

Do You Need a Realtor When Building?

It's common for buyers to assume it's not necessary to use a realtor when their plan is to build. Time and time again I'll get asked whether or not there's any purpose to using an agent, and my answer is always a big, fat yes! For some reason, buyers are convinced that by visiting a new building site and purposely divulging their lack of affiliation with a realtor that they'll get a better deal, but that couldn't be further from the truth.

Without an agent to represent and keep your best interests in mind, more than likely, you're not going to get much of a deal at all! The base prices of homes in a development are set with commissions included. You will not get a reduction in price or receive more in upgrades. You just lose your advocate that works to get you the best possible price on your new home.

Buyers, please talk to an agent about representation before going into a community. When a new home community utilizes a sales representative, they're there to make a sale for the builder. That means the representative is employed and paid by the builder to get them the highest possible price and upsell as many options as they can. Who's working on your behalf? No one, without Buyer representation from a realtor! On the outside, it may not seem like a big deal, but there are a few things

you should consider. How educated are you about market resale values? Have you weighed your options between new construction and resale before visiting a builder? Do you know what sort of questions to ask to make sure you build the home of your dreams? Unfortunately, representatives are not interested in educating buyers on the market.

Before I became a realtor, my husband and I built our home in a new subdivision. Only after the home was built did the builder tell us we could have had a side entry garage. Our lot was large enough to accommodate one, but since we thought it wasn't possible, we didn't even ask! This is just one real-life example of lost communication between buyers and builders. As realtors, we're there to ask the questions and to make sure you understand what you're buying before you sign on the dotted line. We've seen so many houses and been through countless deals. Plus, we understand what most buyers look for in a home. We're a wealth of real estate knowledge, and we're more than willing to share. ∞

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Are You Ready to Buy Your First Home?

Owning your own home is still the American dream! I remember when I was a renter myself and I think there can be something said for doing away with the underlying stress of living on someone else's property, knowing you are at the owner's discretion of being a "good" renter.

I knew that if everything wasn't in the same shape as when I initially signed the agreement, money would be reduced from my security deposit at the end of my lease. When you're a renter, these stresses definitely reinforce the understanding that it's just not YOUR home.

Why not buy your own home? As a first time home buyer, it is a very exciting endeavor and maybe a little scary. As with many firsts in your life, it's good to have a coach. There are things you should know and things you can do, to take the "scary" out of the equation. Let's look at a few good reasons to entertain purchasing your first home.

Buy vs. Rent—Maybe you've heard this already, but financially there are at least 3 reasons why owning a home is a better idea than renting. First, your monthly mortgage payment will generally be less expensive than your current rental payment. Secondly, you will regain some of your mortgage payment back at tax time every year because some of your payment is tax deductible. Third, is growing Equity. Equity is the market value of your home, minus the amount that you owe for it. As you continue paying your monthly mortgage payments, you are paying down the amount you owe, hence gaining more equity. This is a hidden piggy bank while you enjoy your own home.

Beyond financial, how about the peace of mind knowing that if your dog scratches the floor, no one will charge you for it at the end of the year...priceless! Live in the colors you want and landscape your home in elegance. Welcome yourself home with the push of a button as your ga-

rage door opens in front of you. It's yours. This IS the American dream.

Where to Start—Very simply, just visit your trusted mortgage professional or talk to your Realtor today. Realtors know dependable mortgage professionals that complete home purchases every day. They are your one stop shop. Your mortgage professional will give you an approved dollar amount and your Realtor will need this information when they put an offer toward your dream home.

Find a Good Buyer's Agent—Your buyer's agent is your advocate. Get in touch with a Realtor like myself who has successfully worked with many first time buyers. I will guide you through the buying process so you know what to expect. I know what is needed to keep the anxiety level down while you successfully complete your purchase. You don't pay a commission fee to your Buyer agent, so how about some free help from a professional that does this all the time and makes this experience as fun as it should be?

Bottom Line—If you plan on buying a home and can make a long-term commitment of ownership, the potential to grow the equity in your home and turn a profit when you sell is immense. One might argue that the money renters are saving on home maintenance can go into investments, but the truth is, that is rarely the case. More than likely this money is spent in other ways of convenience. Meanwhile and without decision, owners are coming home to a growing investment each day. ∞

Questions and help? Vince Cafazza is happy to serve you at 314-369-8554.

