



Secrets of the Home Inspection Business

There's no doubt about it, Home Inspection is a niche market. That being said, just like the old expression "There's more than one way to skin a cat," there's more than one way to be a successful home inspector. However, there are certain fundamental steps to success which should not be skipped.

Proper Training – Whether you are a licensed contractor with a background in the building trades or you're the Mr. Fixit of the neighborhood, real estate agents will want to see reputable credentials specific to home inspection before they begin referring business your way. Throughout your research you've probably encountered two different types of training schools. The first type is the school who "specializes" in home inspection, they tell you that you must pay \$900 or \$1,000 or more for their course because that's the only way you will ever be successful and that your background doesn't mean anything unless you take their class. Even then these schools will only teach you the basics and will want you to spend hundreds (or even thousands) more later on for things like mold, radon, software, and commercial inspection.

The other type of school is one who doesn't specialize in home inspection, but has a relatively inexpensive course that will teach you the basics and nothing more. These schools offer training in everything from becoming a paralegal to massage therapy and everything in between. Home Inspection might be one of fifty different types of training they offer. The federal government refers to these schools as diploma mills.

Neither of these situations is ideal for someone entering this business.

First of all, your background and experiences DO count. You don't NEED to spend \$1,000 or more on training to get into this business, especially if you're already familiar with most of the home components. What you do need though, is proper training credentials from a school that specializes in home inspection, as opposed to one of the diploma mills.

At ICA we offer a comprehensive Real Estate Inspection Certification Program, which covers all aspects of the industry including commercial inspection, mold inspection, radon, and even code inspection for only \$695. With the typical home inspection paying \$300 - \$400, one inspection will almost cover the cost of your training. When you finish our class you will be an ICA Certified Home and Commercial Property Inspector and you'll be ready to begin building your business.

Relationships – When it comes to starting your inspection business you'll want to build relationships with real estate agents and lenders in your area. With the proper training and credentials you will be able to confidently walk into a real estate agent's office and introduce yourself. You'll want to look professional, act professional, and build a good rapport with those

agents so that when they have a client who needs a home inspection, the realtor will give his/her client your phone number so that you can perform the inspection.

In addition to stopping in at your local real estate offices, you'll want to stop in at the banks and mortgage offices in your area. Lenders also refer home inspectors to prospective buyers and you'll want to make sure you're the one they refer. Not only that, but right now there are plenty of foreclosures on the market that need to be inspected and banks will often pay for what is called a pre-listing inspection. That means the bank will have a home inspector go through and do a full inspection before they put the home on the market. That way if there are any major defects they have the opportunity to fix those ahead of time, in order to get a better price for the home.

Why would an agent refer me, a new home inspector, to their client? Don't they already have someone they use?

Most real estate agents do have inspectors that they refer to clients, but it doesn't mean they're happy with their current rolodex of inspectors. Reason being, there are plenty of home inspectors out there who don't present themselves in a professional manner or they come across as an alarmist during the inspection, so real estate agents are always looking for someone who embodies professionalism and helps the inspection process go a little more smoothly. That's how you sell yourself. You let them know that you are THAT inspector. You will show up on time. You will report defects the way you're supposed to, but you won't be over the top. You won't be an alarmist and a deal killer. You ARE the inspector of their dreams!

The other issue is availability. When a prospective buyer makes an offer on a property, both the buyer and the real estate agent want that inspection to take place as quickly as possible, so rather than wait 5 or 6 days for an opening in "Inspector A's" schedule, many times they would rather have you perform the inspection tomorrow – even if you are new to the inspection industry. When you start your business you might even tell real estate agents you can guarantee an inspection within 24 – 48 hours. They love that because every day that goes by before the inspection takes place is an opportunity for the deal to fall through, so time is of the essence. These are the things you'll learn in our Real Estate Inspector Certification Program. We're not just going to teach you how to perform the inspection. We will teach you how to market yourself. How to sell yourself. And how to successfully build your business from day one. We'll teach you how to stop by open houses and network with not only the agents, but with the prospective buyers who are going through the home. We'll teach you how to target buyers in your area with direct marketing efforts. For instance, if you see a for sale sign on the front yard of a home, chances are that the owners are planning on buying another home. That's the perfect opportunity for you to drop a brochure in their mailbox or even stop at the door and introduce yourself.

Everyone's heard the old saying "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." The inspection business is the same way. At ICA we have a proven system for success and we'll provide you with all the knowledge and support you need to succeed in the inspection industry. If you follow that system you will succeed.

The bottom line is it's a numbers game. What does that mean? It means that if you visit with ten real estate agents in your area, five of them might tell you that they're happy with the inspector they currently use and they are not interested. Three of them will probably tell you they'll keep your card on file and may use you down the road. The other two might say "That's great. I'm so happy you're in my area! I don't like any of the other inspectors I've worked with and will call you the next time a client of mine needs an inspection!" That's business. It's a numbers game. Don't get frustrated by the five that might not use your services. Focus on the two that will. And for the three agents that said maybe, you keep following up with them. Send them emails, drop off donuts at their office once in a while, etc. All it takes is one or two agents to use you and if you do a great job, word spreads amongst other agents. That's how you grow in this industry, and if you're an ICA graduate we'll be there supporting you every step of the way!

For answers to any other questions call us at toll free at (888) 374-4096 or [sign up online at www.icaschool.com](http://www.icaschool.com)



Scroll through the next few pages for more information the tools needed to become a home inspector as well as the average income for home inspectors based on inspections performed per week.



Other than training, what do I need to become a home inspector?

Inspection Reports

We have partnered with www.homeinspectionform.com to provide ICA students with a free copy of their reporting software package called Report Form Pro 2. That report can be used on a laptop, desktop, or as a mobile app on your android or ios device. You'll even get a version that can be printed and filled out by hand in the field if that is what you prefer. The whole report package normally sells for \$399 but as an ICA student you will get it free – no fees whatsoever. The report also comes with a pre-inspection agreement template for you to use with your clients. They still recommend that you have your attorney review the pre-inspection agreement before using it but that is up to you.

There are plenty of other report options out there for home inspectors so don't feel like you need to use the Report Form Pro template. That is completely up to you. At the end of the day as long as you have a report that you are comfortable with that's all that matters. That said, most of our students do start with the Report Form Pro word version. They like that they can either print it and fill it out by hand, or check the boxes and add in photos on their computer or mobile device. If you have a smart phone or tablet, then you will want to download the software so you can create, edit, and deliver professional inspection reports onsite with [Report Form Pro 2](#).

Tools

Since the legally defined scope of the home inspection is “visual and non-intrusive” Truth be told, there are very few tools you need to perform a home inspection and most of them are relatively inexpensive, and some of them you probably already have. You'll need a good flashlight, a reliable ladder, a GFCI tester (\$10 - \$15), a 3-prong circuit tester (\$10 - \$15), and although not required we suggest a combustible gas detector (\$70 for the one we recommend, the TPI 725).

Marketing Materials

Your success as a home inspector will mainly be dictated by your ability to build relationships with real estate agents who can refer their clients to you. That said, there are a marketing materials that you should purchase. You should have business cards printed – which are very inexpensive if you go through an online printer like www.vistaprint.com . You also should consider a company website. It doesn't need to be anything elaborate. Just having a web presence makes you seem more established. Companies like www.web.com will actually build your website for free and just charge you a low monthly fee to maintain it, so you can keep your startup costs as low as possible.

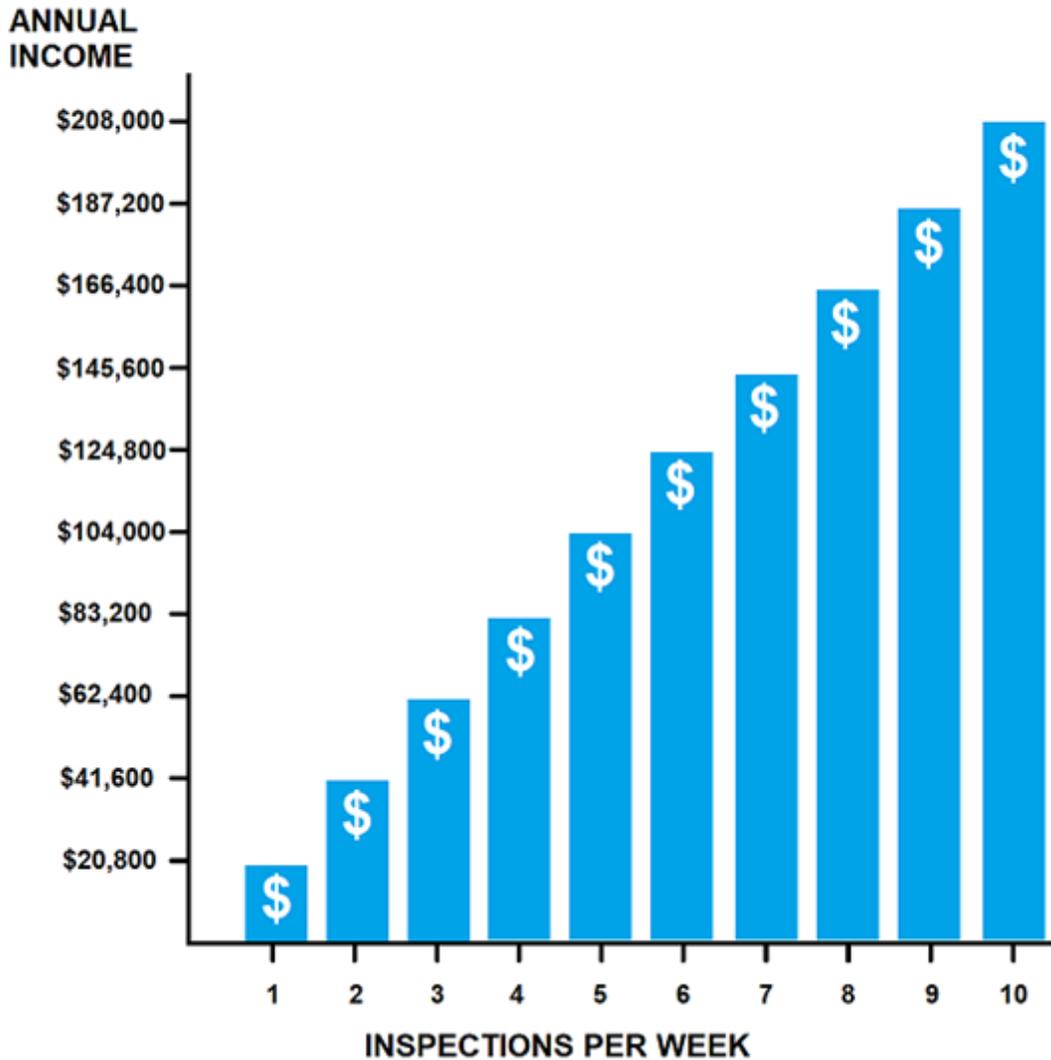
Business

There are different ways to set up your business. You can run it as a sole proprietorship, an llc, or an S-Corp. Most home inspectors run their business as an llc or limited liability company. This means that the business' liability is separate from your personal liability. This is a good way to protect yourself financially in case someone attempts to bring action against your business (very rare in the home inspection business) for some reason. Using a service such as www.legalzoom.com or www.llc.com you can set up your llc for as little as \$99 right online in a matter of minutes.



How much money can a Home Inspector earn per year?

The typical home inspection fee is \$400 for an average sized home. The graph below illustrates the annual income for a home inspector based on the number of inspections performed per week.



BASED ON TYPICAL \$400 FEE FOR AN AVERAGE SIZED HOME (2 HOURS ON SITE)



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