

# Home builders need to look beyond the focus group to learn what buyers want

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***Washington Post:***

What do home buyers want?

For more than two decades, home builders have sought to answer this perplexing question by sifting through the information gleaned from focus groups. Typically, the people who participate are looking for a new home or have recently purchased one. The builders ask them questions and incorporate their responses into the making of the next subdivision. But the focus group input does not dramatically affect the sales, and the builders fume that “buyers are liars.”

Not at all, said Dan Ariely, a professor of behavioral economics at Duke University. The problem is the subject under discussion, not the truthfulness of the respondents.

It’s difficult for people to understand their relationship with their home, Ariely said. “We do things, but we are completely unaware of the environment around us, and we don’t understand its effects on our behavior and well being,” he said.

Read the whole story: [The Washington Post](#)