



First Thing

A Monthly Update from The American Society of Home Inspectors

May 2016



IT'S HERE!

May & June Classes Offered

120 Hour Courses

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93 Hour Courses

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Commercial Class

[Stamford, CT - Jun 8-10](#)

203k Day of Discovery

[Des Plaines, IL - June 25-26](#)



Why Apartment Inspections Are Important

[By Larry Ubell and Matthew Barnett](#)

[Originally posted by Accurate Building Inspectors](#)

Everything You Need To Know About The Apartment You Are Buying Before You Buy It.

Don't walk blindly into a big purchase! Whether the cooperative or condominium apartment is in a new or vintage structure. Hiring a licensed home inspector may save you a lot of heartaches and thousands of dollars in the future. -- (Caveat Emptor! - Let The Buyer Beware!)

A Holistic View

It's the perfect studio apartment - it comes with a parking space and a roof top garden! You have taken a good look at the apartment, but what about the building that surrounds that perfect apartment?

The Building's Board Minutes

When considering an apartment for purchase, start by asking to see the board minutes. You should know that not everything is in the minutes. Items may have been left out of the minutes, not for any malicious reason, but sometimes the management or building managers do not have the construction expertise to analyze the building systems or that perfect apartment. If you have any unanswered questions about the building, this is a good time to hire a trained and licensed building inspector to help you uncover any problems that would affect the

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What's going on with your chapter? Got an event coming up? Something interesting happen at your last meeting? What did you learn about? We want to know and we'll

apartment and its livability.

The Building's Infrastructure

A trained licensed home inspector will help you understand the mechanical and electrical systems that support the apartment. An aging infrastructure including the boiler, water heater, plumbing system, or electrical systems will work if they are well maintained, or become a constant interruption in your daily living. One area to look for is whether the building has or may develop dampness issues. Is there evidence of a previous flood from a mechanical failure such as a pipe leak or burst? Is the location prone to a natural flood disaster? Though most per-purchase inspections are not environmental inspections, it is important to consider that additional testing might be necessary to determine if leaks or flooding have made the apartment and or building unsafe. A home inspector could advice you on these issues.

Who Owns the Problem?

The major building systems like the boiler, sewage drain lines, electrical boxes, etc, are typically the cooperatives or condominiums responsibility. The systems and appliances within the apartment are the unit owner's responsibility. So when is an apartment problem a building problem, or your problem? Does the co-op/condo reserve fund have enough money to pay for the repair or replacement? A structural problem in the apartment will be a building issue that may influence the long-term costs of owning the apartment. Therefore, when a building maintenance issues are discovered, they should be discussed and negotiated before contract, and not after closing.

A Legal Perspective

When making any major property purchase, you might also consider talking with a real estate attorney. An attorney is your legal representative who can advocate on your behalf throughout the buying transaction, and will protect you from the pitfalls and traps of the co-op, or condo apartment buying process. Your attorney may recommend a thorough inspection because this information can be used to compare your goals with the purchase costs and to negotiate a better deal. Note: Clients that declines an inspection may be required to sign a "No Inspection Request Form" by their attorney. Food for thought! Let us know what you think.

Download PDF: [Buying a Co-Op or Condo in New York](#)

post it here. Email your news to Dave at davek@ashi.org

Here's what's going on in a chapter near you...

May 6-7, 2016
ASHI Suncoast Suntech Conference
Hampton Inn Oldsmar
Oldsmar, FL
16 ASHI CEs

May 14, 2016
MAC ASHI Chapter Education Event
Johns Hopkins University
Rockville, MD
8 ASHI CEs

May 14, 2016
South Carolina ASHI
Holiday Inn
Columbia, SC
2 ASHI CEs

September 9-11, 2016
SE Home Inspection Conference
Infinite Energy Center
Duluth GA

September 17, 2016
NIC ASHI
1 Day State CE Event
Crazy Pour Restaurant
Villa Park, IL

October 1, 2016
Ohio ASHI
Historical Home Inspections
Ruth Smucker Home
Salem, OH
8 ASHI CEs

October 6-8, 2016
CAHPI National Conference
Westin Bayshore
Vancouver Waterfront Resort
Vancouver, B.C.
18 CEs

October 14-15, 2016
Keystone ASHI Seminar
DoubleTree by Hilton
Reading, PA
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Instructor: Jim Mailey, Training Manager, Simpson StrongTie

This program will allow industry professionals to properly evaluate decks, stairs and railings using the NADRA Deck Evaluation checklist. The NADRA Deck Evaluation checklist has been developed specifically for industry professionals as a comprehensive tool to be used to properly assess the safety issues of a deck.

When: Friday, May 20, 2016, from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm EDT

Where: Emerald Isle Town Board Meeting Room

7500 Emerald Drive, Emerald Isle, NC 28594

Only the first 150 people who register will be able to attend!

[DIRECT LINK TO CLASS INFORMATION](#)



5 Tips for Using Local Networking Groups To Grow Your Business

By Kevin Jordan

In today's digital world, the hot topics in the small business marketing industry tend to be things like SEO, responsive web design, pay-per-click advertising, and of course whatever the latest fad in social media happens to be in any particular week. Of course all of these things are important and have a role to play in successfully marketing a small business, but while all of these constantly changing and evolving areas have been dominating the conversation, one time-tested marketing tactic has continued to quietly provide good results for those relatively few small business owners who have truly mastered it.

I'm talking about good, old-fashioned networking, which—especially at the local level—is still one of the most cost effective marketing methods available to a small business.



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Unfortunately, it's also something that very few people are good at. Just visit any chamber of commerce luncheon and in no time you'll quickly see numerous examples of bad networking. I'm talking about the guy who passes out business cards to everyone in the room and yet couldn't tell you the name of a single person he talked to an hour later...or the woman who is clearly more interested in the desert tray than in any meaningful business-related conversation. It's no wonder many people concentrate on other marketing tactics when their "networking" experiences involve examples like these.

Just to be perfectly clear, this superficial type of networking is not what I'm recommending as a way to grow your business. What I am recommending is developing long-term, meaningful relationships with quality business professionals who are ready and willing to help you accomplish your business goals. If that last sentence sounded familiar to you, it might be because it's taken from the mission statement of the world's largest small business networking and referral organization, BNI (Business Network International). By participating in local business networking groups like BNI, business owners can not only improve their networking skills, they can also meet strategic partners and get referrals—lots of referrals. In a second, I'll give you five specific ways that local networking groups can help grow a small business, but first I want to define exactly what kind of groups I'm talking about...[READ MORE](#)



7 House Smells You Should Never Ignore

By Kimberly Hiss

If Your Smell: Gas



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Natural gas is odorless, so in order to make it detectable the chemical mercaptan is added, which creates that classic “rotten egg” odor. If you smell gas you could be in danger of a gas leak, which could cause fire or an explosion. Leave the house immediately and call the gas company on your mobile phone or a neighbor’s phone, says Frank Lesh, executive director of the American Society of Home Inspectors. Avoid using a landline phone in the house, turning lights or appliances on or off, or using a car, all of which could create sparks.

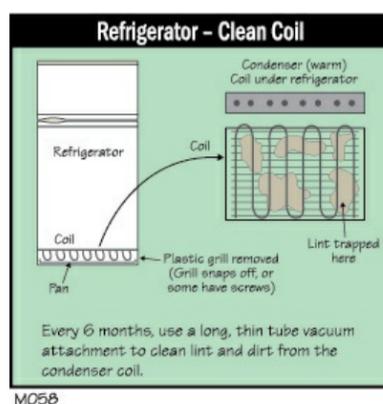
If You Smell: Something Musty

A musty, pungent odor could indicate a sink leak or broken pipe that has given rise to mold, which loves to grow in dark, damp spots. “For mold we’re really concerned about people with allergies and asthma,” says David Dyjack, DrPH, CIH, executive director of the National Environmental Health Association. “Both conditions can be exacerbated by mold exposure.” If you see mold, disinfect non-porous surfaces like tile with a 10 percent bleach/water solution and let sit for 10 minutes while ventilating, Dyjack adds. For porous surfaces like dry wall, it’s best to replace. If you can’t see the mold it may be in the walls, in which case call your local health department or a home inspector (the American Society of Home Inspectors website provides listings based on area code), to find the problem. These are other smart ways to use bleach in your house....[READ MORE](#)

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Quick Tip #36: Tune Your Refrigerator for High Performance (or color it green)

The refrigerator is among the most neglected of household appliances, because usually it

runs forever with little repair. However, it often consumes the most electricity among your home’s appliances. You can improve the performance and extend the life of your refrigerator with simple maintenance.

The condenser coil of a refrigerator transfers heat to the air of your room. You should clean the coil with a vacuum or soft brush once or twice a year. The coil is located behind

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or underneath the refrigerator; it's a serpentine apparatus with small fins. The fins' narrow spacing catches lint and debris. A small tube connected to your vacuum will quickly collect this dirt.

Viewing and accessing the coils is often as simple as snapping the plastic cover off the lower front of the refrigerator. Often there is also a small fan that moves air across the coils. The fan should also be carefully cleaned or vacuumed after you unplug the unit.

Cleaning the coil and fan will aid in heat transfer and shorten the refrigeration compressor's run time. This will save electricity and lengthen the life of your refrigerator.

By Tom Feiza, Mr. Fix-It

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What Every Home Inspector Needs To Know About Pinterest

Pinterest. Perhaps you've heard of it, perhaps you haven't. Either way, it can no longer be ignored. As a Home Inspector, Pinterest can easily be one of the most valuable tools in your social media work belt. With Pinterest, it is all about visualization, which you something about, right?. Ever hear that "pictures are worth a thousand words"? It's why you place pictures in your reports. Pinterest can be a very powerful social media tool in an Home Inspectors' marketing arsenal if used properly! The key to making any social media network is to establish relationships and engage with others. Pinterest is certainly no different.

What is Pinterest?

If you are still unfamiliar with Pinterest, here's a brief rundown to get you up to speed. Basically, it is a virtual bulletin board. You can "pin" images or videos from all over the net to different boards under your profile. The number of pins and boards that you can have are unlimited. Each pin has a description and links directly to the website you got the image or video from.

Once you share a pin, your followers can like it and re-pin it to one of their boards, which goes to all of their friends and family on the site. That can mean a lot of visibility in a small amount of time. If you use it correctly. Additionally one of the things that makes Pinterest great is the shelf life of a pinned article or photo. There are very few sites where your content can get shared consistently for a long period of time.

How Do I Use Pinterest Correctly?

Yes, of course you want to use Pinterest to grow your



Electrical
01 Make sure all outlets, GFCIs, switches work properly. Burnt out light bulbs should be replaced.

Water & Plumbing
02 Drippy faucets, leaking plumbing, water damage and mold are red flags for greater problems.

HVAC
03 Replace filters as needed. HVAC tune-up service will help identify any issues that should be repaired.

Smoke & CO
04 Smoke & CO detectors need to be in working condition.

Windows
05 Windows should open and close freely and be free of cracks and fogging between panes.

Pests
06 Visual signs of pests should be investigated for signs of infestation. Treatment and repair may be required.

Foundation
07 Cracks in foundation walls, basement water intrusion, uneven flooring can point to foundation issues.

Doors
08 Doors should open, close and lock properly. Garage doors must have working safety features.

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business. But just like with all aspects of social media, Pinterest is more about engaging your followers and building trust. Simply put, you want your followers to look at you as the expert for all things home inspection. You cannot do this by just throwing tips in their face. This is a common theme among many home inspectors who don't understand why they never get anywhere with social media.

Yes, you can have a board that is dedicated to your Home Inspection business, but you should also have Pinterest boards that are full of eye-catching images that are related to inspecting all aspects of the home. Remember, the point is to find things that will prompt your followers to re-pin the image. If the image doesn't inspire you, you can forget about it inspiring anyone else. And this goes for every single picture or video you pin. Like other social media channels it is perfectly fine to share other content that interests you. Above all else be human! You don't want to be just a Home Inspection robot.

What Should I Pin?

Now that you understand how Pinterest works and what its purpose is, it's time to get down to the nitty gritty: what you should be pinning. Here are some ideas for boards that you can implement into your Pinterest profile. Each one serves a different purpose and can attract different users.

Postcards from the Field - You love that section of ASHI's *Reporter* magazine that showcases mishaps and flaws in the home that inspectors like you inspect every day. Well, here's your chance to showcase your very own "postcards" with captions, links and tags. Even non-home inspectors love to see those images. It's why HGTV is so popular. We all like the dream homes, but it's the flaws that get us staring.

Neighborhood Information - There are specific areas that you do home inspections. Sure, you go out of your way sometimes, but honestly, you stick to the same areas. Take some photos of those types of homes to showcase all the different styles of homes you inspect. Just like you, home buyers, sellers, real estate agents and everyone else are visual. They like to know what you can and cannot do. Show 'em what you do.

Team Photos - Since Pinterest is about building trust with your followers you want to make the experience personal. Include one board that introduces you and your team (if you have one) so that your followers feel connected to you. If you don't have one, but have a dog, cat or other kind of

Send us your celebratory news and we'll post it here. If we don't see it, it won't be posted.

HouseMaster's Scott

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Atlas Home Inspection

Earns 2015 Angie's List

Super Service Award

HouseMaster's Brad

Horstman Honored with the

Century Club Award



CALLING ALL CHAPTERS!!!

Do you host a chapter event, seminar, or conference and trade show? Do you attend them as an exhibitor? If you answered 'yes' to either question, then you need ASHI's new "**Step Up With ASHI**" banner.

This banner has all the talking points you need to promote ASHI

pet, show them your soft side and showcase your pet.

Tips & Tricks - Don't just write down a tip or trick, find an image and pin it to your board with tips and tricks for home improvements and what to do at various times of the year to get their homes ready for that season.

Realtors and tradespeople you work with - Nothing improves your business more than word of mouth.

Repinning images and topics about your referral network will help them repin your posts and increase traffic to your site. Increased traffic equals more visibility and more visibility equals more business,

What Do I include When Pinning?

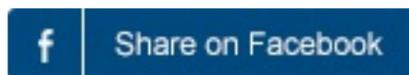
You can either find all of the images you want to pin yourself or you can simply re-pin them from reputable home sites, realtor sites, tool companies, Either way, when you go to pin something you will have to fill in three fields: Description, Link, and Board.

Description - When writing your description, compose something catchy and creative. It is also important to include keywords and hash tags so that your pin can be easily found by Pinterest's search feature.

Link - This is where the image will take the user when it is clicked. Of course, anything from your website should be double-checked to make sure it is linked properly. It is also legally important that you check the link on all re-pins to make sure they are coming from a legitimate website.

Board - You will be given a drop down menu of all of the boards you have created. Simply choose the one that is the best fit for what you are pinning.

A great image to "pin" is the infographic to the left titled "Top 8 Issues Found in Home Inspections"



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