

real

BUYER Guide



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Hello!

I AM MARIANNE KNOWLES

nice to meet you!

As a real estate agent, I am passionate about helping my clients find their dream homes. With my extensive knowledge of the local market and my dedication to understanding their unique needs and preferences, I am committed to finding the perfect property for each and every one of them. I pride myself on providing exceptional customer service, guiding my clients through the entire buying process with honesty, transparency, and open communication. With my expertise and personalized approach, I am confident that I can help my clients achieve their real estate goals.

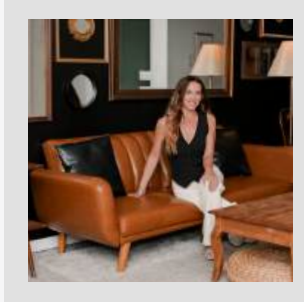


@MarianneKnowles

About us



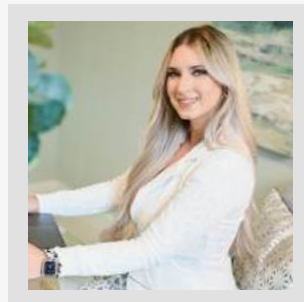
Every Day Tampa Bay



MARIANNE KNOWLES

TEAM LEADER- REALTOR®

Standout figure in the Tampa Bay area's real estate landscape, with years of experience as a leading real estate professional. She is widely recognized and respected for her profound knowledge of the local market, exceptional negotiating skills, dedicated work ethic, forward-thinking marketing approaches, and unparalleled service to her clients. Marianne has established a strong reputation among her peers in the industry, thanks to her innovative use of technology and video.



DAIMI GONZALEZ

REALTOR®

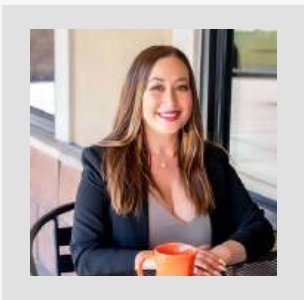
Daimi is a passionate and purpose-driven Realtor who helps clients build equity, stability, and generational wealth through real estate. Bilingual in English and Spanish, she brings a unique perspective as an immigrant who understands the excitement and challenges of relocating, especially to the thriving Tampa Bay area. Daimi is known for her strong communication, strategic thinking, and unwavering commitment to protecting her clients' best interests.



GARY LANIER

TRANSACTION COORDINATOR

Gary is the powerhouse behind the scenes, handling all the details to keep every transaction running smoothly. From contract to close, he manages timelines, paperwork, and communication to ensure nothing falls through the cracks. His organization and attention to detail give our clients peace of mind throughout the process.



BETH JAMIESON

MORTGAGE BROKER/ BRANCH MANAGER-ISERVE LENDING

With over 25 years of experience in the mortgage industry, Beth is the go-to expert when deals get tough. Known for her sharp problem-solving skills and relentless dedication, she has a proven track record of rescuing transactions that others had given up on. Her deep industry knowledge, creative financing strategies, and calm under pressure make her a trusted partner for both clients and real estate professionals. When others say it can't be done, Beth finds a way—turning challenges into closings time and time again.

THE *Process*



HOME BUYER'S *Roadmap*



10 STEPS TO *Buying a home*

1

FIND THE RIGHT AGENT

2

PREPARE FINANCES

3

GET PRE-APPROVED

4

START HOME SHOPPING

5

MAKE AN OFFER

6

ORDER AN INSPECTION

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NEGOTIATE FINAL OFFER

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SCHEDULE THE MOVE

10

CLOSING DAY

01

FINDING THE *Right agent*

GETTING YOU IN THE DOOR

Finding the right buyer real estate agent is crucial to ensuring a smooth and successful home-buying experience.

Look for an agent with experience, knowledge, strong communication skills, and a professional demeanor. They should have a deep understanding of the local market and be able to provide you with personalized guidance and support tailored to your unique needs and preferences. It's also important to find an agent you feel comfortable working with and who is committed to providing exceptional customer service. With the right agent by your side, you can find the home of your dreams with confidence and ease.

STAYING ON TOP OF THE PAPERWORK

As a real estate buyer agent, staying on top of the paperwork is essential to ensure a smooth and timely transaction. I am highly organized and detail-oriented, and I pride myself on my ability to manage and track all necessary documents and deadlines with precision and efficiency.

ON YOUR SIDE

As a real estate buyer agent, I am dedicated to representing your best interests throughout the entire buying process, from property search to negotiation and closing.



AFFORDABILITY

As a real estate buyer agent, I focus on finding affordable properties that meet my clients' needs and budget.

PROBLEM SOLVER

As a real estate buyer agent, I am a skilled problem solver, able to anticipate and address any challenges that may arise during the buying process. I work tirelessly to find creative solutions that meet my clients' needs and achieve their real estate goals.

NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT

As a real estate buyer agent, I am a neighborhood expert, knowledgeable about the local community, schools, amenities, and property values. I use this expertise to help my clients find the right neighborhood that meets their lifestyle and investment needs, while ensuring they get the best possible value for their money.

02 PREPARE *Financing*



HOW MUCH HOUSE CAN YOU AFFORD?

Mortgage lenders recommend you do not buy a home that is more than 3 to 5 times your annual household income. If you are not purchasing a home with cash, you will need a mortgage pre-approval provided by your mortgage lender. A lender will work with you to get a loan that meets your needs. Some buyers are concerned with keeping their monthly payments as low as possible, others want to make sure that their monthly payments never increase.

CHECK YOUR CREDIT

A mortgage requires a good credit score. You can improve your score by:

- ✓ Paying down credit card balances
- ✓ Continuing to make payments on time
- ✓ Avoid applying for a new credit card or car loan until you have been approved
- ✓ Avoid making big purchases until you have been approved
- ✓ If possible, avoid job changes until you have been approved

SAVE CASH FOR A DOWN PAYMENT & OTHER EXPENSES

In order to make your dream of buying a home a reality, you will need to save cash for your down payment, earnest money, closing costs & home inspector.

- ✓ A Down Payment is typically between 3.5% & 20% of the purchase price
- ✓ Earnest Money is money you put down to show you're serious about purchasing a home. It's also known as a good faith deposit.
- ✓ Closing Costs for the buyer run between 2% & 5% of the loan amount
- ✓ A Home Inspection costs \$300 to \$500

03 GET *Pre-approved*

Being pre-approved, unlike being pre-qualified, means you've actually been approved by a lender for a specific loan amount. You will need to provide documented financial information (income, statements, assets, debt & credit reports etc.) to be reviewed & verified by the lender.



GET *qualified*

TYPE OF LOAN	CREDIT SCORE	DOWN PAYMENT
VA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
USDA LOAN	620	NO DOWN PAYMENT
FHA LOAN	580+	3.5%
	500-579	10%
203K LOAN	640	3.5%
CONVENTIONAL 97	620	3%
CONVENTIONAL LOAN	640	5-20%



Income QUALIFICATIONS

QUALIFYING INCOME

- ✓ W-2 Income/Salary
- ✓ Income from part-time jobs
- ✓ Income from a second Job
- ✓ Overtime & Bonuses
- ✓ Seasonal jobs
- ✓ Self-employed Income
- ✓ Alimony & child support (Documentation required)



NON-QUALIFYING INCOME

- ✓ Income from the lottery
- ✓ Gambling
- ✓ Unemployment pay
- ✓ Single bonuses
- ✓ Non-occupying co-signer income Unverifiable income
- ✓ Income from rental properties

NEEDED DOCUMENTS

- ✓ W2'S FROM THE PAST 2 YEARS
- ✓ 3 MONTHS WORTH OF PAY-STUBS
- ✓ BANK STATEMENTS (PAST 3 MONTHS)
- ✓ PREVIOUS 2 YEARS OF TAX RETURNS
- ✓ LIST OF YOUR DEBTS & ASSETS
- ✓ DIVORCE DECREE
- ✓ ADDITIONAL INCOME DOCUMENTS

TYPES OF *mortgage loans*

TYPES OF LOANS	WHO QUALIFIES	DOWN PAYMENT	UPFRONT MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MONTHLY MORTGAGE INSURANCE	MINIMUM CREDIT SCORE
VA Department of Veteran Affairs	Veterans Personnel with honorable discharge Reservists & National Guard Surviving Spouses	NONE	NONE	NONE	580
USDA Department of Agriculture	Someone who is buying a home in a USDA -designated rural area.	NONE	2% of the loan amount. Can be rolled into loan amount.	REQUIRED	640
FHA Federal Housing Administration	Anyone who meets the minimum credit and income levels.	At least 3.5% of purchase price	1.75% of loan amount	REQUIRED	580-640
203K Federal Housing Administration	Anyone who plans to purchase a fixer-upper or needs to renovate their home and meets credit & income requirements	At least 3.5% of purchase price	1.75% of loan amount	REQUIRED	580-640
CONVENTIONAL 97	Depending on the program, available first time home buyers (a buyer who hasn't owned in the last three years) can put 3% down with a Conventional 97 program.	Varies from 3%-20% of purchase price	NONE	REQUIRED	620
SELECT SMART PLUS	Anyone who meets lenders credit, income & debt level requirements	Varies from 3% -20%, but typically ranges from 5-20%	NONE	REQUIRED	620

Start HOME SHOPPING



04

START

Home shopping

START TOURING HOMES IN YOUR PRICE RANGE

Time to start shopping! We will take notes on all the homes we visit. It can be hard to remember all the details of each home, so take pictures or videos to help you remember each home, and review the notes you have written. Once we have found THE house for you, we will present an appropriate offer based on recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its current condition. Negotiations may take place after the offer is presented.



Tip

WE WILL MAKE SURE TO CHECK EVERY LITTLE DETAIL OF EACH HOUSE

- ✓ Test the plumbing
- ✓ Test the electrical system
- ✓ Open and close the windows & doors to make sure they work properly

EVALUATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SURROUNDING AREAS

- ✓ Are the surrounding homes well maintained?
- ✓ How much traffic is on the street?
- ✓ Is it conveniently located to schools, shopping, restaurants, & parks



Make an OFFER



05 MAKE *an offer*

WHEN TO MAKE AN OFFER:

So you have found THE house! Congrats! In today's market when the demand is higher than the amount of homes available it is important to act fast!

HOW MUCH TO OFFER:

We will sit down and look at recent sales and current buyer activity in the area, as well as the value of the property in its present condition. Putting all this information together, we will determine the price that you would like to offer.

SUBMITTING AN OFFER

There are some components to an offer that makes it more appealing to the sellers.

- ✓ **Put Your Best Foot Forward**
We will work together to discover options and create your best offer. Depending on the circumstances, you may have only one chance to make a good impression.
- ✓ **Shorter Inspection Periods**
Try shortening the inspection period to 10 days
- ✓ **Offer to Close Quickly**
Many sellers prefer to close within 30 days.



- ✓ **Put Down a Healthy Earnest Deposit**
A large earnest money deposit shows the seller you are serious.
- ✓ **Cash Talks**
A transaction that is not dependent on receiving loan approval is more attractive to a seller
- ✓ **Write the Seller a Letter**
We will make your offer stand out by writing a personal letter to the seller, explaining why you fell in love with their home.

AFTER YOU SUBMIT AN OFFER

THE SELLER COULD

- ✓ **ACCEPT THE OFFER**
- ✓ **DECLINE THE OFFER**

This happens if the seller thinks your offer isn't close enough to their expectations to further negotiate.

✓ COUNTER-OFFER

A counter-offer is when the seller offers you different terms. If this happens, you can:

- ACCEPT THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER
- DECLINE THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

COUNTER THE SELLER'S COUNTER-OFFER

You can negotiate back and forth as many times as needed until you reach an agreement or someone chooses to walk away.

OFFER IS ACCEPTED - CONGRATS!

Sign the purchase agreement and you are now officially under contract and in escrow! There are usually several contingency periods while in escrow. Now inspections, appraisals, or anything else built into your purchase agreement will take place.

ESCROW PERIOD



06

ORDER AN *inspection*

During the inspection period, we will schedule a licensed home inspector to do a thorough inspection of the home. Once this is complete, the inspector will provide us with a detailed report. You can take the issues as-is or request the seller to address some or all of the findings. We will be mindful and reasonable on smaller items while being very cautious and vigilant of potentially significant issues.



07

NEGOTIATE *final offer*

Issues typically arise after the home inspection, and those issues tend to result in another round of negotiations for credits or fixes.

- ✓ Ask for credit for the work that needs to be done.
Likely, the last thing the seller wants to do is repair work.
- ✓ Think “big picture” and don’t sweat the small stuff.
A tile that needs some caulking or a leaky faucet can easily be fixed. Repairs are still up for negotiation and perhaps a small credit would help with closing costs.
- ✓ Keep your poker face.

The listing agent will be present during inspections and revealing your comfort level with the home could come back to haunt you in further discussions or negotiations.

08 APPRAISAL *ordered*

Your lender will arrange for a third party appraiser to provide an independent estimate of the value of the house you are buying. The appraisal lets all parties involved know that the price is fair. The loan file then moves on to the mortgage underwriter. If approved you will receive your final commitment letter that includes the final loan terms & percentage rates.



PROPERTY TITLE SEARCH

This ensures that the seller truly owns the property and that all existing liens, loans or judgments are disclosed.

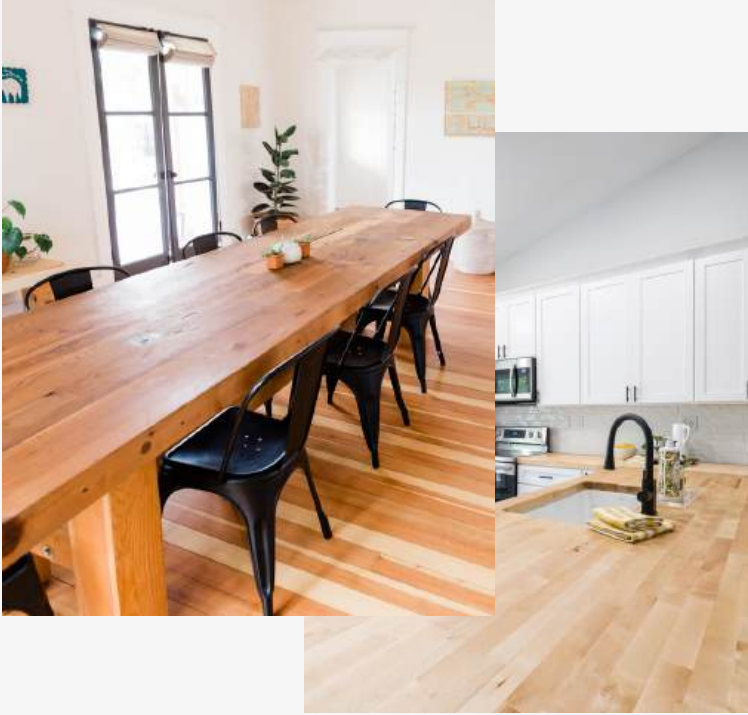
HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

You'll need insurance for the new home before closing. This will protect against things like fire, storms, and flooding.

Scheduling YOUR MOVE



09 SCHEDULING *your move*



AFTER SIGNING

- ✓ Finalize Home Mortgage
- ✓ Schedule Home Inspection
- ✓ Declutter! Sort through every drawer, closet, cupboard & shelf, removing items you no longer need or like. Donate or sell items that are in good condition
- ✓ Get copies of medical records and store them with your other important documents
- ✓ Create an inventory of anything valuable that you plan to take
- ✓ Get estimates from moving companies

4 WEEKS TO MOVE

- ✓ Give 30 days notice if you are currently renting
- ✓ Schedule movers/moving truck
- ✓ Buy/find packing materials
- ✓ START PACKING

2 WEEKS TO MOVE

- ✓ Secure Home Warranty
- ✓ Get quotes for home insurance
- ✓ Schedule time for closing
- ✓ Contact utility companies (water, electric, cable)
- ✓ Change address: mailing, subscriptions, etc.
- ✓ Minimize grocery shopping
- ✓ Keep on packing

3 WEEKS TO MOVE

- ✓ Arrange appraisal
- ✓ Complete title search (Title company will do this)

1 WEEK TO MOVE

- ✓ Obtain certified checks for closing
- ✓ Schedule and attend a final walkthrough
- ✓ Finish packing
- ✓ Clean
- ✓ Pack essentials for a few nights in new home
- ✓ Confirm delivery date with the moving company

Closing DAY



10 CLOSING *day*

CLOSING DAY

Closing is when you sign ownership and insurance paperwork and you receive your new home's keys! Typically, closing takes four to six weeks.

CLOSING DISCLOSURE

Lenders are required to provide you with a closing disclosure, at least three days before closing. This will show you what your final loan terms and closing costs will be. You will have three days to review the statement. This is done to ensure that there are no surprises at the closing table. If there is a significant discrepancy between the loan estimate and the closing disclosure, we must notify your lender and title company immediately.



FINAL WALKTHROUGH

We will do a final walk through the home within 24 hours of closing to check the property's condition. This final inspection takes about an hour. We will make sure any repair work that the seller agreed to make has been done.

We will be sure to:

- Make sure all appliances are working properly
- Run the water in all the faucets and check for any possible leaks
- Open and close garage doors with opener
- Flush toilets
- Run the garbage disposal and exhaust fans



CLOSING TABLE

Who will be there:

- ✓ Your agent
- ✓ The seller
- ✓ The seller's agent
- ✓ A title company representative
- ✓ Your loan officer
- ✓ Any real estate attorneys involved in the transaction

The closing typically happens at the title company. You will be signing lots of paperwork so get your writing hand warmed up! Some of the papers you will be signing include: the deed of trust, promissory note, and other documents.



CLOSING COSTS

Closing costs can vary depending on your home's purchase price and where you are located. You can generally expect your closing costs to be around 3% to 4% of the home's purchase price. These closing costs can sometimes be shared with the seller.

BRING TO CLOSING

- ✓ Government-issued photo ID
- ✓ Copy of the sales contract
- ✓ Homeowner's insurance certificate
- ✓ Proof of funds to cover the remainder of the costs

RECEIVE YOUR KEYS

Congratulations! It was a journey but you are now officially a homeowner!! Time to celebrate!



Client

TESTIMONIALS



Client Testimonials

LAURIE CARLIN

"Her professionalism and care in looking out for my best interest, in both buying and selling of my homes, is greatly appreciated. She is an asset to her profession and is highly recommended."



GAIL WAITT

"Just wonderful . they helped us for nearly a year. Very welcoming and knowledgeable professionals and always had helpful advice about everything. What a great experience we had , we learned so much. It's hard to arrange moves across the country they helped it go smoothly."



ADAM BOSSERT

"Team Knowles Tampa Bay was the absolute best to work with. They had amazing knowledge of the market, was able to help us guide through the sale of our home and the purchasing of another with poise and professionalism and was always responsive and attentive to our needs. We felt more like family than clients. We would not have been able to navigate the selling of our old home and the purchase of our dream home without them. We will never work with another team."



What to EXPECT

GREAT COMMUNICATION

HONESTY & TRANSPARENCY

INTEGRITY & RESPECT

LOCAL MARKET KNOWLEDGE

REACH YOUR REAL ESTATE GOALS



THE BUYER AGREEMENT

WHAT IS A BUYER'S AGENT AGREEMENT?

Before we start searching for your dream home, let's discuss the Buyer's Agent Agreement. This agreement helps us work together smoothly and successfully.

STARTING WITH A SOLID FOUNDATION

Due to the recent NAR settlement, new rules require us to sign this agreement upfront so you have more control, transparency, and clarity over how agent fees are handled. Signing this agreement upfront ensures we are aligned from the start.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT:

- **My Services:** I will help you find homes, set up showings, negotiate offers, and guide you through closing.
- **Your Role:** You will be available for showings and make timely decisions.
- **Exclusivity:** You agree to work only with me during our set timeframe, so I can fully focus on your home search.
- **Duration:** The agreement lasts for a set period but can be adjusted as needed.
- **Compensation & the MLS:** Buyer agent compensation is no longer listed on the MLS, but we can still discuss it directly. Sellers and buyers can negotiate these details as part of the transaction.

BENEFITS OF A BUYER'S AGENT AGREEMENT:

- **We're on the Same Page:** The agreement makes everything clear.
- **I'm Your Advocate:** I'm here to support you and protect your interests.
- **Fits Your Needs:** We can adjust the agreement to work for you.
- **Less Stress:** You'll have a pro on your side, making the process easier.

OPEN COMMUNICATION AND NO PRESSURE:

My priority is to ensure you're fully informed and comfortable throughout this process. I encourage you to ask questions and raise any concerns about the Buyer's Agent Agreement. This partnership is built on trust and transparency, and there's no obligation to sign until you're absolutely ready.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE:

This agreement ensures we work together effectively. Once you're ready to sign, we can officially start your home search!



UNDERSTANDING THE NAR Settlement



Under the NAR settlement, buyer's agent compensation will be handled outside the MLS, with buyers and agents negotiating fees directly, leading to more transparent and individualized arrangements.

Understanding Your Options:

Traditionally, buyer agent Compensations were often included in the listing price and paid by the seller. While this might still be the case in some instances, it's becoming increasingly common for buyers to discuss and agree upon compensation directly with their agent.

What This Means for You:

This change empowers you to have a more transparent conversation about agent fees. We'll discuss my services and compensation structure upfront, outlining everything in a clear, written agreement. This ensures we're both aligned from the start.

How Agent Compensation Works Now:

There are a few possibilities:

Seller-Paid Compensation:

Some sellers may offer compensation to buyer's agents, covering my fee.

Buyer-Paid Compensation:

If the seller doesn't compensate, you'll pay my fee, which we'll agree on in advance.

Negotiated Compensation:

In some situations, we might negotiate my compensation as part of your offer to the seller.

UNDERSTANDING AGENT FEES: A Key Component of Your Home Purchase Budget

Budgeting for a home purchase should include potential agent fees, which I can help clarify. We will discuss these details to ensure you are informed and comfortable with the process, aiming for transparency and the best service possible.

CLIENT ADVOCACY & *Transparency*

THE RECENT NAR SETTLEMENT EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY AND CLIENT ADVOCACY. I AM COMMITTED TO:

Clear Communication:

I'll keep you informed every step of the way, explaining all processes, fees, and potential challenges.

Independent Advice:

I provide objective, unbiased guidance specifically tailored to prioritize your needs above all else.

Fee Transparency:

I'll fully disclose my compensation and we'll agree on terms before we work together, covering all scenarios for complete clarity.

Your Real Estate Advantage: Expertise, Service, & Results

As your dedicated real estate agent, I provide a personalized and stress-free experience, leveraging local expertise to ensure your success.

- Expert Market Knowledge:** Detailed insights into local trends, property values, and neighborhood dynamics enable informed decision-making.
- Customized Service:** I recognize your individual needs and will tailor solutions to meet your needs and goals.
- Reliable Communication:** Anticipate prompt responses, regular updates, and transparency throughout the process.
- Extensive Network:** Access to reliable lenders, inspectors, contractors, attorneys, and other professionals in the industry.
- Optimized Process:** I use advanced technology for smooth and convenient transactions.
- Professional Negotiation:** My strong local market knowledge and thorough preparation enhance my negotiation skills. I analyze comparable sales, track market trends, and foresee challenges to help you secure the best deal.
- Expert Guidance & Support:** From our initial consultation to the moment you receive your keys, I provide proactive advice and unwavering support. I anticipate potential challenges, offer solutions, and ensure you're never left wondering what comes next.