

What Buyers Want

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Millennial buyers lead the pack in 2019.

Even though the tipping point for millennials is a long way off, they are influencing the push toward modern, streamlined, practical functionality of space. Flexibility and nonformal spaces are also top of their minds. Open plan floors are centered around an increasingly larger great room and kitchen. The investor flipper is loving this trend, as it helps smaller houses feel larger.

A large functioning kitchen remains the number one desire of buyers. 82% of people also said an eat-in kitchen was vital. So, kitchens will continue to be the social center of the house, serving for meal prep, homework, eating, and entertaining.

It's no surprise that smarter storage solutions are amongst the most frequently requested interior features throughout the house, but particularly in kitchens. Now that there are fewer cupboards, a dedicated pantry is a must-have, and quartz is now the top countertop material for its durability and choices.

Multifunctional space is something many new homebuyers want. They are looking for a loft space that can serve as a place for kids and teens to do their homework, play games, or host friends. The trend toward casual and elimination of formal living and dining spaces opens possibilities for alternative uses for those spaces. Now that nearly a third of millennials work from home, an office with a door that closes (for conference calls) is important. Alternative floor plans for multigenerational living are also important as young families welcome friends, staff, relatives, or aging parents.

Top Seven Wants:

1. Topping the NAHB list of most wanted at 92% is a **separate laundry room** to fold, iron, and store. Other features would be a dog bathing station, extra storage cupboards for cleaning materials/vacuums, and additional vertical freezer space. Craft and work tables are also being requested, as are a secondary laundry rooms adjacent to the bedroom areas.



2. **Exterior Lighting** is a big lure for buyers—92% of them to be exact; not only exterior illumination for curb appeal, but spotlights, walkway lights, and pendant motion sensor lights for safety.
3. **Energy Efficiencies** such as low-E windows, Energy Star appliances, programmable thermostats and energy-efficient LED lightbulbs are in demand by 90% of people. (Huge prediction on behalf of CSP dating back to 2007.) An emphasis on water conservancy means appliances, toilets, and fixtures must be water efficient. WaterSense® fixtures reduce water consumption without sacrificing performance.
4. As energy prices rise, homeowners are doing all they can to cut costs. So, it's not unexpected that 89% of buyers name **ceiling fans with remote controls** as the most wanted decorative feature. A typical ceiling fan uses 60 to 75 watts of energy per hour even when





running on high. This makes ceiling fans a very efficient alternative to a typical central air conditioning unit, which uses 3,500 watts. They amplify energy efficiency as they can lower utility bills by 30% to 40%.

TIP: Energy Star-rated fans are 60% more efficient than cheaper conventional units.



5. Millennials and young buyers want a **blurred indoor-outdoor connection**. Whether a patio or balcony, people want ease of living. In fact, 87% of people cited the patio as crucial for relaxing with guests and increasing the usable square footage. Covered space helps make an outdoor space functional during inclement weather and is a special boon for outdoor kitchens. Buyers also want to bring the outdoors in. Ample daylight is easier to accommodate if the building's width is narrow because it helps drive



daylight into the center of house. For enclosed areas, consider adding transom windows, solar tubes, or glass interior and exterior doors.

6. You can host all sorts of extras in a **finished basement with entertainment space**. Picture a movie theater, billiards table, or full-scale gaming room. Basements are no longer the dark spaces of the 1970s. Builders are seeing requests for them to be opened to the floors above with wider and grander staircases.
7. Of course, **technology** remains a major demand. We are not just talking about wi-fi connections! Buyers want control of their property from their phone. Today that means lighting, HVAC, security and other functions.

When selling property, everyone involved in the equation must understand it takes a team of professionals to interpret the complexity of what buyers want. Working with a staging professional who is not only trained but voluntarily tested by a credible source, enhances your reputation as a leading real estate professional. ■