

CENTRAL FLORIDA REAL ESTATE NEWS

Keeping You Up To Date On Housing Trends & The Local Real Estate Market

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10 Mistakes First-Time Homebuyers Make—And How to Avoid Them

Buying your first home is exciting—it's a milestone that marks independence, stability, and the start of a new chapter. But let's be honest: it can also feel overwhelming. With so many decisions to make and details to juggle, it's easy to stumble into a few common pitfalls. Don't worry, though. Today, we're breaking down the **10 most common mistakes first-time homebuyers make—and how you can avoid them.**

1. Shopping for homes before getting pre-approved for a mortgage. Solution: Start with a pre-approval. It shows sellers you're serious and helps you set a realistic budget.

2. Falling in love with a home but ignoring the area. Solution: Research schools, commute times, and amenities. The right neighborhood can make or break your experience.

3. Using all your cash for a down payment. Solution: Keep a cushion for closing costs, moving expenses, and emergencies. You don't want to become "house poor."

4. Skipping the inspection to speed up the process. Solution: Always get an inspection. It's your best protection against hidden issues that could cost you big later.

5. Overlooking additional costs and budgeting only for the mortgage. Solution: Factor in taxes, insurance, maintenance, and utilities. Owning a home costs more than the monthly payment.

6. Letting emotions take over, falling in love with a home, and overpaying to get it. Solution: Stick to your budget and keep emotions in check. There's always another great home out there.

7. Ignoring resale value and buying a home without thinking about future buyers. Solution: Choose a property with broad appeal—good layout, solid construction, and a desirable location.

8. Taking out loans or switching jobs after you've applied for a mortgage. Solution: Keep your finances stable until you have the keys in hand. Your lender will thank you.

9. Not asking enough questions or feeling embarrassed to ask for clarification. Solution: Don't be shy! Your real estate agent and lender are there to guide you. No question is too small.

10. Waiting for the "Perfect" time, or waiting for prices to drop. Solution: The best time to buy is when you're ready financially and emotionally. Waiting can cost you in the long run.

By steering clear of these common pitfalls and partnering with the right professionals, you can enjoy a smooth, stress-free journey. When you're ready to take the next step, let's connect. Together, we'll find the perfect home for you—without the hassle. Your dream home is closer than you think!

What's Inside:

2. **How Do I Sell Quickly w/o Leaving Money On The Table?**
3. **Challenges for first-time Home Buyers**
4. **Service Pros In Our Area!**

How Do I Sell Quickly Without Leaving Money On The Table?

Selling in today's market isn't just about listing your home—it's about making your property irresistible to buyers. With the right strategies, you can get your home sold faster, for the price you want, and with as little hassle as possible. Here's how.

1. Price It Right from the Start

One of the biggest mistakes sellers make is overpricing their home, thinking they'll "test the market" or leave room for negotiation. The truth is that an overpriced home sits, and a sitting home loses value.

Your solution: Let's work together. I know the market and can help you set a competitive price that attracts serious buyers while still maximizing your profit. The first two weeks on the market are critical—so let's make them count.

2. Stage to Impress

Buyers aren't just purchasing a property—they're buying a vision of their future life. A cluttered, outdated, or overly personalized home can make it hard for buyers to picture themselves living there. So start with decluttering and deep cleaning. Then, consider staging to highlight your home's best features. Simple touches like fresh flowers, neutral décor, and well-placed furniture can create a welcoming atmosphere that buyers love.

Pro tip: Don't forget curb appeal. First impressions matter, so tidy up the yard, power-wash the driveway, and add a fresh coat of paint to the front door.

3. Market Like a Pro

Gone are the days of a simple yard sign and a few photos. Today's buyers are searching online, and your home needs to stand out in the digital space. Invest in high-quality photography, video tours, and maybe even drone footage. Great visuals grab attention and help buyers imagine themselves in the space.

We want to put our best foot forward with a robust marketing plan that includes social media, online listings, and email campaigns to reach as many potential buyers as possible. The more eyes on your home, the faster it sells.

4. Be Flexible with Showings

The more buyers who can see your home, the better your chances of selling quickly. Restricting showings or requiring too much notice can turn away interested buyers. So stay flexible. Make your home available for last-minute viewings and keep it "show-ready" at all times. Yes, it's inconvenient—but it can shave weeks off your time on the market.

Selling your home quickly in today's market is all about strategy.

By pricing it right, staging it to perfection, marketing it effectively, and staying flexible with showings, you'll attract serious buyers and close the deal faster.

Ready to sell? Let's connect and create a plan to get your home sold—fast, efficiently, and for top dollar. Your next chapter starts now!

Quote of the Month

A house is made of walls and beams; a home is built with love and dreams.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

First-Time Homebuyers Face Challenges as Starter Homes Disappear in 2025

Central Florida, [Insert Date] – As the 2025 homebuying season begins, first-time buyers in Central Florida are finding it increasingly difficult to secure an affordable starter home. Once a stepping stone into real estate, the classic starter home—typically under 1,400 square feet—has become a rarity in today's market.

The Decline of the Starter Home

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 9% of new homes built in 2023 were under 1,400 square feet, a dramatic decrease from 1982 when nearly 40% of new homes fit this category. The diminishing supply of smaller homes is creating affordability challenges for first-time buyers.

The Factors Behind the Shortage

Restrictive zoning laws are a major contributor, limiting where and what types of homes can be built. Rising costs of labor, materials, and land further hinder builders from constructing affordable homes. Sam Khater, chief economist at Freddie Mac, explains that many builders are unable to build smaller homes profitably due to high costs and regulations. Instead, they focus on high-end single-family homes or luxury multi-family properties.

Homebuilders also contend with soaring expenses. Over the past decade, labor and material costs have risen by 50%, while land prices have increased by two and a half times that amount, according to CoreLogic's chief economist, Selma Hepp. These rising costs make it difficult to produce lower-priced homes.

Market Challenges for First-Time Buyers

Since January 2020, home prices have surged over 52%, according to the S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller U.S. National Home Price Index. With mortgage rates hovering near 7%, affordability remains a concern.

Valentine												
A	R	D	N	E	I	R	F	L	R	I	G	LOVE
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Y	A	A	U	R	N	D	T	R	A	W	N	BE MINE
E	R	I	D	Q	O	Q	A	E	N	E	E	SWEETHEARTS
B	N	A	N	M	U	S	R	H	C	E	N	RED ROSES
B	B	I	U	L	I	E	E	C	E	T	G	CHAMPAGNE
E	M	C	T	R	O	R	T	S	O	H	A	CHOCOLATES
N	T	D	R	N	B	V	E	O	A	E	P	DATE
I	A	I	I	B	E	E	E	R	D	A	M	FEBRUARY
M	O	U	E	P	S	L	F	P	A	R	A	CUPID
E	D	O	N	A	U	N	A	E	T	T	H	ADMIRER
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Many homeowners are staying put, locked into low mortgage rates, keeping the supply of existing homes tight and driving prices even higher.

The National Association of Realtors (NAR) reports an all-time low in first-time homebuyer participation, while all-cash purchases hit record highs. In 2024, the median age of a first-time homebuyer rose to 38—compared to just 29 in 1981—highlighting the mounting difficulties for new buyers.

Opportunities for First-Time Buyers

Despite these challenges, options remain for first-time buyers in Central Florida. Potential strategies include:

- Exploring New Construction Incentives: Some builders offer financing incentives and closing cost assistance.
- Considering Alternative Locations: Expanding searches to less competitive areas may yield more affordable options.
- Working with a Real Estate Professional: An experienced agent can help identify off-market deals and negotiate favorable terms.
- Utilizing First-Time Buyer Programs: Florida offers down payment assistance programs and favorable loan options like FHA and USDA loans.



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Agent Spotlight

Phil Holliday is a dedicated real estate professional with Preferred Real Estate Brokers, specializing in helping clients buy and sell homes in both Central Florida and Las Vegas. With years of experience in the industry, Phil combines local market knowledge, cutting-edge technology, and a client-focused approach to make every real estate transaction smooth and successful. One of Phil's unique offerings is his Perfect Home Finder program, a personalized service that goes beyond the standard MLS listings. By working closely with clients to identify their precise needs and preferences, Phil uses advanced target marketing to identify pre-listed and off-market properties that perfectly match each client's criteria. This program is especially valuable for buyers who want exclusive access to homes that aren't widely available. Whether you're a first-time homebuyer, a seasoned investor, or looking to relocate, Phil is committed to helping you find your dream home with ease and expertise. Reach out today to experience a superior level of service in Central Florida or Las Vegas real estate.

Recommended Service Professionals

As a real estate professional, I work with many local professionals and want to recommend those that found to give exceptional service. Here are a few of my top choices, please be sure to tell them I referred them to you

Vince Gaudio
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