



August 20, 2001

Use Floorplans To Impress Clients

Are you looking for a new marketing edge over your competitors? How about adding a skill that impresses both buyers and sellers? Learn to design floor plans. Sound hard? That depends on whether you like to draw and how motivated you are to leap over the competition.

Knowing how to draw floorplans can help you make sales. Floorplans ultimately help buyers make the decision to buy and that's good for sellers, their agents and the buyers.

Florida Realtor Chris Pardo is a former kitchen designer who knows how to do CAD kitchen designs. Pardo does floor plans for every listing and most of her buyers, and says this ability offers her a marketing advantage. "I believe I am the only agent in town that does them and I get great responses for buyers and sellers about them," says Pardo.

But, according to New York Realtor Juan Junco, you don't have to be artistic, techy or interested in drawing to use floor plans in your business. "I got interested because I needed a floor plan to demonstrate something, and I didn't have one," says Junco. "At first, I created floor plans in Corel Draw, and then switched to a home design program."

Junco likes to draw, but only as part of the everyday work, but he says there's no question that once he started adding floor plans to his talents, he was closing more deals. Still, he says it's not for everyone. "I draw because I need to," he says. "Some people would say that a floorplan program is too much work to learn, but that depends on your motivation. I'm motivated because they help me get people over objections."

Once people can see a floorplan, it has a positive effect, explains Junco. "A lot of people can't visualize from a two-dimensional sketch," he says. "When they can see a drawing of the house, and then the floorplan with elevations, it shows the home in three dimensions. That helps get them over any humps."

Floorplans are a tool you can use with most buyers. "They want to know the size of the rooms," says Junco, "and if it is new construction, they want to visualize what the house will finally look like."

At what point does he offer a floorplan to clients? "I normally won't offer unless they have a question about how something works," says Junco. "If they can't visualize it, then I will do it. With listings, I do a floorplan to include in the listing packet. If I want someone to hire me as a Realtor, then I use them."

Junco does his own measuring using a digital measuring ruler, a device you can find at most Home Depots, or you can order them through real estate magazines. He holds the device against the opposite wall and clicks a button. As it beams to the opposite wall, it will electronically measure the distance. The distance registers on the display.

Then he does a rough sketch of the measurements. "For new construction, I do a complete floorplan, so

they can see what the house is going to look like."

Finally, he promotes the drawing on the feature sheet of the home.

Pardo's rule is measure, measure, measure. "Every wall, hallway, closet, etc.," says Pardo. "The more you measure the easier it is to do. For buyers, I usually do this while the inspector is doing his thing."

So which home design program should you use?

"If you want to try some free floorplan software (along with TurboCad 2D or TurboProjectLT) go to Floorplan.com," suggests Junco. "I used it for a while, and it was okay for basic plans."

Junco prefers [Punch! Professional Home Design Suite](#). "But I don't necessarily recommend it if you have a low frustration level," cautions Junco. "It does many things very well and includes fly-overs and walk-throughs. The one I have has 12 modules (wiring, landscaping, framing, plumbing, etc.)."

Pardo uses the [Bob Vila](#) floor plan program.

Happy drawing, but watch out for one unintended side effect when you provide this extra service. "Many visitors on my site ask for floor plans of properties that are not my listings and get disgusted when I cannot provide them," sighs Pardo.

Written by Blanche Evans

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