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### Survey shows how men, women approach house shopping differently

By [The Grand Rapids Press](#)  
September 12, 2009, 5:09AM

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Delbridge Langdon Jr. | The Grand Rapids Press

Megan Smith and Danny Taratuta didn't come to the same conclusion initially when visiting this home.

The minute Megan Smith walked into the home on Soren Court in Lowell with her fiance and their real estate agent, she knew it was the one.

Her fiance, however, was not so quick to give his approval.

"He took forever," said Smith, 25, a physician's assistant at Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital. "At least an extra day."

That wasn't the only difference.

The most important feature she looked for: The kitchen.

His? The basement and yard.

And what about the price?

"He is definitely more like the penny-pincher type," Smith said of her fiance, Danny Taratuta. "He wanted a way basic house, very plain.

"I like to spend money a little more."

Not an uncommon experience for house-hunting couples, according to a recent survey by Coldwell Banker Real Estate that examined the differences between men and women when it comes to looking for a home.

That's why real estate agents say it is important that couples discuss a few things before they embark on the search for home, sweet home.

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"You can be running around like a chicken with its head cut off looking for what she likes, but it's not what he likes," said Pat Vredevoogd of Coldwell Banker AJS-Schmidt and a former president of the National Association of Realtors.

Sue Kazma Hilton of Re/Max Real Estate Professionals in Grand Rapids Township said house buying can be a reflection of the relationship.

"If they both come to the same agreement on a house, then it's the right house, and they're both going to be very very happy," she said. "If you see there's a big difference about what he wants and what she wants, it says a lot about the relationship.

"They're not necessarily paddling together."

She recalled one couple where the husband built a home for his wife, choosing everything, even the decorating.

"Within a year or two she had left him," she said. "If they are not emotionally connected to the house, usually the marriage doesn't last."

According to the survey, 70 percent of the respondents said making major financial decisions, like buying a house, was a mutual effort.

Vredevoogd said that among her clients, it primarily is a mutual decision, but she has run into a few self-absorbed people who appeared to run the show.

"You need to know how to work with somebody like that," she said. "But sometimes it's the bluster that hides the fact that the other person has quite a bit to say.

"You have to treat everybody as if everybody has the decision-making power."

Jeannine Lemmon of Patriot Realty in Grand Rapids said three recent clients were married women making most of the decisions themselves.

"One made a successful offer on a house in Cascade that closed -- all without her husband ever seeing it," she said. "Thankfully, once he did, he was happy with her choice -- but she definitely was 'the decider.'

"I have yet to have a married man come along who has bought a house without his wife's active involvement."

Lemmon said that, like Smith and Taratuta, most women are interested in the kitchen and being close to family, while men seemed more concerned about "man caves."

### BY THE NUMBERS

Couples make home-buying decisions together, but a recent survey finds they take different paths to get there.

**How long did it take?** 70 percent of women knew a home was for them the day they walked in; only 62 percent of men said the same. Conversely: 32 percent of men said they needed two or more visits vs. 23 percent of women.

**Do you want to live closer to work or extended family?** 55 percent of women chose family compared to 37 percent of men.

**Who "wears the pants" for major financial decisions?** 70 percent said it's mutual. Of those who said they wear the pants, 26 percent were men, 20 percent were women.

"In fact, show a guy a property with a pole barn and you are halfway to the sale," she said.

Five Star agent James Goetzka, who is working with Smith and Taratuta, said many people think the man will have the final say.

"The real story is that the woman will typically have to give the thumbs-up on any deal before any progress is made and a decision is finalized," he said. "Sometimes it's behind the scenes, but not always."

Smith and Taratuta agreed they made the decision together, even though they cared about different things.

"I think that's what makes us a good couple," Taratuta said. "We have the same values and we make sure that if one of us wants something, we go out of our way to make sure we get it."

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Posted by [macchamps04](#)

September 12, 2009, 10:54AM

What a shock the woman likes to spend a little more. At least she cares about the kitchen.

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September 12, 2009, 10:54AM

Women? Impulse shopping? You've GOT to be kidding! I can't believe that.

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