

Creative Living



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organizing

Dorothy Lehmkuhl

Get a system, then stick to it

Q. I have so many things to do that I sometimes wake up in the middle of the night, fearing I'll forget something important. I try making lists but then lose my lists. How can I remember everything?

A. People who rely on their memory for details tend to suffer anxieties over the fear of forgetting. Writing down your tasks on paper removes the responsibility of remembering everything in your mind. It literally lightens your load.

There are various types of reminder systems but an important factor is to create and stick to one single kind so it is utilized consistently and located readily. Don't use a napkin in your pocket today and the back of an envelope on your desk tomorrow. You can purchase tablets, secretarial notebooks or long, narrow pads of paper in a bright color, making them more visible.

Many people prefer a calendar reminder system. There are numerous calendar books on the market that consolidate calendars with list making ability. The disadvantage of using large calendar books is that they are cumbersome to carry with you. I recommend they be carried only by people who spend a good deal of their time working away from home or office.

I prefer a simple Week At A Glance Professional Appointment calendar. This 8 1/2-by-11-inch book spreads one week across two facing pages, providing lines for 15 minute increments. I incorporate my appointments together with my To Do's according to what time of a certain day I intend to work on a given task. By scheduling my work for specific times I am more likely to accomplish what needs doing. The book fits easily into my attache, desk filing drawer or on a book shelf.

Rather than making lists, the 3-by-5 system also works well alone or in conjunction with a calendar book. This reminder system uses 3-by-5 inch scratch sheets carried with you and stored by your bed and each telephone. As tasks are remembered, write each one on a separate sheet immediately, then file in a card file box. These reminders can be categorized by dividers according to your needs, or made into a tickler file (this date reminder file will be described in a separate column.)

Regardless of which system you use, it is imperative that you write down tasks immediately upon thinking of them and that you establish one single place to keep them.



designing ways

Eve Garvin

Color schemes lend personality

IT IS interesting to see the various room arrangements and styles in apartments and condos that are identical to the other units. An expression of your personal taste helps to give your place distinction and original appeal. Most apartments and condos do not have a fireplace. Lacking that as a focal point, take the largest wall and use that for your central interest.

Your focal point should be of the correct size, scaled to the room. For example, a large room with a high ceiling and grand proportions needs a dominant focal point. A small room should not have a massive center of visual interest, since that would overwhelm the room.

THERE ARE numerous focal points. I recall a particular house I did some years ago for clients who were avid art collectors.

For architectural interest, I placed a chair rail around the room. I placed a tall display cabinet in the center of the wall, which served as the fireplace wall. The unit was flanked by love seats on either side. The wall was covered with their art works. This was the first thing you saw as you entered the room.

A sofa with a dominant painting is another way. Or you may try art works of varied sizes that are in diverse frames.

When you hang your paintings, graphics or whatever you are using, hang them at different levels so that you have a sense of movement.

THE IMAGINATIVE use of color does much to a standard room. Color is a very effective decorating tool. I have used navy walls with white ceiling and woodwork in a large living room. The walls, stained wood floor and Oriental rug were perfect foils for a wonderful art collection.

Unusual color schemes give a room great personality. For a striking combination, try milk chocolate with mauve and cadet; navy and white with splashes of yellow and mint green; banana with lavender, white and mauve; charcoal gray and white with mustard and terra cotta.

Home buyers want more amenities

AMERICANS are spending more time at home, and as a result, home buyers are seeking a greater number of amenities in new homes, according to a nationally known real estate sales, design and marketing consultant.

Among the features buyers want are additional storage space, kitchen suites rather than four-walled kitchens, larger rooms, center-island kitchen arrangements, built-in appliances, master bedroom suites, walk-in closets, media walls in the family room, security systems and quality wood floors.

"Today's home buyer wants more amenities as standard offerings, not options," said Kristelle Petersen, president of Petersen Communications, a Dallas-based public relations and advertising firm.

A former editor for Better Homes and Gardens and real estate editor for the Dallas Times Herald, Petersen conducted a recent seminar for the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

"IN THE HOME building industry, demographic and sociologic trends are critically important," noted Herbert Lawson, BASH president. "Kristelle Petersen is extremely well qualified to discuss them."

"We know that changing lifestyles are affecting the market," he said. "People seem to be rediscovering the home as the center of their lives. This often means they will want more features in their home."

Petersen, who follows real estate trends closely and speaks throughout the country, cited surveys by Newsweek magazine and Professional Builder magazine that reported Americans are spending more time at home.

"This trend translates into a desire for more amenities in the home," she pointed out. "Features such as home offices, saunas, fitness rooms, central vacuum systems and home entertainment centers are gaining in popularity."

The real estate marketing consultant advised builders to keep those trends in mind when designing and marketing new homes.

"Today's home should be built for comfort, not for speed," she said. "The trend is for amenities like fireplaces, bookcases, in-home spas — things traditionally considered options — to become standard."

REFERRING TO THE survey taken by Professional Builder, she said 64 percent of Detroit-area respondents were looking for larger homes with more amenities in better locations. And 48 percent had \$10,000-\$50,000 available for a down payment. Security, privacy and lifestyle were among the main reasons given for seeking a new home.

Demand for entry-level homes is softening across the country, according to Petersen, with the majority of buyers looking to trade up. This is largely because baby boomers are becoming well established in middle age, and there are 5.9 million fewer teenagers than there were a decade ago.

However, many empty nesters are seeking smaller dwelling places that require less time for upkeep. And while baby boomers represent the highest proportion of potential home buyers, people over 55 tend to be more financially secure.

Effective merchandising is becoming more important than ever, Petersen believes.

"In its highest form, home merchandising might be referred to as the seduction of the buyer," she told seminar attendees. "You want the buyer to aspire to the lifestyle and amenities that your homes offer."

The "curb appeal" of a home is an important factor in attracting prospective buyers, she said, noting that half the people who stop at model homes do so on impulse as they are driving by. Architecture, landscaping, colors and location all have a bearing on curb appeal.

"ONCE A PERSON steps inside a model home, you have 11 to 15 seconds to attract and hold their attention," Petersen explained. "That's one reason it is so critically important to identify your target market and know what they are likely to be looking for in a home."

She encouraged builders to do their own market research.

"At the very least," she emphasized, "sales staffs should be using prospect cards to track where buyers are coming from and for referrals."

Sales personnel need to be more skilled than ever, she said, not only in relating how the special feature of a particular home would fit with the buyer's lifestyle, but also in making clear the investment advantages of owning a home in today's uncertain economy.

'People seem to be rediscovering the home as the center of their lives. This often means they will want more features in their home.'

— Kristelle Petersen



Finishing touches

Doors to 18 idea homes featured in Homearama-Summer will swing open at 7 p.m. Thursday in the Autumn Ridge subdivision on Orchard Lake Road just north of Walnut Lake Road in West Bloomfield. Herbert Lawson (left), president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, discusses final preparations with Dennis Dickstein, chairman of the event, in front of the Woodridge model by Key Building Corp. of Farmington Hills. To mark the event, a special section with all the details will be part of all editions of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers on Thursday.

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