

SECRETS:

NINE DEADLY THINGS TO AVOID WHEN BUYING A HOME

THE BUYING GAME

How To Avoid Nine Costly
(But Common Mistakes)

Let's face it, buying a home is a major expense. But why make it more expensive than necessary ? Play the buying game right and you can cut costs AND buy the house that's best for you. I can help you watch out for these nine common, but costly, pitfalls.

1) THE WRONG HOUSE

One costly mistake is choosing the wrong house: maybe one too big or too small for future needs, or a fixer-upper if you're not handy, a house too far from work or too close to traffic, one likely to need extensive fixing up, or a home in the wrong price range. Avoid this #1 trap by working with me to define your present and future needs, what location is most suitable, what level of fixing up is comfortable, and how much you can afford for maintenance, utilities and everyday life after moving in.

2) BIDDING BLIND

Some buyers offer a contract above the true market value of the property or fail to bid on a great value because they don't know the market. Don't try to go it alone. Ask me for a comparative market analysis to avoid overpaying or underbidding on the home you choose.

3) TITLE TROUBLE TRAPS

A title search may reveal encumbrances on the property title like tax liens, easements, leases or an undisclosed co-owner. Avoid this trap by having the title search done early if possible, and by buying owner's title insurance to protect your investment in case a problem surfaces later.

4) SURVEY SURPRISES

The property survey may show the lot boundaries are different from the property plat, a neighbor's fence is over the line, or zoning regulations have been violated. Avoid the trap by asking to see the seller's survey made back when the seller bought the house, and go over any additions or variations with your real estate agent. Also have your new survey done early.

5) LAST MINUTE DEFECTS

Avoid surprises by first doing a careful inspection of the house, then consider an independent home inspector to check the house inside and out. Have the inspector report to you any items needing attention, the cost to fix them or the repercussions if they are left as is. Removal of subject clauses should be contingent upon an acceptable professional inspector's report.

6) **PRE-PAID SHOCKERS**

Some items such as real estate taxes and strata fees-get pro-rated at completion, while others-including hazard insurance and taxes-have to be paid ahead a few months. Avoid inaccuracies by asking for these figures a day or two in advance, and check the charges. Remember, if the settlement date changes so do some of these pre-paid costs.

7) **SELLER SLIP -UPS**

Repairs not made, items that fail to convey or other contractual hang-ups can delay settlement. To avoid these traps, take the list of agreed-upon items to walk-through and check them off. But be prepared to set a dollar amount for a trust account for items that fall through the cracks.

8) **HIDDEN JUNK FEES**

Some lenders add questionable charges at closing that were not shown on the disclosure form, such as an "underwriting fee," "courier fees," or mark-ups on court documentation fees. Avoid these fees by asking the lender at application time exactly what fees are included on the federal settlement forms and what additional fees may be charged at closing. Some of these fees can be negotiated down or waived for the customer who complains.

9) **CLOSING RUSH**

Insist on seeing the settlement sheets the day before closing. That way, you'll avoid last minute problems- such as an interest rate or points other than you agreed to showing up on the paperwork.

Sometimes missing the settlement date because of an eleventh-hour snag endangers the locked-in interest rate or the entire sale. Don't get trapped by a too-close closing. Get a 60 -day lock-in for your loan interest rate, if possible, and give yourself that much time to close the sale.

How I Can Help

Relax. You CAN win at the homebuying game. Your best first move is to call me, Michael Cowling at 604-276-2335 or email at mc@michaelcowling.com. I'm here to make sure you succeed and avoid the nine deadly things when buying a home. After all, my business depends on referrals from happy homeowners who receive service beyond their expectations.