

Understand your investment

As a possible investor in real estate, you should start by doing two things. First, compare the benefits of investing to the benefits of consumption. And then, know what investment vehicles are available and how they can meet your goals.

Whether it be real estate, a government bond, an investment certificate or stock in a company, it's important to do your homework and make sure that you understand what you're buying.

Investing in real estate can mean buying anything from an empty lot to a residential property to a commercial property.

Investment real estate is defined as the sale of industrial, commercial or residential income-producing real estate.

Both industrial and commercial real estate are concerned with the sale or lease of a building. The difference between them is that industrial refers to warehouse and manufacturing space while commercial covers retail and office space.

There are a number of advantages to investing in real estate.

Real estate traditionally has excellent potential for capital growth during inflationary times. When the economy is stable, real estate can provide a higher rate of return than many other forms of investment. Real estate is a tangible investment that won't lose its value suddenly. Furthermore, there may be tax benefits in such an investment which an accountant can help you with.

Conversely, real estate is not as liquid as other investments such as stocks and bonds which can be converted into cash reasonably quickly. Some investment real estate is not as readily accessible for the average person because of the large dollars involved.

Investing in real estate can also be done for

the purpose of planning for retirement or an estate. In planning for retirement, an investor puts part of their present income towards acquiring real estate holdings that will provide a source of supplementary income when a regular pay cheque is no longer coming. In estate planning, the purchase of real estate is for the benefit of heirs.

A feasibility study can help you make your decision. This study focuses on the potential of satisfying your investment objectives and what the most appropriate course of action is to meet those objectives.

An investment analysis, not to be confused with a feasibility study, concentrates more specifically on comparing real estate as an investment to other investment possibilities.

Of the Ontario Real Estate Association's (OREA) approximately 40,000 members, 15 per cent work mainly on industrial, commercial, farm or land brokerage. It means that finding a qualified real estate professional in this highly specialized business is not as difficult as you might think.

There is no one way for you to find the right sales person specializing in investment properties. Many rely on word-of-mouth for their business, so begin by calling real estate companies for leads on such specialists in your area or the area you want to invest.

To give yourself more people to choose from, contact your local real estate board for direction. There are 48 local real estate boards province-wide who are willing to help.

When you feel that you have a sufficient number of people to contact, ask each person about their experience and what they feel they can do to assist you.

One final note. Don't be impatient to jump into the market. The worst investment deals are usually those made in haste.

Is home ownership right? Depends on many things

You've probably asked yourself this question a countless number of times - "Is homeownership for me?"

Obviously there's no one answer that applies to everyone. Whether or not homeownership is for you depends to a large extent on the lifestyle you lead.

Is "home" to you a place where you make pit-stops every now and then? Or is "home" somewhere you take comfort in retreating to?

You should be thinking of buying a house if you find yourself saying yes to the following: you plan to live in the same area for the next several years; you have several thousand dollars in savings and no major debts; you plan on having a stable income in the foreseeable future; you find yourself longing for greater control of the place you call home.

Financial gain, freedom of lifestyle and pride in saying that it's yours are principal advantages of homeownership.

The financial benefits of owning rather than renting begin the day you become an owner. Countless monthly payments for renting a place to live amount to nothing in terms of ownership. But, by gradually paying off a mortgage, you build equity and call the property yours. And by that time your home will likely have appreciated in value.

As time goes on you may find that your living requirements are changing and greater disposable income makes owning a larger house possible. In this case, you can budget

for the sale of your present house and use the money from the sale towards your next purchase.

There is little freedom to change and improve your dwelling if you're renting. Owning your own house allows you this freedom.

This freedom can be as minor as deciding to have a pet or as complicated as making an addition to the house. It all comes down to the fact that the decision is yours to make, not your landlord's.

There's no better feeling than being able to say that it belongs to you. Especially when it's your home and you can mold it to suit your needs and taste.

No doubt a first-time buyer will at times feel overwhelmed by the undertaking. The expense and responsibility that come with the purchase can unnerve even the most stoic of us.

The Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) recommends using the services of a real estate sales person and broker to the fullest extent. They can make the process more enjoyable and take much of the mystery away.

In later years when you're reminiscing about the good 'ole days when the cost of living was so much less and you could buy a house for next to nothing, you'll be glad that you bought your home.

Bath design features to look for when buying a new home

Home is where the heart is...and also where the residents are, according to researchers who track lifestyle trends. People are staying home in droves, according to the experts, and relaxing in the comforts afforded there.

This phenomenon, called cocooning, is making its mark on the bath industry, noted Francis Jones, CKD, Executive Director of the National Kitchen & Bath Association, during the recent Kitchen & Bath Symposium in New York.

"Researchers tell us that people are spending more of their precious leisure time at home. Consequently, they want that time to be more pleasurable, and they want their homes to offer the amenities that make it an enjoyable place," said Jones.

At one time, a room for fulfilling primarily hygienic functions, today's bath has become a "bodyroom" for tending to corporal needs: Relaxing, exercising and rejuvenating.

Today's well-appointed bath could be equipped with a whirlpool tub, steam room, sauna and exercise equipment.

Industry trends indicate that the bath has become the most-remodeled room, followed by the kitchen.

In light of these trends, Jones recommends potential home-buyers consider the following features when looking for a new home:

• **Proper Lighting**—The move towards multi-purpose kitchens and baths is accompanied by more sophisticated lighting needs, noted Symposium speaker

Joseph Orzechuta, CKD, Sleepy Hollow Custom Kitchens, North Tarrytown, N.Y.

In addition to general illumination, task lighting is needed: Under counters, over the sink, around mirrors, in the shower and other bath "privacy zones," for example. Lighting can also be used to create a mood.

• **Adequate Ventilation**—Adequate ventilation is important in the bath, where a moist environment can wreak havoc with wallcovering, laminates and tile grout.

Studies have shown that the moisture content in a ventilated bath two minutes after the shower is turned off is lower than it would be after 20 minutes in an unventilated bath.

• **Safety Considerations**—The National

Kitchen & Bath Association estimates 25 percent of all household accidents occur in the bath. Features such as grab bars, slip-resistant surfaces and ground fault circuit interruptors can help prevent accidents.

Consumers should request non-skid tile or other flooring in the bath, noted Symposium presenter Nicholas Geragi, Jr., CKD, Kitchens by Nicholas, Herkimer, N.Y.

Bathrooms pose a potential threat. If they're too deep, they're difficult for some people to get in and out of.

Sunken tubs can be hazardous. This doesn't mean sunken tubs should be avoided. Rather, they should be equipped with the necessary safety features to make them even more enjoyable.

• **Adequate Clearance Spaces**—With the trend towards multiple-user baths, clearance space is especially important.

While it is always desirable for the shower door to swing free and clear of cabinets and countertops, the importance is heightened in a bath for two.

Likewise, other fixtures—tubs, water closets and bidets—should be surrounded by enough space to accommodate both users.

For this reason, many NKBA bath designers create "privacy zones" around these areas.

• **Anticipation of Future Needs**—How adaptable is the home? Can it grow with your family and change with your needs? For example, can a spare bedroom be transformed into a master bath?

Like the homeowners below, You Could PLAN Your SPRING Move NOW

LET BILL OR ANDY SHOW YOU HOW EASY IT IS TO MOVE TO YOUR DREAM HOME

(Not Intended To Solicit Homes Already Listed For Sale)



BILL MCKEOWN
Sales Rep.
873-2437
457-9788



This Certificate

Entitles You To A

PROFESSIONAL HOME EVALUATION

At No Cost Or Obligation

CALL BILL MCKEOWN OR ANDY KING FOR PROMPT, PROFESSIONAL & FRIENDLY SERVICE

RE/STAR

MARLATT REALTY GROUP INC.

NETWORK OF THE STARS ★ MEMBER REALTOR

(Not Intended to solicit homes already listed for sale)



ANDY KING
Sales Rep.
873-1056
457-9788

