisions during the home sale process. That's because agents who have earned the CRS must demonstrate an outstanding level of professionalism and experience in residential real estate. CRS agents have achieved a high number of transactions, and they all receive advanced training in areas such as business planning, real estate investing, marketing and technology. They must also maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) and abide by its Code of Ethics.

When it comes time to buy or sell a home, be sure you work with an agent who belongs among the top 4 percent of REALTORS® in the nation. Work with a CRS.



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