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News To Move You Forward

Brought to you by Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

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Where Will Technology Take Us Next?

Products like smartphones and voice-command speakers used to be the stuff of *Jetsons*-esque fantasies. Then they became reality and altered our world dramatically. So, what's next? Here's a roundup of the emerging technologies with the greatest potential to change our lives.

Drones: These aren't just for taking Instagram-worthy aerial shots. Drones offer plenty of yet-to-be-fully realized potential. They're being explored as tools for farm crop assessment, law enforcement, and disaster relief.

Blockchain: This technology is much more than cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin. By facilitating the distribution of digital information without copying, blockchain can power all kinds of activities, from providing financial solutions to unbanked people to auditing supply chains around the world.

Artificial intelligence: Computers with human smarts get a lot of flak for the scary side of their potential. But there's plenty of good stuff too, like an A.I.-powered system that analyzes a baby's cry to instantly diagnose birth asphyxia, a top cause of infant mortality.

Driverless vehicles: Autonomous vehicles are already here. When they become widely available, they could help those who are underserved by public transportation, reduce the space needed for parking, and improve road safety.

CRISPR: Named after CRISPR DNA sequences (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats), this DNA-altering technology can be used to precisely edit genetic information. While it received bad press after a Chinese scientist announced he had used it to create genetically edited babies, the tech has incredible potential for everything from healthcare to agriculture.

Want to Sell Your Home Fast? Get My Free Guide



Buying a home is a complex process with many factors to consider.

Prepare for the decisions you'll need to make along the way by requesting my free report, "10 Easy Steps to Buying a Home."

Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I'll send it right out to you.

Home Seller's Guide: Top Do's and Don'ts for a Quick Sale

You want to sell your home quickly and for the best possible price, right? What's the secret to achieving this goal? There are several. Use these do's and don'ts to guide your home sale process.

What to Do

Get out of Dodge: When potential buyers view your home, they want to see your property, not you. Always leave the premises. The buyers will feel more comfortable and are likely to spend more time looking at your home and fully considering it if you are not there.

Put out the welcome mat: Go the extra mile to make your home show well. Declutter. Clean. Turn on all lights and open all window treatments before showings to create a bright, airy atmosphere.

Partner with a pro: A real estate agent knows what works best in your market. He or she can provide invaluable input to make your home stand out among the competition.

What Not to Do

Take it personally: A home filled with personalized décor can turn buyers off. Neutralize your home to make it appealing to the maximum number of buyers. This might mean removing family photos or repainting your bright orange bathroom.

Crowd the skeletons: When you declutter your home, don't simply throw everything in the closets. Your storage spaces need to look large, useful, and inviting.

Overinflate: While you want to get the biggest bang for your buck, overpricing your home only delays your sale. Consult with a real estate agent who can help you determine the right price for your home based on features, location, and current market trends.

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'Dear Seller' Letters Offer Unique Negotiation Strategy

You're probably familiar with letters to Santa. You've most likely heard of letters to the editor. But have you heard of a homebuyer letter? In some areas, buyers are including these communications when they submit offers to purchase a home. If the trend grows, these messages could become common documents among real estate paperwork. Here's the scoop.

What is a homebuyer letter?

These notes are designed to make a buyer's offer more personal and appealing. The goal is to encourage the seller to choose the writer of the letter over another buyer.

In hot markets, a seller may receive multiple offers at once and must then choose which offer to negotiate or accept. To make their offer stand out, buyers are using these letters. They are written to sellers to plead the buyer's case, offering reasons the seller should accept this offer over others.

What is included in the letter?

The exact details vary from letter to letter, but many contain similar details. Buyers

often mention the features of the home that they love, discuss how they plan to use the house, or reassure the sellers that they don't plan to make significant changes to the home. This can prove helpful in situations where the seller has lived in the home a long time or the property has been in the family for generations. Buyers may also include personal information such as hobbies and professions to try to further connect with the seller.

Does it work?

Apparently, it can. Real estate agents have reported instances when sellers did not choose the highest bid because of a letter included with a lower offer. Of course, this tactic is not guaranteed to work. For many sellers, the price is all that matters. And to others, the letters can come across as corny or inappropriate.

Is this a good strategy to use for your next offer? Should you polish up your writing skills and submit a homebuyer letter? Maybe. Consult with your real estate agent to determine what's best for your situation.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

Should I order a home inspection for the home I am purchasing?

The short answer is yes. The longer answer is why.

Buying a home is likely one of the most significant investments you'll ever make. You want to make sure it's a good one. A home inspection can help with this.

The inspection can reveal home defects that you would otherwise remain unaware of until after you move into the property. Then, it's too late. By using a home inspection to discover issues up front, you can either walk away from a potential money pit or negotiate with the sellers to make repairs or offer credits for you to do so.

Considering the amount of money and time you'll be pouring into your home, a little extra of both up front are well worth your while. And if the inspection reveals no concerns? That's great too. You can then have peace of mind knowing you are buying a property with no hidden issues. It's a win-win.

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