

Expert Content Strategy Guide

Mortgage Financial Education



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Emails

Emails are published to the email gallery for admins to copy into their library and use with journeys, campaign builder, or publish to end users for direct sending. This series of emails was designed to inform potential customers about mortgage literacy as it relates to general finances. Topics range from selecting a home inspector, benefits of using a real estate agent, typical steps and timelines of the home purchase process, and mortgage/homebuying financial scams.

*All communications should be reviewed prior to initiating the journey.

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Hello Teddy,

When you're shopping for a home, you'll probably want to view properties that resemble your dream home. But even if it's love at first sight, you'll need to take a closer look before you commit. You don't want to buy expensive problems.

There's an easy, affordable solution: hire a home inspector. They'll carry out a comprehensive inspection of your home and prepare a report for your review.

Hiring a reputable home inspector

No matter how you locate an inspector, you'll want to know what you can expect for your money. These are some important questions to ask:

- How long will an inspection take? Ideally, an inspector will spend at least three hours at the property.
- Will you inspect the roof and attic? There are plenty of structural components that could be aging, broken or missing.
- Do you use thermal imaging during the inspection? This enables inspectors to detect any water leaks that can cause major damage.
- Are there any appliances you won't inspect? If your home comes with a dishwasher, washer and/or dryer, your inspector should ensure they're running properly.
- May I see a sample report? This is an excellent way to judge the quality of an inspector's work.
- May I tag along? Except for potentially dangerous areas, most inspectors will allow this. If they're offended by your request, this is a red flag.

Last but not least: find out if your state requires inspectors to be licensed. This is something I can help you with.



Hello Teddy,

Buying a home is one of life's big events, especially if it's your first. You may be wondering how long the process will take from offer to move-in. I understand...that's why I've prepared this step-by-step guide. You'll also learn what you can do to speed things up.

1. Find the right agent. A licensed real estate agent will help you find homes that have your "gotta haves" and negotiate with sellers. Your agent will also provide intel about local schools, shopping and more.

2. Take care of financing. When you find the right home, you'll want to make an offer immediately. A mortgage pre-approval enables you to do this. It also confirms how much home you can afford, which helps you shop within your budget. This can take two to five days.

3. Find the right home. Now the fun part begins! Your search may only take a few days, or it may be longer. This is difficult to predict, as it will depend on your ability to find a home that's affordable and appealing.

4. Make an offer. When you find the perfect home, it may need some work. This is when an agent can help you negotiate with the seller, who may offer to pay for repairs or reduce the sales price. This shouldn't take more than a week. Your seller may also make the sale contingent upon buying their next home, so they won't have to sleep on a friend's sofa.

5. Help your lender finalize your loan. Before closing, your lender will order a home appraisal. This protects you from overpaying for your home. While you're waiting for final approval, you'll need to:

- Hire an inspector to check out the property for you.
- Shop for homeowner's insurance.

Processing and finalizing your loan can take anywhere from two to eight weeks. Your lender will tell you if delays occur, and why.

You'll meet with your agent and a title company representative or real estate attorney to complete the transaction.

Now it's time to move in, unpack and throw that housewarming party!



Hello Teddy,

When interest rates dip lower than your current mortgage's rate, you may start thinking about refinancing. Since there are several directions you can take, it's worth looking at your overall finances—and different refinancing strategies—before deciding what you'd like to achieve.

Here are the two most popular refinancing options. Depending on your overall financial situation, the right one can help you save.

A rate-term refinance replaces your current mortgage with a new one with a lower interest rate, which lowers your monthly payments. If your income has grown since closing your current mortgage, you may want to shorten your loan's term and pay it off sooner. This can translate into significant savings on interest.

If you have a VA, FHA or USDA mortgage, you may qualify for a streamline refinance with lower overall costs.

A cash-out refinance allows you to access some of your home's equity (the amount you've repaid on your mortgage, plus any increase in your home's appraised value). It replaces your existing mortgage with a new, larger one while you receive cash at closing. If you want to pay off higher-interest debts, begin home renovations, or finance school tuition, a cash-out refi can help.

Not ready to refinance? Say hello to a HELOC.

If you like your current mortgage "as is" but would like to tap into your home's equity, consider applying for a home equity line of credit, or HELOC for short. This will give you convenient access to funds when you need them, for up to 10 years. For example, if you want to pay off a high-interest debt or replace a leaky roof, just withdraw the funds from your HELOC.

If you're interested in exploring one or more of these options, or are ready to apply, feel free to contact me.



Hello Teddy,

If you're looking for a way to expand your home's living space without major renovations, adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) could be a great solution.

An ADU can be anything from a she-shed to a garage apartment. It can improve your lifestyle in a variety of ways. Here are some ideas to consider.

- Rent out the ADU for additional monthly income (it'll pay for itself).
- Provide safety and comfort for aging parents.
- Build a personal workspace, such as a home office, workshop or studio.
- Offer weekend visitors an alternative to your sofa.

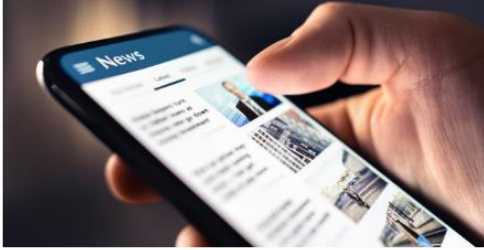
In addition, an ADU can increase your home's value and bump up your equity.

As a homeowner, you can check out several options for financing an ADU. They include home equity loans and lines of credit (HELOCs), refinancing, construction loans or an FHA 203(k) Rehab loan.

Email Subject:

- Buy your dream home, not a money pit.
- How to put your home purchase in the fast lane
- Save and be happy with the right refinance
- Need more space? Consider adding an ADU.

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Hello Teddy,

If you're thinking of buying a home, you'll want to know how the recent settlement announced by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) may affect you.

Terms of the settlement include written agreements for buyers that clarify the terms and costs of working with an agent.

To introduce buyers to the new agreement, NAR has created a two-minute video presentation "[Window to the Law: Terms of a Written Buyer Agreement](#)".

If you prefer to read about the NAR Settlement details, or are planning to sell a home, here's a [link to NAR's Get the Facts](#) page.

In addition to Settlement FAQs, it has links to these Consumer Resources pages:

[Resources and FAQ for Buyers](#)
[Resources and FAQ for Sellers](#)



Hello Teddy,

I'm writing to provide you with details of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) Settlement that became active during August 2024. It was created to help ensure that buyers fully understand the possible costs of working with a NAR REALTOR® before beginning their home search.

Agents are required to prepare a written buyer agreement for buyers to review and sign before they tour homes for sale. This agreement will include:

1. A specific, clear disclosure of the amount or rate of compensation the real estate agent will receive. If needed, this disclosure will describe how this amount will be determined.
2. Agent compensation must be objective. This means that an agent may ask a buyer for a flat fee, percentage or similar payment schedule. Agents cannot describe their compensation in a vague, open-ended way, such as "compensation shall be whatever the amount the seller is offering to the buyer".
3. A term that prohibits the agent from receiving compensation for services from any source that exceeds the amount or rate agreed to with the buyer.
4. A clear statement that informs buyers that agent fees and commissions are fully negotiable and not set by law.

This agreement is NOT required for a buyer who is attending an open house event or contacts an agent with questions about their services.

No matter who you choose to assist you with buying a home, your agent is a licensed professional who understands that you have choices. Agents also expect buyers to ask questions about their compensation and services.

You can find additional information about the NAR Settlement online on NAR's [Facts, FAQs and Consumer Resources](#) page.



Hello Teddy,

You may have seen news of a legal settlement made by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), together with details of new regulations that have been introduced. Here are the basics:

- The amount of compensation a home buyer or seller pays an agent remains fully negotiable.
- Potential home buyers must sign a written agreement with their agent before touring a property. This agreement is required for both in-person viewings and tours conducted online but is not required when attending an open house event.
- This agreement will contain the terms that the buyer has negotiated with the agent. These terms define the services provided, total costs, and how the buyer will compensate the agent.
- Home sellers may offer buyers concessions, such as paying some or all of their closing costs. These may be mentioned within a seller's listing on a Multi Listing Service (MLS).
- A seller's agent may advertise a property for sale within social media postings, flyers and websites.

Keep in mind: you have choices when buying or selling a home. Your real estate agent will be willing to clarify any part of the NAR Settlement for you. You may also visit [NAR Settlement: Get the Facts](#) online.



Hello Teddy,

If you're planning to buy or sell a home soon, you may be thinking "This will be simple. No need to pay a real estate agent."

While it's easy to assume that agents only walk buyers through houses, they do a lot more. Agents carry out complex, time-consuming tasks during every stage of a home sale, including stuff you probably don't have the time (or patience!) to do yourself.

Before listing a home for sale, they study market data and prepare a detailed market analysis. They also arrange inspections for sellers and locate property information for buyers.

When assisting a seller, agents evaluate different buyer offers and negotiate with other agents. If you're selling, you'll want to know which prospects are serious, and which ones are tire-kickers. An agent will only bring you buyers with funds.

When a sale is almost ready to close: an agent will help you review the various documents (which average around 100 pages) that go with finalizing a home purchase.

Email Subject:

- Tune into some good news for home buyers
- NAR document requirements for home buyers
- How the 2024 NAR Settlement affects home buyers
- Why every home sale's better with a real estate agent

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Hi Teddy,
Home ownership comes with plenty of benefits, including some impressive federal tax deductions. After you move up to a home of your own, you could be celebrating tax time instead of dreading it.

- Here are some details of your potential savings.
- You may be able to deduct the entire portion of your mortgage payments that go towards interest.
 - You may also be able to deduct up to \$10,000 for real estate taxes charged by your state and/or local government.
 - If you own two homes, you may be able to deduct the interest paid for both properties' mortgages.
 - Your deduction amounts may differ, depending on if you file a single or joint tax return.
 - Be sure to visit [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) or contact your tax professional if you'd like more information.

Saving money's fun, but there are many other things you'll like about home ownership.



Hello Teddy,
Buying a home is a uniquely exciting event, especially if it's your first. However, there are a couple of scams that target people like you during the closing stages of the transaction. Fortunately, both are easy to spot if you know what to look for, so I'm sending you details of both.

Closing funds wire fraud
Scammers set up this scam by hacking into computers and stealing details of mortgage closings. A few days before, they send home buyers a fraudulent email with instructions to wire their closing funds to an account that's not related to the transaction.

To avoid this scam, rely on your real estate agent and lender to contact you with any changes to closing, and contact them if you receive this type of email.

Home title theft
Scammers steal personal information about homeowners and forge documents with this information. These forgeries transfer the homeowner's property title to themselves and are filed at the county recorder's office. Next, they may try to obtain a home equity loan against the property or even sell it.

To protect yourself against title theft, contact your county recorder's office and ask if title fraud alerts are available. You'll be notified if anyone attempts to alter your home's title. Title lock services from a security protection provider are another option.

- Other tips**
- Anyone who's legitimate doesn't try to rush customers or ask for passwords. Hang up on anyone who does.
 - If you receive an email with a link to an unknown business website, don't click on it. This could trigger a malware download to your computer.
 - Scammers often ask for payments to be made with non-conventional methods, including gift cards and cryptocurrency.

If you would like to learn more about potential financial scams, feel free to contact me. I'm here to help.



Hi Teddy,
Whether you're planning to buy a home or have already bought one, consider opening a dedicated savings account for home-related expenses. It keeps budgeting simple while helping you reach your goals. You'll also have a little less to worry about...something we'd all like!

- If you're planning to buy: A savings account is perfect for building that all-important down payment. Plus, you'll have a place to stash funds for other expenses that you'll encounter during the buying process.
- If you've just moved in: If you've got ideas for making your new house all yours, a savings account can help you turn those Pinterest photos into reality, one room at a time.
- If you're a homeowner: A cashed-up savings account means you don't have to rely on credit when the water heater or refrigerator decides to take the day off.

Email Subject:

- Why April 15th's less taxing for homeowners.
- Watch out for these housing-related scams
- Why your nest needs a nest egg