

News To Move You Forward



Brought to you by Jill Scheppler, Bob McManus & Angie Domine

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Can You Become a Millionaire by Brown-Bagging It?

Eating out during the work or school day is undeniably convenient. There's no scrounging in the cupboards for something to prepare, searching for forks when you forgot yours at home, or eating cold spaghetti when the office microwave is out of order. But what's better than convenience? Keeping money in your wallet.

The fact that packing lunch is cheaper than buying lunch isn't surprising. What *is* surprising is just how much money you can save by brown-bagging it. In fact, some simple math might be enough to convince you to do away with takeout lunches permanently.

Let's say your preferred takeout lunch is a deli sandwich with a drink. With taxes, your total is about \$10. If that's your lunch choice five days out of seven, you're spending \$50 a week, \$200 a month, \$2,600 each year.

What if you make that same sandwich at home? Maybe the ingredients (a loaf of bread, cheese, and sliced meat) cost you \$15 up front, and they make about five sandwiches. Now your cost is \$3 per sandwich, for a total of \$15 a week, \$60 a month, \$780 a year. That's a yearly savings of \$1,820!

There's another kind of savings that comes with bringing your own lunch: calories. While how many calories you can save depends on what you choose to bring, home-cooked meals are typically more healthful than takeout is.

No, this lunch switch won't make you a millionaire. Still, with fewer calories and lower cost, all these savings might make that brown bag look more enticing.

Are You a First-Time Buyer? Get My Free Guide



Buying your first home is a big step, and one that is likely to impact your financial future for years to come.

Make it easier by requesting my free guide, "How First-Timers Can Make a Wise Buy."

Just call me at 715-387-1122 and I'll send it right out to you.

Why Flexibility Is the Watchword for Today's Homes

Let's roll back the clock to around 1900. If we take a tour of the average home, we'll find layouts of about 900 square feet. Fast forward to the year 2000, and we'll find that number has more than doubled, to just over 2,000 square feet.

However, the trend toward "bigger is better" has not carried into 2019. The past few years have seen a slow decrease in median home size. By the end of 2017, it was just over 2,400 square feet.

While this shrinking home size may be significant, what's even more noteworthy is the change in style. Gone are the days of formal living and dining rooms. The trends for extravagant game rooms, wine cellars and media rooms also seem to have faded into the history books.

Today's homeowners are seeking something different. They want rooms that serve multiple purposes and homes that serve multiple generations.

This latest concept offers a home within a home. A common layout includes a great room that serves as both living and dining rooms and a suite that adjoins to the main house. This attached one-bedroom living space includes its own kitchen and bathroom and can function as a teen suite, college student's pad, home office, or in-law apartment.

The idea is that it can be whatever the homeowners need it to be. As parents age or adult children bounce back home, the layout offers suitable living arrangements to accommodate a variety of situations. It creates a space that allows the property to meet homeowner needs, not just for many years but for many generations.

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Negotiation: There's More to it Than You Think!

When you think of real estate negotiations, what comes to mind? For most buyers and sellers, price tops the list. While this is certainly an important part of any real estate deal, did you know there are at least six others areas of potential negotiation?

Closing costs: In addition to the price of the home, buyers must pay closing costs that cover lender fees and other charges. Buyers may ask sellers to help pay for these costs with a flat dollar amount or a percentage of the fees.

Closing date: Do you need to close on a home quickly? Perhaps you need a little more time to search for your next home. There are also different advantages to closing at the beginning and end of the month.

Personal property: What will be included with the four walls and roof? Negotiations will be worked out on whether the seller includes the washer and dryer, kitchen appliances, and even items such as living room furniture or that pool table in the basement.

Contingencies: Many real estate contracts are contingent on financing or other home sales. The buyer may need to complete their lender requirements by a certain date or complete their current home sale before the contract is in full force. These details must be worked out and agreed to up front.

Home repairs: Most contracts include a stipulation that the buyers can complete a home inspection. Once the buyers receive this report, they can ask the sellers to fix items that were found to be in disrepair. Each of these items must be negotiated.

Home warranty: This can be provided as an incentive to buyers to offer peace of mind. It can be particularly appealing for older homes. It typically provides coverage for the home's HVAC system, appliances, and other major items in the event that they need repair soon after the purchase. Does this sound like a lot to negotiate? It is. Fortunately, real estate agents are expert negotiators and can handle all of these points for you! Your agent will identify your top needs and work hard to get you the best deal.

Ask the Agent: This Month's Question

As a buyer, how much will an agent charge me to find my dream home?

As a buyer, your agent will ask you for details regarding the type of home, price, and location you desire. The agent will then partner with you to find your perfect home.

You may fall in love with the first one you see, or your agent may take you on multiple home visits.

Once you find that dream home, your agent will work with you to write up an offer, negotiate the sale, and walk you through all the final details of closing.

How much does this detailed service cost you? As a buyer: \$0.00.

When sellers list a home with a real estate agent, they agree to pay that agent a commission of the sales price. If another agent supplies the buyer, the two real estate agents split that commission.

Therefore, the seller pays for your agent's time and efforts. You simply get to benefit from them...and enjoy your new dream home.

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