

DOES YOUR REPORT SAY “WOW?”

By

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When you complete a home inspection and issue your client a written report, the format of that report may consist of a checklist, a checklist with written comments or a narrative report. Perhaps you prepare your report on-site, email it or mail it to the client. Regardless of the format or method of delivery, when a reader picks up your report, he or she is looking at a reflection of your professionalism. That reflection should shout “WOW” - “ASHI® inspectors are the greatest!”

If you consider your final report to simply be a vehicle that documents what was said and done at time of inspection and the end of another workday, then I submit that you are missing one of the greatest sources of advertising available. In addition to being a legal document and your best means of defense (along with a good contract), the appearance and content of your report should be considered as THE most important marketing tool available. Your report will be shown to relatives, friends, brokers, attorneys, etc. Each individual who sees your report will form an instant opinion regarding your professionalism. That opinion should be “WOW”, if I ever need a home inspector, I certainly know who to call! A “WOW” report will make the telephone ring.

As a home inspector, you are selling intellectual knowledge that should be presented in a professional format. Our clients are becoming better informed consumers. They recognize ASHI® inspectors as “professionals” and expect a professional report. When the buyer picks up your final report, they should be captivated with your documentation and presentation of the facts as disclosed during the home inspection. There should be no difficulty with comprehension, deciphering check boxes, terms or illegible handwriting. Most likely, the reader will thumb through your report and form a first impression. That first impression should be one of gratification for their expenditure, a respect for your professional services and a desire to read further. Your report should say “WOW” that home inspector was great and his report is even better!

Like a home, the cover page of your report should have curb appeal. The front page should catch and hold the eye with a little “glitz & glitter,” by including an interesting graphic, or color photograph of the home. In my opinion, a professional report is one that is not only accurate, informative, and in compliance with the Standards of Practice; it is impressive from the cover page to the body of the report and on to the summary. If placed in a book store, your report should be the one that the consumer pulls from the shelf for review, confirms an interest in reading and then walks to the cash register to purchase. A report that says “WOW” will entice the client to read it, thus reducing call backs and law suits. A “WOW” report will produce clarity of understanding for decision making purposes.

Examine your own report and consider this analogy: As a consumer, imagine seeing your report advertised on television and disguised as a new sparkling vehicle, with the obvious intention of captivating your interest and your wallet. The plush new car with “your name” printed boldly on the body is cruising along the highway making heads turn with envy. The car enters a tunnel. Exiting the tunnel and turning the page, the car magically enters the front door of a prospective new home and travels from room to room. Turning on the headlights, the driver stops to examine each surface and mechanical system. The driver engages the cruise control and G.P.S. systems and sits back to enjoy the view while the comfort control system caters to his needs. As the car travels throughout the home, the windshield changes into a view screen and the CD player paints pictures with words by using the English language. Each aspect of the home is explained in layman’s terms and deficiencies are prominently displayed as idiot lights on the dashboard. The luxurious car navigates onward from page to page, room to room, system to system; allowing you the reader, to bask in comfort while absorbing all of the facts needed for purchase consideration. Upon reaching the exit, the enlightened driver steps out of the new car and stops to admire it while relishing in the experience of an ASHI® home inspection. I don’t know what kind of mileage the car gets, but “WOW” I sure would like to own one!

We have all seen “good reports” and “bad reports.” As an ASHI® inspector, your report should not be a “good report” – it should be the BEST REPORT! You should be proud to sign your name at the end of your report and proclaim that “I am a professional home inspector.” Your report should be the equivalent of the new vehicle that bedazzles the spectator, gets the best mileage and survives the crash test. You should be proud that the client purchased your services as opposed to the competition. For if the consumer is satisfied and impressed, they will show your report to others and will confidently recommend you to friends and relatives. Be a consumer for a moment and hold your report up in front of a mirror along with the competition. Which one says “WOW,” and boy-O-boy, am I glad that I chose an ASHI® inspector?

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