

Generation by Generation: What Drives Home Buyers and Sellers

The recently released 2017 National Association of REALTORS®' *Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends* study (<http://bit.ly/2jik5CM>), gives you a generation-by-generation snapshot of people's home buying and selling habits, desires, and motivations.

It also provides an idea of what's driving younger generations—potential buyers of your house—along with the financing challenges buyers are up against, incentives sellers offered to buyers, and sale price and time on the market.

Highlights that may interest you include:

- **Who's buying what?** Buyers aged 36 years and younger are the largest generational group (34 percent) of home buyers, and first-time buyers made up 35 percent of all home buyers.

Those between the ages of 37 and 51 had the highest household incomes among other generations at \$106,600, followed

by buyers between 51 and 60, who had an income at \$93,800.

The median size of recent homes purchased was 1,900 square feet, with buyers aged 37 to 51 buying 2,100-sq.-ft. homes. Those who were 36-years-old and younger bought properties with a median of 1,800 square feet.

That aged 36-and-younger crowd bought the most affordable properties at a median price of \$205,000, and those from age 37 to 51 bought more expensive homes with a median price of \$261,000.

- **Student debt.** Thirteen percent of all buyers said that saving for the down payment was the most challenging aspect of buying a home.

It's no surprise that student loan debt played a role. In fact, 27 percent of all buyers had student loan debt. In addition, 49 percent of all buyers who had problems saving for a home down payment said that such debt delayed them. Debt from credit

cards and car loans also slowed down saving.

- **Website features.** When you're selling and your listing agent suggests including robust details about your home on a website, say yes.

Things like floor plans, virtual tours, and detailed information about recently sold properties were deemed very useful among buyers aged 36 and younger and to those ranging in age from 37 to 51.

- **Sacrifices.** Some buyers needed to make financial sacrifices to making buying a home a reality, though 60 percent of buyers didn't need to make any such sacrifices.

The most common sacrifices for all buyers were cutting spending on luxury or non-essential items (29 percent) and reducing what they spent on entertainment (22 percent) and clothes (17 percent).

- **Multigenerational housing.** One in five home buyers aged 52 to 61 bought a multi-generational home and 14 percent of buyers aged 62 to 70 bought such a property.

For those in the 52-to-61 age range, reasons for buying such a property included caretaking of aging parents (18%), children or relatives moving back into the

house (20 percent), and a desire to spend more time with aging parents (11 percent).

- **Seller incentives.** Thirty-six percent of all sellers offered incentives to attract buyers, and offering home warranties, helping with closing costs, and providing credit toward remodeling repairs were some of the strategies used to sweeten deals.

Alternatives to Traditional Retirement Living

Retirement housing options keep expanding and people are finding more and more alternative to institutional settings.

The ideas can serve as inspiration if the traditional choices are unappealing to you.

Consider Jikka, a retirement community <http://bit.ly/2ptxBnN> in Japan. The rural dwellings are wheelchair accessible, but have none of the institutional trappings typically associated with accessibility. The design marries sleek aesthetics with the practical and functional.

The tiny house movement meets accessibility in this prototype, the Wheel Pad (<http://bit.ly/2jTliAo>) that was designed by LineSync Architecture, a Wilmington, Vt. firm.

And a New York City couple found a way to make a life in a tiny 220-sq.-ft. hotel room <http://nyti.ms/2oDSay9> and embrace the nostalgia associated with the storied Chelsea Hotel.

Lighten Up on Unhappy Clutter

Only the most devoted minimalist doesn't suffer with unhappy clutter.

You know what it is. It's that broken something you keep meaning to fix. It's that now meaningless plaque from an old job. And it's the stuff from a relative's estate that they treasured but you don't.

As you launch your spring de-cluttering, start by tossing what burdens you and what no longer brings joy.

House Beautiful <http://bit.ly/2ptlm9S> features a short list of that "unhappy" stuff and some décor changes that can lighten your spirit.

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