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News To Move You Forward

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

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Memory Brain Training: From Sieve to Steel Trap

Some instances are easy to laugh off. Forgetting an appointment or misplacing one's keys can be filed under "being forgetful." But a leaky memory isn't funny when those misplaced dates and items are of great importance, or when the forgetfulness becomes chronic. Fortunately, there's good news for sufferers of poor memory: it can get better. With the right techniques, it's possible to train your brain and improve your memory. Try these tips:

Use imagery: Memory athletes (yes, it's a thing) use this trick to make words stick. Next time you're trying to remember an important date or someone's name, picture it as an over-the-top image. For example, imagine "April 20" exploding out of a confetti cannon.

Resist the urge to Google: Anything we could ever want to know is just a couple of taps away. But constantly using a search engine to remember facts and figures that we've forgotten is making our brains lazy. Next time you're stuck, wait it out and work your brain to remember.

Create a memory palace: A memory palace is a real physical location or route that is familiar to you, where you can "store" words and dates to remember later. For example, if your memory palace is your jogging route and you want to remember your credit card numbers, you might imagine your Visa number scrawled on the bench you stretch on and your Mastercard number posted on the billboard you pass by on your run.

Practice: As with physical exercise, consistency is key. Practice recalling directions, phone numbers, and important dates in the shower or during your commute.

Are You a First-Time Buyer? Get My Free Guide



Buying your first home is a big step, and one that is likely to impact your financial future for years to come.

Make it easier by requesting my free guide, "How First-Timers Can Make a Wise Buy."

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

Real Estate Secrets: Why (and How) Kitchens Sell Homes

The kitchen is the heart of the home. It's a bustling center of activity where people gather to cook, eat, socialize, and entertain.

As the central hub, the kitchen is one of the most important rooms of the home. This space will immediately attract buyers or turn them off. It's much easier to look passed a small bedroom or an outdated powder room than to get over an undesirable kitchen. The kitchen must be designed to meet the needs of their lifestyle. If it's not a good match, the buyer will likely eliminate the home as an option.

To prevent this from happening, homeowners can make strategic efforts that will improve their property's culinary appeal.

Refurbish rather than replace: Cabinetry is a significant factor in a kitchen's appeal. Since replacing cabinets is an expensive endeavor, many homeowners are reluctant to take on this project. Fortunately, other options won't break the budget. Consider repainting the cabinetry or replacing only the doors. New cabinet hardware can also create a brand-new look.

Invest in appliances: Modern, matching appliances offer immense appeal. They look sharp, offer convenient features, and typically provide high efficiency to reduce utility bills.

Make it sparkle: Cluttered countertops have never helped sell a home. Buyers want to see the kitchen, not the mess. Keep counters clear and clean and ensure the entire space shines.

Consider the market: When considering kitchen improvements, homeowners should always consult with a trusted real estate agent to ensure upgrades are in alignment with their neighborhood, the target buyer, and current trends. Reach out with your questions. We are happy to help.

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Modern Homes Are Getting Smarter by the Second

Innovative technology is transforming the real estate marketplace. As they design and select homes, today's buyers are weighing options that were nonexistent for homeowners 20 years ago. Modern houses, enhanced with smart technology, have become more than rooms and walls. They are integrated systems of efficiency, entertainment, and security, designed to cater to a high-tech lifestyle. These technological advances are adding value to homes in creative ways.

Convenience: Control centers allow owners to manage almost everything in the home remotely. They can turn up the heat, turn on the lights, or turn off the television from around the globe. With remote access, homeowners no longer have to worry about misplaced or stolen keys. They can even grant entry to others while they are away from home.

Security: Wireless technology and video surveillance options have transformed home security. Systems can be added without drilling holes and hiding wires. Cameras and video technology allow personal, remote observation of the home inside and out. In addition to securing

their home against crime, owners can check on Fido, confirm a package delivery, or enjoy peace of mind that the kids arrived safely home from school.

Efficiency: Smart technology can provide greater efficiency for utilities, which can provide significant savings over the years. Improved temperature control technology, remote access to thermostats, and better utility sensors can create a highly efficient home.

Linkage: The internet of things has added multiple new features to homes. Homeowners can link smart appliances, security systems, and more to connect every facet of their lives. The connectivity a home offers can boost its value to plugged-in buyers who are seeking modern networking capabilities. These smart technologies are becoming more affordable and more accessible. It's likely that more and more buyers can expect to find high-tech options listed among standard home features.

If you're considering a smart upgrade to your home, reach out to our office to determine which innovations make the most sense for your market.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

Should I do a final walkthrough?

Your contract may or may not require this step. Even if it's not a requirement, it is highly recommended that you complete this vital part of the home-buying process.

A final walkthrough gives you the opportunity to view the home just before the closing (often the day before or the day of the closing). The walkthrough lets you confirm that the property is in the condition you expected, with no significant changes since your initial viewing.

You can check to see that all items that are left for you are still in the home, such as appliances. If the sellers agreed to make repairs based on home inspection requests, you could verify these as well.

Typically, your real estate agent will arrange for this walkthrough and escort you during this final inspection. If you discover any issues, you should immediately notify your real estate agent, who can advise you on the next steps to resolve concerns.

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