

CONDOTELS VS.  
TIMESHARES

PAG-IBIG  
BENEFITS

STOCK MARKET  
CYCLES

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024  
PhP150

# Money Sense

SAVE, SPEND, AND INVEST WISELY

RICHARD CARVAJAL'S  
TIPS ON PROPERTY  
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FINANCING YOUR REAL  
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THE FIRST-TIME  
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“Real estate cannot be lost or stolen, nor can it be carried away. *Purchased* with common sense, paid for in full, and *managed* with reasonable care, it is about the safest *investment* in the world.”

— FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

“I have always liked *real estate*; farm land, pasture land, timber land, and city *property*. I have had *experience* with all of them. I guess I just naturally like ‘the good Earth,’ the *foundation* of all our wealth.” — JESSE JONES

“I would give a *thousand* furlongs of sea for an acre of *barren* ground.”

— SHAKESPEARE

“If you *can*, you should, and if you’re *brave* enough to *start*, you will.” — STEPHEN KING

“Landlords grow rich in their *sleep* without working, risking or *economizing*.” — JOHN STUART MILL

“It is a *comfortable feeling* to know that you stand on your own ground. *Land* is about the only thing that can’t fly away.”

— ANTHONY TROLLOPE

“In the *real estate* business, you learn more about people, and you learn more about *community* issues, you learn more about *life*, you learn more about the impact of *government*, probably than any other *profession* that I know of.” — JOHNNY ISAKSON



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# Is Your Home an Asset or an Expense?

This question has always bugged me. Rich Dad author Robert Kiyosaki most famously scoffs at the idea that your home is an asset. It goes against most people's long-held beliefs, including mine, that their home is an asset, even an investment. But I get both sides. To be fair, I'm presenting the arguments for those who believe their home is an asset and those who insist it's just an expense.

## Your Home as an Asset

### 1 Potential for Appreciation

One of the primary reasons a home is considered an asset is its potential to appreciate over time. Real estate generally increases in value due to factors like inflation, neighborhood development, and improvements made to the property. For instance, a house purchased in an up-and-coming neighborhood might gain value as the area develops and attracts more residents. This appreciation can translate into substantial financial gains when you decide to sell the property.

### 2 Equity Building

Owning a home allows you to build equity as you pay your mortgage. Equity is the difference between the market value of your property and the outstanding mortgage balance. Each mortgage payment reduces the loan principal, thereby increasing your equity in the property. This accumulated equity can be a valuable financial asset, which you can use for various purposes such as home improvements, funding education, or securing a loan. For example, a homeowner who has paid off a significant portion of their mortgage may use their home's equity to finance a new business venture or invest in other assets.

### 3 Long-Term Investment

A home can be a solid long-term investment. Unlike some investments that fluctuate wildly, real estate tends to provide a more stable return, particularly if you buy in a well-chosen location. Additionally, homeownership can provide a hedge against inflation, as property values and rents generally rise with inflation. Thus, owning a home can be a way to preserve and potentially grow your wealth over time.

## Your Home as an Expense

### 1 Ongoing Costs

While your home can be a valuable asset, it also incurs significant ongoing costs. These include mortgage payments, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and maintenance expenses. Each month, you need to cover these costs, which

can add up to a substantial financial burden. For example, in addition to the mortgage payment, you might need to budget for annual property taxes, insurance premiums, and unexpected repair costs. These expenses need to be managed carefully to ensure they do not outweigh the benefits of homeownership.

### 2 Depreciation and Repairs

Over time, homes require maintenance and repairs, which can be costly. Components such as roofs, plumbing, and electrical systems can deteriorate and need significant investment to repair or replace. If a property is not maintained properly, its value might decrease rather than appreciate. For instance, a home with neglected maintenance issues might suffer from reduced market value and increased repair costs.

### 3 Opportunity Costs

The funds invested in purchasing and maintaining a home could potentially be used for other investments. Opportunity cost refers to the potential returns you might miss out on by tying up your money in real estate. For example, money spent on a large down payment for a home could have been invested in stocks or other assets with higher returns. Similarly, ongoing expenses for a home could have been used for other financial opportunities or investments.

## What's Your Take?

Both sides have sound arguments. For me, however, I maintain that it's almost like any other real estate investment. You can sell it, leave it to your children (who can live in it or sell it), and, in some cases, rent it out (whether it's one room or the entire property).

My mom sold her home at a profit and used the proceeds to fund her retirement and medical expenses. I list my home as an asset when I apply for visas and loans. It has already appreciated in value and is part of my strategy to build long-term wealth. Yes, I spend a lot on property taxes, repairs, improvements, and maintenance. But the capital appreciation has outpaced the costs, putting me much ahead. I could one day sell it, rent it out, borrow against it, or leave it to my children. If that's not an asset, then I don't know what is. <sup>MS</sup>

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# MONEY SUMMIT

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# How to Pick the Perfect Location for Your Property Investment

By CARLOS GONZALES

In the bustling real estate market of the Philippines, choosing the right location for your property investment can make all the difference between a lucrative venture and a costly mistake. Whether you're a first-time investor or a seasoned property mogul, understanding the key factors contributing to a prime location is crucial. This article will guide you through the essential considerations to help you pick the perfect spot for your next property investment.

**1 Accessibility and Transportation.** One of the most critical factors in property selection is accessibility. A location with easy access to major roads, highways, and public transportation will likely attract more tenants or buyers, increasing your property's value over time.

- **Proximity to public transit:** Look for properties near MRT or LRT stations, major bus routes, or jeepney terminals.
- **Road networks:** Consider how easily accessible the property is by car. Are there multiple routes to reach major business districts?
- **Future infrastructure projects:** Research upcoming transportation developments that could enhance connectivity in the area.

**2 Economic Growth and Job Opportunities.** Areas with strong economic growth and abundant job opportunities tend to have a higher demand for housing, which can drive up property values and rental rates.

- **Business districts:** Properties near central business districts like Makati, BGC, or Ortigas often command higher values.
- **Emerging economic zones:** Look for areas with new industrial parks or IT parks that are likely to create job opportunities.

- **Local employment trends:** Research the major employers in the area and their future expansion plans.

**3 Amenities and Lifestyle Factors.** The availability of amenities can significantly impact the desirability of a location. Consider the following:

- **Shopping and dining:** Proximity to malls, markets, and restaurants adds convenience for residents.
- **Healthcare facilities:** Easy access to hospitals and clinics is crucial for many tenants and buyers.
- **Educational institutions:** Properties near reputable schools often attract families and can command higher rents.
- **Parks and recreational areas:** Green spaces and leisure facilities contribute to a better quality of life.

**4 Safety and Security.** A safe neighborhood is always in high demand. Research crime rates and security measures in the area:

- **Local crime statistics:** Check with the local police station or barangay office for crime data.
- **Gated communities:** These often provide an added layer of security and can be attractive to tenants.
- **Street lighting and visibility:** Well-lit areas tend to be safer and more appealing to residents.

**5 Future Development Plans.** Look beyond the current state of the area and consider its potential for future growth:

- **Local government plans:** Research the city or municipality's development plans for the next 5-10 years.
- **Private sector investments:** Look for announcements of new malls, office buildings, or residential complexes in the area.
- **Zoning changes:** Check if there are any upcoming zoning modifications that could affect property values.

**6 Natural Disaster Risks.** Given the Philippines' geographical location, it's crucial to assess the area's vulnerability to natural disasters:

- **Flood-prone areas:** Avoid low-lying areas with a history of flooding.

- **Fault lines:** Research the proximity to known earthquake fault lines.
- **Coastal properties:** Consider the risks associated with storm surges and rising sea levels.

**7 Property Values and Market Trends.** Analyze historical property values and current market trends:

- **Price appreciation:** Look at how property values have changed over the past 5-10 years.
- **Rental yields:** Research the typical rental rates in the area to estimate potential returns.
- **Supply and demand:** Assess whether there's an oversupply of similar properties or if demand outstrips supply.

**8 Local Community and Culture.** The character of the neighborhood can play a significant role in your property's appeal:

- **Demographics:** Understand the typical residents in the area (e.g., young professionals, families, retirees).
- **Community events:** Look for areas with active community engagement and regular local events.
- **Cultural attractions:** Proximity to museums, theaters, or historical sites can add value to your property.

**9 Environmental Factors**

Consider the environmental quality of the area:

- **Air quality:** Areas with less pollution are generally more desirable.
- **Noise levels:** Properties away from major highways or industrial areas often command higher values.

- **Green initiatives:** Look for neighborhoods with eco-friendly practices or green building certifications.

**10 Legal and Regulatory Considerations.**

Ensure that your investment is protected by understanding the legal landscape:

- **Land titles:** Verify that the property has a clean and transferable title.
- **Zoning regulations:** Check if the property's intended use aligns with local zoning laws.
- **Building codes:** Ensure that any existing or planned structures comply with local building regulations.

Picking the perfect location for your property investment requires careful research and consideration of multiple factors. By evaluating accessibility, economic growth, amenities, safety, future development plans, and other crucial elements, you can make an informed decision that maximizes your investment potential.

Remember that no location is perfect, and you may need to prioritize certain factors based on your investment goals. Whether you're looking for long-term appreciation, high rental yields, or a balance of both, understanding these key location factors will help you make a smart investment in the Philippine real estate market.

Lastly, don't hesitate to seek advice from local real estate professionals who can provide valuable insights into specific neighborhoods and market trends. With thorough research and careful consideration, you'll be well-equipped to choose a location that offers the best potential for your property investment. **MS**





# Best Real Estate Marketplaces to Market Your Properties

By CARLOS GONZALES

The digital age has transformed the way we buy and sell properties. For real estate investors, developers, and agents in the Philippines, online platforms have become essential for marketing properties to a broader audience. These platforms offer convenience, a wide reach, and often free or low-cost listings, making them ideal for sellers looking to maximize exposure.

Here are some of the best real estate online marketplaces you can use to market your properties:

**1 Lamudi Philippines.** Lamudi is one of the country's most popular real estate platforms, known for its extensive listings of properties for sale and rent. Whether selling residential homes, commercial spaces, or vacant lots, Lamudi provides an easy-to-use interface and various tools to help you market your property effectively.

#### Key Features:

- Advanced search filters to help potential buyers narrow down their choices by location, price, and property type.
- Lamudi Academy offers free courses on real estate marketing, which is especially useful for agents and sellers looking to improve their skills.
- It provides a "featured property" service, allowing your listings to appear prominently for a fee, increasing visibility.
- Mobile-friendly website and app for users to browse listings on the go.

**Why Use It?** With millions of visitors monthly, Lamudi is a solid choice for sellers who want access to a large, engaged audience. The platform's commitment to real estate education and premium listing options ensures that your property gets noticed by serious buyers.

**2 Property24.** Property24, owned by Netherlands-based OLX, is another well-established platform for real estate listings. It caters to both buyers and sellers, offering a clean, simple interface for browsing and marketing properties. The site covers various types of properties, from apartments to luxury homes and even commercial spaces.

#### Key Features:

- Detailed listings with photo galleries, property descriptions, and neighborhood information.
- Allows sellers to advertise homes, condos, lots, and commercial properties.
- Extensive reach, thanks to its affiliation with OLX.
- Interactive maps make it easy for buyers to locate properties and explore nearby amenities.

**Why Use It?** Property24 especially benefits those selling properties in urban areas like Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao. Its OLX integration gives your listing additional exposure on the larger OLX network, attracting various buyers and investors.

**3 Dot Property.** Dot Property is an international real estate marketplace with a strong presence in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. It's designed to cater to local and international buyers, making it an excellent choice for marketing high-end properties or vacation homes.

#### Key Features:

- Free and premium listing options.
- Built-in SEO features that ensure your property listing ranks higher on search engines.
- A vast network that includes partnerships with global real estate websites.
- Dot Property Magazine, which further enhances the visibility of premium properties.

**Why Use It?** Dot Property is ideal for sellers looking to reach a global audience, especially those marketing luxury or resort properties in prime areas like Palawan, Boracay, or Batangas. The platform's SEO tools are a plus, as they help boost your listing's visibility online.

**4 Carousell.** Carousell, once known primarily as a buy-and-sell platform for secondhand goods, has evolved into a legitimate marketplace for real estate. Its real estate section offers a streamlined way for sellers to list homes, lots, and commercial properties.

#### Key Features:

- Free listings for property sellers.
- Quick and easy posting of properties with photo uploads and location tagging.
- A large, diverse user base that includes both homebuyers and investors.
- User-friendly app with a chat function, making it easy to communicate with potential buyers.

**Why Use It?** Carousell is ideal for sellers who want a quick and easy way to list properties without navigating complex listing forms. It's especially popular with millennials and tech-savvy buyers, making it a good option for sellers marketing affordable housing or starter homes.

**5 Facebook Marketplace.** Facebook has become more than just a social media platform; it's now a significant player in the real estate marketplace. Facebook Marketplace allows individuals to post listings for free, targeting local buyers through its extensive network.

#### Key Features:

- Free property listings with no limit on the number of posts.
- Direct messaging feature lets you interact with interested buyers in real-time.
- Integration with Facebook Ads lets you boost your listings to reach a broader audience.
- You can post property details, videos, and 360-degree virtual tours to attract potential buyers.

**Why Use It?** Facebook Marketplace is perfect for sellers looking to engage with a local audience. With millions of Filipino users active on Facebook daily, this platform allows you to promote your property directly to people within your target market while also leveraging paid advertising for more visibility.

**6 MyProperty.ph.** MyProperty.ph, a sister platform to Lamudi, focuses on residential properties for sale and rent. It offers similar features to Lamudi but targets a slightly different demographic, often leaning toward first-time homebuyers and small property investors.

#### Key Features:

- Free and paid property listing options.
- Advanced search tools for buyers to filter results by location, price, and property type.
- Seller support, including data insights and listing management tools.
- Allows sellers to market residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

**Why Use It?** MyProperty.ph is ideal for sellers focusing on the residential market. The platform's clean design and easy navigation make it a go-to for first-time buyers, giving sellers the opportunity to connect with this important market segment.

**7 Rentpad.** While Rentpad focuses primarily on rental properties, it's still worth mentioning for property investors looking to lease their units. Rentpad is a trusted platform for landlords and property managers to list condo units, apartments, and houses for rent.

#### Key Features:

- Simple and fast property listing process.
- A highly engaged audience of renters, from students to professionals.
- Filters based on location, budget, and property type.
- Property management tools that help landlords track inquiries and manage listings.

**Why Use It?** Rentpad is perfect for investors aiming to market rental properties in urban areas. Its audience is primarily young professionals, expatriates, and students, making it a valuable platform for those renting out units in cities like Manila, Cebu, or Davao.

In the digital age, marketing your property online is essential for reaching a broad audience of potential buyers. Whether you're selling a condo in Makati or a beachfront property in Palawan, choosing the right platform can significantly impact your success. By leveraging these top real estate marketplaces, you can ensure that your property gets the exposure it deserves.<sup>MS</sup>



# Condotels vs. Timeshares: Which is the Better Investment?

By ANDY CRUZ

When it comes to vacation property investments, two popular options often come to mind: condotels and timeshares. Both allow you to own a slice of paradise, but the financial and usage structures of these properties differ significantly. Here, we'll compare condotels and timeshares, examining their pros and cons and which investment might be your best choice.

**What Are Condotels?** A condotel, or condominium hotel, is essentially a condominium unit that functions like a hotel. You own the unit outright, just like a traditional condo. However, when you're not using the property, you can rent it out to guests through a hotel management company, generating income.

- Key Features:**
- You own the unit as a freehold property.
  - The property is typically located within a hotel or resort, with access to hotel-like amenities (e.g., housekeeping, pools, gyms).
  - The hotel management handles bookings, maintenance, and guest services, usually in exchange for a percentage of the rental income.

- Pros of Condotels:**
- **Income Generation:** When you're not using your unit, the hotel management rents it out to guests, providing you with passive income.
  - **Full Ownership:** Unlike timeshares, you own the condotel unit outright, which means you have the freedom to sell, transfer, or inherit the property.
  - **Access to Amenities:** Condotels offer access to hotel amenities like concierge services, housekeeping, and resort facilities.
  - **Capital Appreciation:** Since you fully own the unit, there's potential for the property to appreciate over time, offering long-term investment gains.

- Cons of Condotels:**
- **High Costs:** Condotels typically come with high maintenance fees, and a percentage of rental income is shared with the management company.
  - **Management Control:** You have limited control over who rents your unit, as the hotel handles guest bookings, pricing, and policies.
  - **Limited Personal Use:** Some condotels impose restrictions on how often you can personally use the unit each year to maximize rental availability.

**What Are Timeshares?** A timeshare is a shared ownership model for vacation properties. Instead of owning the property outright, you buy the right to use the property for a specified amount of time each year, often for one to two weeks.

- Key Features:**
- You own a fraction of the property and share it with other timeshare owners.
  - Ownership is usually limited to a specific period, such as a fixed week each year.
  - Timeshares are often part of larger resort chains, offering flexibility to use other properties within the network.

- Pros of Timeshares:**
- **Lower Initial Cost:** Timeshares are generally less expensive upfront than condotels because you only purchase a portion of the property's usage rights.
  - **Resort Access:** Many timeshare properties are located in desirable vacation destinations with high-end amenities like pools, spas, and golf courses.
  - **Flexible Exchange Options:** Timeshare programs often offer flexibility in how and where you can use your time. Some allow you to exchange your time for stays at other resorts within their network, giving you access to a broader range of vacation spots.

- Cons of Timeshares:**
- **No Ownership of the Property:** Unlike condotels, you don't own the property outright. You only own the right to use it for a specific period each year.
  - **Depreciation:** Timeshares typically depreciate over time, and selling your share can be difficult and often results in a loss.
  - **Limited Use:** You're confined to a specific period each year, which can be inconvenient if your vacation schedule changes or conflicts arise.

- **High Maintenance Fees:** Even though you only own a portion of the property, you're still responsible for paying annual maintenance fees, which can increase over time.
- **Aggressive Sales Tactics:** Some sellers of timeshares can be very aggressive. They might bombard you with all sorts of sales tactics and pressure you to decide on the spot or lose your opportunity.

### Comparing Condotels and Timeshares

Feature	Condotels	Timeshares
Ownership	Full ownership of the unit	Fractional ownership (right to use)
Income Potential	Can generate rental income	No rental income
Costs	Higher upfront costs; shared rental income	Lower initial cost; ongoing maintenance fees
Flexibility	Can sell, transfer, or rent out the unit	Use is limited to a set time each year
Personal Use	Varies; some restrict personal use	Fixed or floating weeks; less flexibility
Investment Value	Potential for capital appreciation	Typically depreciates over time
Amenities	Access to hotel or resort amenities	Access to resort amenities

**Which is Better for Investment?** Choosing between a condotel and a timeshare largely depends on your financial goals and lifestyle preferences. Let's look at which option might be better suited for different types of investors.

**Condotels: Best for Income-Driven Investors.** A condotel is the better choice if your primary goal is to generate income and potentially see capital appreciation. While it comes with higher upfront costs, condotels offer rental income and full ownership rights. You can also benefit from potential property value appreciation, making it a more traditional real estate investment.

Condotels are particularly appealing to investors who want to enjoy the luxury of a vacation property without sacrificing the potential for financial returns. It's also ideal for those who prefer a hands-off approach, as the hotel management handles the day-to-day operations.

**Timeshares: Best for Vacation-Focused Buyers.** If your main objective is to have a guaranteed vacation spot each year without the hassle of full property ownership, a timeshare might be the way to go. Timeshares are more affordable upfront and give you access to high-end vacation properties without the responsibility of managing a rental unit.

However, if you're looking at timeshares purely as an

investment, they tend to depreciate and offer no income generation. They're better suited for personal use rather than as a financial investment. Also, stay away from aggressive sellers. Any substantial investment requires time to think and discuss with your family and not make impulsive decisions because of high-pressure sales tactics.

### Key Considerations Before Making a Decision

- Long-Term Goals:** Are you investing for potential returns or simply looking for a vacation spot? Condotels may offer income and appreciation, while timeshares are typically focused on personal use.
- **Usage Flexibility:** How often do you plan to use the property? Condotels may limit personal use, while timeshares lock you into specific dates.
  - **Costs and Fees:** Condotels tend to come with higher upfront costs and shared rental income, but timeshares can have increasing maintenance fees with limited flexibility in usage.
  - **Resale Potential:** Condotels often have better resale potential compared to timeshares, which depreciate over time and are more challenging to sell.

Both condotels and timeshares have advantages, but they cater to different investors. A condotel is a better option if you're looking for a real estate investment that can generate income and appreciate over time. However, a timeshare may meet your needs if you're seeking an affordable, vacation-oriented property and are okay with limited usage.

Understanding your financial goals, lifestyle preferences, and the long-term costs associated with each option will help you make the best decision for your property investment.





# Pag-IBIG Benefits for Filipinos

By CARLA CONCEPCION

The Pag-IBIG Fund, also known as the Home Development Mutual Fund (HDMF), is one of the most valuable social benefit programs available to Filipinos. Established to help its members with affordable housing and financial assistance, Pag-IBIG is a government-backed savings and loan facility to support its members' financial stability and welfare.

In this primer, we'll break down the key benefits Pag-IBIG offers and how you can take full advantage of them.

**1 Affordable Housing Loans.** One of the most well-known benefits of the Pag-IBIG Fund is its housing loan program, which allows members to finance the purchase of their dream home at affordable rates. Whether you're buying a house, a condominium unit, or a lot, Pag-IBIG's housing loan offers more favorable terms than most commercial loans.

## Key Features:

- Loan amounts of up to ₱6 million.
- Competitive interest rates starting at 5.75% per annum, depending on the loan amount and repayment period.
- Flexible repayment terms ranging from 5 to 30 years.
- The ability to use the loan for various purposes, such as purchasing a residential lot, a fully developed property, or even house construction and renovation.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a Pag-IBIG member for at least 24 months.
- Regular monthly savings contributions.
- Must not be more than 65 years old at the date of loan application and not more than 70 years old at loan maturity.
- The Pag-IBIG Housing Loan is an excellent option for first-time homebuyers or those seeking to upgrade their current living situation. Compared to traditional loans from banks, Pag-IBIG offers lower interest rates and more flexible terms, making homeownership more accessible to many Filipinos.

**2 Multi-Purpose Loan (MPL).** Need financial assistance for personal needs? Pag-IBIG also offers a Multi-Purpose Loan (MPL), allowing members to borrow money for various purposes, such as home repairs, medical emergencies, tuition fees, or debt consolidation.

## Key Features:

- Loan amount is up to 80% of your total Pag-IBIG savings.
- Interest rate of 10.5% per annum.
- Repayment terms of up to 36 months.
- Quick processing times, with loans being released within 2 to 3 days from approval.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- Must have contributed at least 24 months to the Pag-IBIG Fund.
- Must have made at least one monthly savings contributions prior to the loan application.
- The MPL provides a quick and accessible way for members to access short-term funds for urgent needs. Because the loan amount is based on the member's total Pag-IBIG savings, it also ensures that borrowing limits are kept reasonable.

**3 Calamity Loan.** In natural disasters, Pag-IBIG members can avail themselves of the Calamity Loan, which provides much-needed financial assistance to rebuild after typhoons, earthquakes, floods, or other calamities. The loan is offered with favorable terms to ensure affected members can quickly recover from disasters.

## Key Features:

- Loanable amount is up to 80% of the member's total savings.
- Low interest rate of 5.95% per annum.
- Repayment terms of up to 36 months, with a 3-month grace period.
- Fast processing, ensuring that the funds are available when needed most.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be an active Pag-IBIG member with at least 24 months of contributions.
- Must reside in an area declared under a state of calamity by the national government.
- The Pag-IBIG Calamity Loan is a vital financial lifeline for members affected by natural disasters, helping them recover more quickly and providing much-needed support in times of crisis.

**4 Pag-IBIG Loyalty Card Plus.** Aside from loans and savings programs, Pag-IBIG offers the Pag-IBIG Loyalty Card Plus, which serves as an ID card and gives members access to exclusive discounts and perks.

## Key Features:

- Discounts on products and services from partner merchants, including healthcare services, fuel, education, and travel.
- Functions as an ATM card, allowing members to receive Pag-IBIG loans, dividends, and other financial transactions.
- A minimal fee for card issuance, providing practical savings benefits without a significant cost.

## How to Apply:

- Visit a Pag-IBIG branch or its partner banks.
- Present valid IDs and fill out the application form.
- While it may not seem like much at first glance, the Pag-IBIG Loyalty Card Plus can provide long-term savings through discounts, making it a simple but effective tool for enhancing your financial wellness.

**5 Pag-IBIG Savings Program.** The Pag-IBIG Regular Savings Program is the core of the Pag-IBIG membership. It's a savings program where members contribute a minimum of ₱200 per month (employers contribute another ₱200 per month). These contributions accumulate over time and earn annual dividends, which are tax-free.

## Key Features:

- Tax-free dividends, which are credited to members' savings accounts.
- Contributions can be withdrawn upon membership maturity, usually after 20 years of continuous contributions or upon retirement at 60 years old.
- Voluntary members can contribute more than the minimum required, leading to higher dividends and larger retirement funds.
- For members looking to build a stable, long-term savings fund, Pag-IBIG's Regular Savings Program offers a reliable way to accumulate wealth over time, with the added benefit of government-backed security.

**6 Modified Pag-IBIG II (MP2) Savings.** The Modified Pag-IBIG II (MP2) Savings is an optional savings scheme offering higher dividend rates than the Regular Savings Program. This program is available to existing Pag-IBIG members and retirees, providing a more lucrative investment option for those looking to grow their savings.

## Key Features:

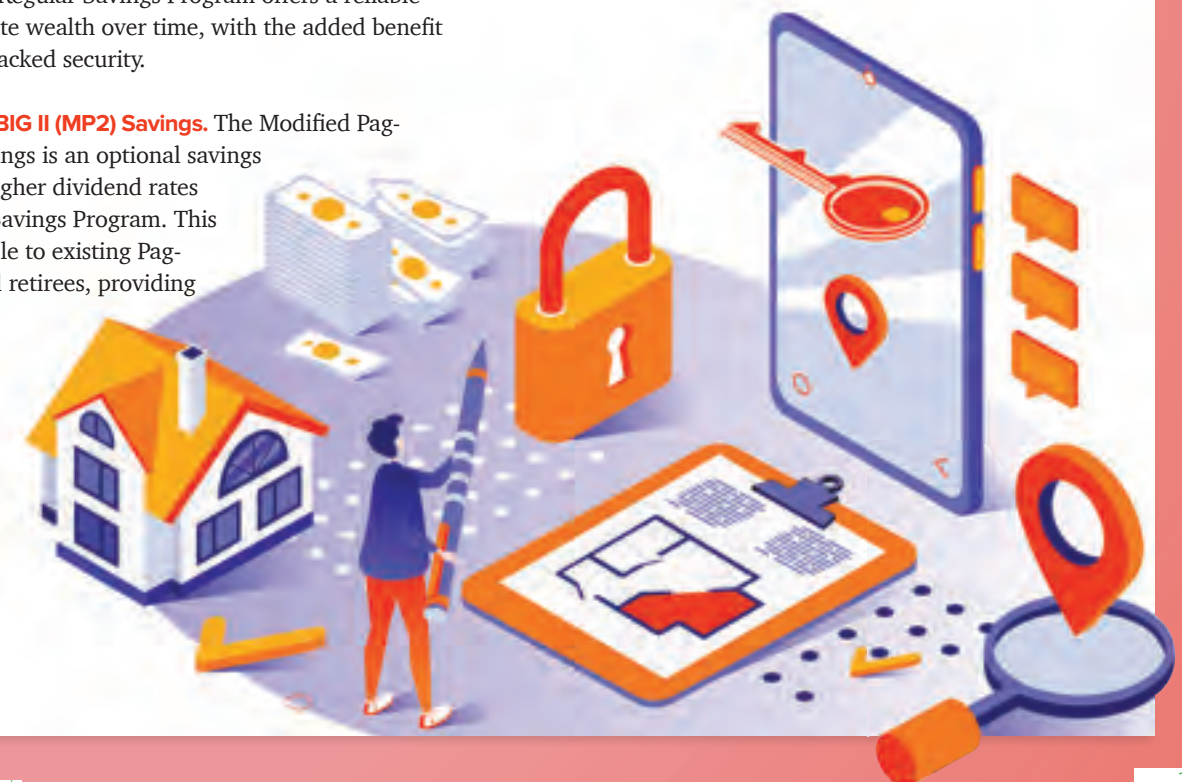
- Higher dividend rates, usually 6% to 7%, depending on Pag-IBIG's annual performance.
- Savings can be withdrawn after 5 years, with the option to renew.
- Voluntary contributions starting from as low as ₱500 per month.
- Dividends are tax-free and compounded annually.

## Who Should Consider MP2?

- Pag-IBIG members who want to supplement their Regular Savings Program.
- Retirees who want to invest in a safe, government-guaranteed savings scheme.
- The MP2 program is ideal for those looking to maximize the growth of their savings over a shorter period while enjoying competitive interest rates that outpace regular bank savings accounts.

**Get the Most of Your Pag-IBIG Benefits.** Pag-IBIG is more than just a housing fund. It's a comprehensive financial service designed to improve the quality of life for Filipinos through affordable loans, flexible savings programs, and financial support in times of need. Whether you're planning to purchase a home, looking for emergency funds, or saving for the future, the Pag-IBIG Fund offers various programs tailored to meet your financial goals.

To get the most out of Pag-IBIG's benefits, it's important to be an active member, keep your contributions current, and explore the programs that best fit your needs. From home loans to savings programs, Pag-IBIG provides essential financial tools that every Filipino should use.<sup>MS</sup>





# Navigating Crypto and Real Estate Success

By ANGELINE VIRAY as told to EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

**M**y journey into cryptocurrency started with a curious fascination with new technology. Back in 2013, I stumbled upon Bitcoin, which was like discovering a shiny new toy.

I started mining Bitcoin through faucets, which meant literally clicking links and collecting satoshis. It felt fun, geeky, and experimental, though I eventually forgot about it, along with the wallet.

Fast forward to 2017, and I saw a friend trading crypto on Facebook. The excitement came rushing back, and I couldn't resist diving in again. I caught up with him at a startup event and asked for his help. He gave me a simple instruction: "Do everything I do and say," and I followed his lead. Shadowing him until I learned to trade independently, I gradually built my foundation, and that's how Cryptoph, my Facebook group, came to be. Today, it has grown to over 77,000 members, all fueled by the power of community.

The evolution of the cryptocurrency landscape has been nothing short of remarkable. What began as small communities and faucets has now transformed into a global market with the rise of DeFi, NFTs, and Web3 projects. Witnessing this growth from a niche concept to a worldwide force influencing entire industries has been incredible.

In the early days of trading, one of the toughest challenges I faced was managing larger sums of money. I started with just Php1,000, and watching it grow was thrilling, almost like a game. But as my Bitcoin holdings increased, fear crept in. I wasn't just playing with small amounts anymore – this was serious money. I remember one moment in particular: I walked into a Forever 21 store, needing a dress for a last-



minute baptism invitation. Without even checking the price tag, I used my crypto earnings to buy it, thinking, "So this is what freedom feels like."

But with that realization came fear – the fear of losing everything I had earned. That experience taught me that trading isn't just about winning; it's about preserving and growing what you've worked hard for. I began to study trading seriously, forming strategies that focus on intention rather than emotions.

**From Crypto to Real Estate.** My foray into real estate, however, was less successful. After earning a substantial amount from crypto, I thought real estate would be a smart

move. I bought one property, but then I was upsold into buying two more preselling units for rental purposes. I assumed I could cover the payments with my trading profits, but I soon found out I was wrong.

I lost all three units and am still waiting on a refund from the real estate company while dealing with the debts that remain from that investment. It was a tough lesson that taught me never to dive into something I don't fully understand. Mastery and a clear exit strategy are essential, whether in trading or real estate.

Even with such a setback, my passion for technology didn't stop with crypto. Over time, I became deeply interested in personal development and how emerging technologies like AI and blockchain could enhance human potential.

I created a program called Changemaker Within to help aspiring entrepreneurs align with their purpose and leverage tech tools to bring value to their businesses. Now, as the Head of Personal Development in the Kaizen program, I get to combine my love for personal growth with tech, helping others transform both mentally and physically.

When used effectively, technology can accelerate personal alignment and success. Imagine using AI to coach yourself or blockchain to protect your business processes—it's all about elevating the human experience.

Maintaining resilience through losses, whether in real estate or crypto, has been crucial to my growth. Even after losing millions, I never gave up. My advice for anyone facing setbacks is to find your "why." Understand where you are and where you want to be and focus on the journey. You may face failures along the way, but if you're clear on your goal, setbacks will just be temporary roadblocks. Don't listen to the inner voice that tells you to give up; keep pushing forward.



## Finding Success

For those who want to follow her path, **Angeline Viray** has tips and pointers.

**Autonomy.** Everyone has their unique way of success, and copying someone else's will only frustrate you. Learn from others' mistakes, adjust, and always align your actions with your purpose. You have full control over your destiny, so focus on being better than your past self.

**Belongingness.** Find and engage with communities that align with your goals. No one succeeds alone. Surround yourself with like-minded people who challenge and uplift you. Contributing to others' success is as important as your own. Helping others will boost your own growth and fulfillment in ways you can't imagine. It's a long-term investment in relationships and impact.

**Competence.** Operate in your strengths. Focus on areas where you excel and get small wins often. These small victories build your confidence and lead to bigger successes. Continuously learn, practice, and master your craft. If you're consistently growing in your strengths, the results will follow. Design your life experiences to create a natural pathway to success. Without being intentional about this, you might find yourself lost, going around in circles, asking, "What am I doing wrong?"

**Staycations and Technology.** My current venture into the staycation real estate sector is all about proving to myself that I can succeed. I'm starting small, making sure one unit is sustainable before scaling up. My approach is to grow steadily and smartly—build a working formula, replicate it, and then expand. My ultimate goal is to create a sustainable, passive income stream from staycations before venturing into other properties or markets.

Emerging technologies like blockchain and AI can potentially revolutionize the staycation market. AI can personalize guest experiences and automate repetitive tasks, while blockchain can enhance transparency and security in transactions. But it's never about using tech just for the sake of it - it's about leveraging its strengths to create more efficient, seamless experiences for guests and owners.

Ultimately, personal development plays a key role in any business success. Whether it's navigating the volatile crypto market or handling long-term real estate projects, it's essential to stay grounded and resilient. Personal growth enables you to manage emotional highs and lows and keeps you focused on long-term goals. Both crypto and real estate have tested my patience and resilience, but they've also taught me the value of sticking to your plan, learning from mistakes, and continuing to evolve.<sup>MS</sup>





# Empowering Talents, Building Brands

By JOSEPH MAX WEBB  
as told to EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

It has been a pleasant surprise to enter this career path as Head of Business Development at Gushcloud Philippines, a global content and commerce company. I used to work heavily in digital media, and naturally, I branched out to entertainment media when I joined Gushcloud International. I started working in Business Development for the SEA market, where I assisted East Asian and Western brands in penetrating the Southeast Asia market, which, globally, is seen as a hot pot of growing creators and influencers.

However, dealing with global brands and international businesses has helped with my approach to growing the Gushcloud Philippines office with a global mindset. If there are any countries with a better chance of reaching a global audience, it is the Philippines.

My primary focus during my first month in Gushcloud Philippines was to lay down our foundations as a Talent and Entertainment company. This meant further empowering our creator partners by signing on talents who embody our values and strengthening and creating new relationships with brands across the Philippines and Internationally. Because we are in the world of talent and entertainment, we need a keen ear on trends shaping today's (and tomorrow's) audiences. This allows us to guide our business partners towards effective reach in their target markets.

**Strategies and Trends.** We have a proprietary data platform called Bankeble that serves two key stakeholders: Creator Partners and Brand Partners. For creators, Bankeble provides insights on how to produce more engaging content for their audiences. For brands, it matches them with the right talents using rich data sets and analytics. This data-driven approach enables Gushcloud to consistently deliver predictable results for brands looking to optimize their advertising and marketing budgets, while also helping creators grow their communities.

Traditionally, media agencies treat influencers as mere media placements. However, to build strong brands and vibrant communities, we view influencers as talents and co-creators. By leveraging their follower base, we can develop brand-led communities with deeper connections and lasting impact.

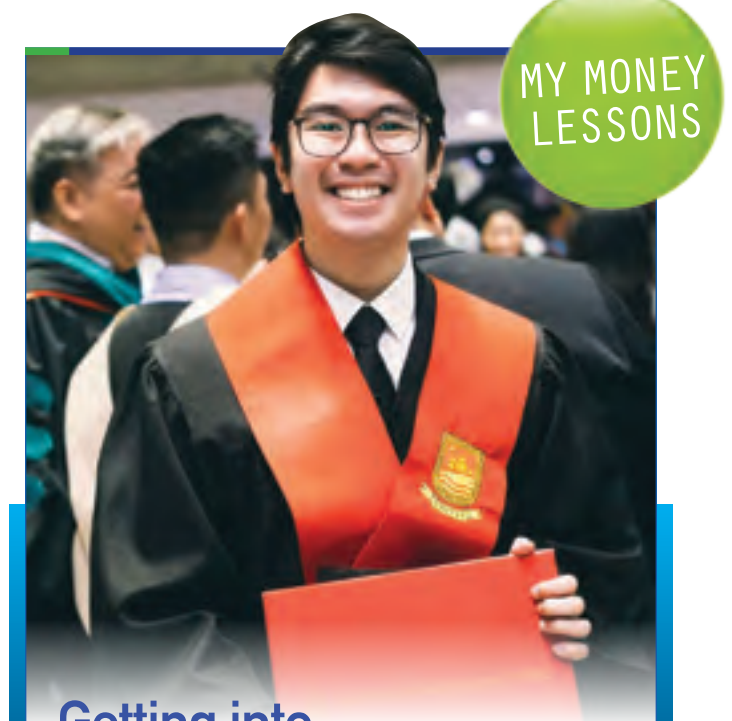
In sales, my team is the lifeline of the business. We must consistently meet our targets to keep the business thriving. We ensure that our portfolio of brands and talents stays current and adaptable to the evolving market, regardless of whether they collaborate.

Recognizing cultural trends like KPop or emerging music genres is crucial for understanding shifts in consumer behavior. For marketers, these trends provide valuable opportunities to authentically connect with their audiences. However, it's important to approach trends strategically, ensuring they align with your brand's values and long-term goals, rather than simply jumping on every passing fad.

“Recognizing cultural trends like KPop or emerging music genres is crucial for understanding shifts in consumer behavior.”

**Celebrating Big and Small Wins.** At the heart of it, we're all about talent and content here at Gushcloud. we care deeply about talents and their power of content and influence. Given this, we look to expand our capabilities and solutions for businesses and talents.

I consider myself a young leader at 27. I'm learning as I go along, but I'm grateful to my team and managers for being extra considerate, patient, and supportive. I treat my team as friends, and I want to create an environment where we can celebrate small and big wins. I assure them that they can approach me anytime if they just need someone to talk to or who will listen about work or otherwise.<sup>MS</sup>



## Getting into Entertainment

At 27, **Joseph Max Webb** is considered the youngest Head of Business Development at Gushcloud Philippines. He shares some pointers for those who want to carve a niche in the media and entertainment industry.

**Build and nurture relationships.** Entertainment and business are powered by relationships backed by trust.

**Understand the power of Influence.** It's important to understand the impact that content and talent make, not just on the current generation but also on the future.

**Always maintain Integrity in everything you do.** Integrity ensures honesty and fairness, which are essential for creating long-lasting connections.



# From Corporate to Crypto Leader

By **ARLONE ABELLO**, AKA COACH MIRANDA MINER  
as told to **EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO**

**M**y journey into crypto trading began after a long and diverse career in corporate operations. I spent over 15 years in the corporate world, serving as a Senior Director of Operations and overseeing a team of 3,000 in a telecommunications company.

My role was centered on ensuring profitability and managing costs while balancing the needs of the client, the business, and the employees – a concept I like to call the “three-legged stool.” This experience gave me a deep understanding of operational excellence, leadership, and financial acumen, skills further honed through global training in Six Sigma Black Belt and reporting.

Around 2016-2017, I ventured into the stock market and developed my own trading system. However, I found the stock market’s limitations – being closed on weekends and holidays, no shorting opportunities, and no trigger orders – too restrictive.

That’s when I discovered cryptocurrency, with its volatility and flexibility. The real turning point came in 2020, just before the bull season. Having resigned from my role supporting Google’s Global Operations, the pandemic made me realize the importance of working from home, perfectly aligning with my passion for trading. I applied my trend-following system, which allowed me to earn consistently while working full-time in corporate.

After much reflection, I made the leap in June 2021, leaving the corporate world to fully dedicate myself to the thrilling and dynamic world of crypto trading. This move has not only been fulfilling but also allowed me to blend my trading expertise with my operational experience.

**The Value of Malasakit.** At the core of Global Miranda Miner Group (GMMG) is the Filipino value of “malasakit,” which embodies compassion and genuine care. Our mission is to help traders find enlightenment in their trading journey by offering the guidance and support they need to succeed in cryptocurrency.

We are deeply committed to giving back to the community, engaging in tree-planting activities and outreach programs, and extending our blessings beyond trading. This culture of care, or #cultureofmalasakit, is something we proudly uphold with the help of our trading partners and sponsors.

In addition, as the Founding Chairman of IMPACT, or the Innovative Movement of the Philippine Association of Cryptocurrency Traders, we aim to empower traders nationwide by making education accessible. Through CrypTalk, we travel to remote schools, from Bohol’s northernmost parts to Davao and Camarines Sur, sharing our

knowledge with our partners like Bitaskwela, King & Graidio Law, and others. We want to be a channel for education, helping people avoid scams and providing a roadmap for navigating the fascinating world of cryptocurrency and blockchain.

A key strategy in launching and scaling my coaching business has been delegating and duplicating myself. Today, I have 11 mentors who teach my strategy to Filipinos taking our course. Building a personal brand has also been crucial, as it helps build trust and encourages people to enroll in our courses.

We maintain a thriving community through our organic Discord channel, which fosters healthy, accountable conversations among traders. We also schedule MALASAKIT follow-up sessions for learners to ensure their continued growth.

One of the most inspiring success stories from our community involved a mother who worked as a banker. She had been in and out of the trading industry, searching for a system that worked for her. After enrolling in our trading university, she mastered the system and, just this past August, achieved six-digit profits in trading. Her success has been a source of inspiration for both her and the entire community.

**Mirroring Blockchain Adoption.** I believe the Philippines is headed in the right direction when it comes to crypto adoption. At the #TOKEN2049 event in Singapore, I met many Filipino community leaders eager to learn and bring blockchain updates and developments back to the Philippines.

As for recent regulatory changes, the opening of the Virtual Asset Service Provider (VASP) application in 2026 has sparked better conversations among crypto enthusiasts, and there is hope for more international applications in the Philippines.

Several key developments are currently shaping the crypto landscape. For instance, the US SEC’s approval of Bitcoin options, the potential impact of the upcoming US elections on Bitcoin prices, and the interplay between interest rate cuts in the US and rising rates in Japan could create a carry trade effect that will influence the market.

Looking ahead, I believe the Philippines will mirror the global scene regarding blockchain adoption. As the international market grows, we will likely see exponential growth in our local market as well.

My future plans for the Global Miranda Miner Group involve growing our network to 50 responsible KOLs who share the same passion as I do. Together, we will continue to provide awareness and support to the Filipino community, whether they are based locally or abroad.<sup>MS</sup>

## Getting into Crypto

**Arlone Abello**, also known as Coach Miranda Miner, shares this advice for anyone looking to enter the crypto space today.

**Filter information.** The world of crypto trading is filled with an overwhelming amount of information. It’s crucial to filter through this noise and focus on quality, reliable sources that provide real value. Find the right coach or mentor to guide you through the learning process and help you cut through the clutter.

**Eliminate ego.** Ego is one of the biggest drivers of losses in trading. It can lead to overconfidence, emotional decisions, and stubbornness in holding onto losing positions. Recognize the importance of humility in trading and be willing to learn from your mistakes. Keep your ego in check to make rational, informed decisions.

**Awareness through journaling.** Keeping a trading journal is essential for developing self-awareness and improving your trading skills. Document your trades, thoughts, and emotions to gain insights into your behavior and decision-making processes. This practice will help you identify patterns, learn from your experiences, and continuously improve your strategy.

**A system that works.** Use a proven trading system that has been tested and refined. A reliable system helps you approach the market with a structured plan, reducing the impact of emotions on your decisions. At GMMG, they emphasize the importance of following a disciplined, systematic approach to trading.

**Join a trading community.** Surround yourself with a supportive trading community. Engaging with like-minded individuals who share your goals and challenges can provide valuable insights, encouragement, and accountability. A strong community can help you stay motivated, learn from others’ experiences, and grow as a trader.





# The Millennial Property Entrepreneur

How Richard Cavajal's go-getter attitude and digital savvy led to his real estate success

By EXCEL V. DYQUIANGCO

At a time when most young people are still trying to figure out their career paths, Richard Cavajal has not only found his calling but thrived in it. At just 23, Richard had already made his million from real estate. Today, he's a successful entrepreneur, property investor, content creator, and personal finance advocate.

Ironically, real estate and entrepreneurship were never on Richard's radar. He once aspired to be a dentist, fascinated by the profession since childhood. While most kids dread the dentist's chair, Richard was a fan. "I

initially wanted to take up dentistry because I loved going to the dentist as a kid," he recalls with a grin.

But a scholarship at Enderun Colleges set him on a different path. There, he studied International Management, majoring in Hotel Administration, a world far removed from his childhood aspirations. Little did he know, this academic detour would lead him straight into the heart of real estate and finance, where he would forge a new identity, advocate for financial literacy, and mentor the next generation of entrepreneurs.



“Being *young* and trying to sell to older *clients* was tough. Many rejected me because I lacked *credibility*.”



“My *first* few months with the *business* were smooth sailing. But I had the normal struggles of a *businessman*. Every decision I made – small or big – was *important* and affected the company in the long run.”

### From Corporate to Real Estate.

Richard's introduction to real estate came during his college years when a friend working as a real estate agent involved him in property referrals. Although his role was limited to making introductions, this experience planted the seed for his future endeavors. “That was what I did in college – referred them to my friend,” he shares.

After graduation, Richard worked in Human Resources at a 5-star hotel, managing expat housing—a role that gave him valuable insight into the property market. This exposure to property management and market prices proved invaluable, serving as the foundation for his eventual full-time pivot into real estate.

The turning point came when Richard received a commission check from one of his real estate referrals. “A couple of years later, while working in the corporate world, my real estate agent friend gave me a check from my referrals. I was dumbfounded and thought to myself that this was easy money since I didn't even do anything! This piqued my interest in real estate,” he exclaims.

This unexpected financial windfall caught his attention, leading him to explore real estate more seriously. Soon after, he transitioned from the corporate world to become a full-time real estate broker.

### Building Credibility and Early Wins.

Richard's early foray into real estate came with its challenges. He made his first million at 23, an impressive feat for someone so young, but earning the trust of older clients wasn't easy. “Being young and trying to sell to older clients was tough,” Richard admitted. “Many rejected me because I lacked credibility.”

Determined to establish himself, Richard invested heavily in his professional development. He attended seminars, completed training programs, passed the board exam, and earned his license as a real estate broker. These credentials helped him gain clients' trust and solidified his reputation in the industry.

However, despite his early financial success, Richard learned that wealth could be fleeting if not managed properly. “I didn't really realize I had hit the million mark because it was gone





“The *importance* of being present online cannot be *overstated*. We’ve seen how video tours, property blogs, and social media posts can drive *engagement*. We now see clients who make *decisions* based on online viewings alone.”



“We are not yet in a real *estate bubble*; people are just looking for cash flow and are *holding* onto their cash.”





in a month,” he admits. “I had to pay for many things such as investments and car amortization, among others.” This experience of blowing his first million taught him the value of financial literacy—knowledge he now shares with others through his writing and speaking engagements.

Creating Solutions for OFWs.

Richard’s big break came when he identified a gap in the market for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) struggling to manage the properties they had purchased. “I found out that OFWs had a difficult time maintaining the properties they had bought,” he shares. Worse, many of these workers had been misled by their agents about market performance, property locations, and return on investment.

Seeing the gap in services provided to OFWs, Richard decided to create a business that would address their needs comprehensively. This led to the founding of Philgems Realty Corporation, a full-service investment brokerage firm that not only sells properties but also offers property management, leasing, market research, and investment planning. “Basically, what we did was to make the most out of our clients’ investment,” he explained.

As with any entrepreneurial venture, Richard’s journey with Philgems had its share of challenges. “My first few months with the business were smooth sailing,” he notes. “But I had the normal struggles of a businessman. Every decision I made – small or big – was important and affected the company in the long run.”

Mistakes like over-hiring, overspending on marketing, and expanding too quickly taught him valuable lessons in business management. Richard took these experiences in stride, using them as motivation to continuously improve his business.

These experiences have also reinforced the importance of sound financial management. One of the key lessons he has learned is the value of cash flow. “Cash flow is crucial,” he emphasizes. “I make sure to use my cash wisely, especially in my personal investments.” He also highlights the importance of leveraging payments with no interest and maintaining backup liquidity in case of emergencies.



“What *drives* me is that I like what I do. Maybe it’s because I am very *passionate*, but I enjoy these things. It’s *physically* tiring, but at the end of the day, it’s emotionally fulfilling.”







### Advice to the Young

For Richard, leaving a lasting impact goes hand-in-hand with his commitment to guiding the next generation of business leaders and real estate professionals. His advice for Gen Z and other Millennials is simple yet profound:

**Do your homework.** It is important that you do your research before buying any property. Don't just depend on your broker. You also have to know the cost and obligation of becoming a property owner, such as paying different taxes, association dues, and maintenance expenses to make sure you earn from it.

**Maximize the potential.** The good thing about property investment is that you can earn from different income streams, such as capital appreciation, rental, resale, or interest payments, by selling it via a rent-to-own scheme. Do not just buy and wait for the value to increase. Get a property manager to help you lease out the property, which would also help you self-liquidate the investment, especially if you have a bank loan.

**Prepare to commit.** Make sure your mindset is ready. Real estate is a long-term investment you will pay for many years. "We've seen many buyers who forfeited their real estate investment and laid their money to waste because they are not financially prepared," Richard laments. "Also, make sure you have a good credit standing. Real estate investing might sound tedious, but it is definitely worth it."



### Advocating Financial Literacy.

While building his real estate empire, he was also increasingly drawn to financial education. His passion for teaching others about financial literacy led him to become a finance and motivational speaker, a role that quickly evolved into a calling. "This became an advocacy since I did it for free, just for the passion of creating financial freedom and financially literate Filipinos," he explains.

His speaking engagements eventually led to a desire to reach even more people, and thus, his writing career was born. Despite never seeing himself as a writer, Richard embraced the challenge, motivated by the need to share his knowledge. "I needed to read and keep myself updated with the economy and market trends," he says. This self-taught approach eventually led to the publication of his first book, *The Millionaire*, which aimed to inspire fellow Millennials to become millionaires by taking control of their financial future.

The book was intentionally designed to be relatable to its target audience. "I tried to think of a title that would catch the attention of my generation," he explains. "I decided to talk about selfies, YOLO, and social media and then relate it to personal finance."

### Real Estate Gets High-Tech.

Like most Millennials, Richard is very tech-savvy, leveraging social media and online videos for business purposes. The global pandemic in 2020 further accelerated the digital shift. "Buyers are now more comfortable with virtual tours, digital reservations, and completing transactions without even stepping into the property," he shares.

Richard adds that the pandemic pushed the industry toward greater innovation. "The pandemic forced the real estate industry to adopt new technologies," Richard notes. He recognizes that embracing technological advancements has not only streamlined business processes but also opened new avenues for marketing and client engagement.

As more people turn to online platforms, Richard has capitalized on creating compelling digital content to attract potential buyers. "The importance of being present online cannot be overstated," he stresses. "We've seen how video tours, property blogs, and social media posts can drive engagement. We now see clients who make decisions based on online viewings alone."

This digital shift extends beyond marketing and sales. Even operational aspects of property management have been enhanced through technology. Processes like move-in clearances, maintenance requests, and rental agreements have shifted online, allowing for a smoother experience for property owners and tenants alike.

### Adapting to a Changing Market.

Like any savvy entrepreneur, Richard is keenly aware of market trends. The real estate market has always been cyclical, and Richard is no stranger to its ups and downs. In 2024, he noticed a shift in the real estate landscape. "Many have not profited from their recent real estate investments, especially in pre-selling condominiums," he notes.

Buyers became more cautious, with many holding onto their cash rather. "Many investors have struggled to sell their properties and are running out of time to liquidate them," he adds.

Richard quickly points out that these challenges don't spell the end for real estate as a profitable investment: "We are not yet in a real estate bubble; people are just looking for cash flow and are holding onto their cash."

"The market is constantly shifting," he explains. "For instance, while we're seeing a slowdown in the sales of pre-selling condominiums, the demand for lots and horizontal developments has surged. Investors are now looking for properties that offer immediate returns."



And this requires a shift in strategy. In response, Richard shifted his focus more on lot sales and developments that cater to a broader market, including middle-income families looking for affordable housing. Horizontal developments, like townhouses and subdivisions, are becoming more attractive to buyers because of their potential for immediate use and higher capital appreciation.

He continues, “The challenge now is balancing supply with the right demand. A lot of sellers are holding onto their properties, but many buyers are looking for immediate returns and are hesitant to commit to long-term investments, especially in high-density urban areas. We have to be creative in matching the right buyers with the right properties.”

He emphasizes that real estate, while highly rewarding, is not without its risks. Buyers and investors need to be more discerning, especially in today’s market, where overpricing and the saturation of certain developments can lead to stagnant investments.

### A Legacy of Empowerment.

Despite the pressures of running a successful business, Richard has managed to balance his many roles – running a business, speaking at events, and writing books. He attributes his ability to handle multiple responsibilities to effective time management and a willingness to delegate tasks. “I used to struggle with delegation,” he admits, “but I eventually learned that a good leader could trust their team.”

His passion for work keeps him motivated, even when the workload is heavy. “What drives me is that I like what I do,” he says. “Maybe it’s because I am very passionate, but I enjoy these things. It’s physically tiring, but at the end of the day, it’s emotionally fulfilling.”

As Richard continues to build his legacy, he

also looks ahead to new ventures and challenges. He has plans for another book that will focus more on the basics of real estate investing for a broader audience. “I’ve learned that people from different fields, such as medicine and arts, are also interested in learning about real estate and financial management,” he explains.

He also envisions a future where he can transition into a consulting role, sharing his knowledge with other real estate companies and developers. “I believe that I have gained valuable experience and knowledge over the past few years and would like to have a platform where I can share best practices and processes,” he says.

Above all, Richard is passionate about mentoring the next generation of entrepreneurs, particularly those from the millennial and Gen Z cohorts. “I want them to become the best versions of themselves and not be pressured by societal standards,” he points out.

He believes that young people have the potential to make a significant impact on the world, and he is committed to helping them realize their potential. “I believe their uniqueness and advocacies can have a big impact on our economy,” he adds. “They are here to change the world, and I want to empower them.”

His passion lies in building a legacy that will inspire future generations of entrepreneurs. He foresees a world where financial literacy and smart investments are accessible to everyone, especially young Filipinos. His advocacy, built around mentorship and knowledge-sharing, extends beyond real estate and business. It encompasses a broader vision of empowerment.

“I want to be remembered as someone who helped others succeed,” he shares. “Whether through my talks, books, or real estate ventures, my ultimate goal is to pass on the lessons I’ve learned so that others can benefit from them.” **MS**

“I believe their *uniqueness* and advocacies can have a *big impact* on our *economy*.”





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# Building Wealth with Rental Properties

By CARLA CONCEPCION

**B**efore diving into rental property investment, it's crucial to understand how rental properties contribute to long-term wealth building. Real estate offers multiple avenues for generating income and increasing the value of your assets, making it a powerful tool for financial growth. However, success in this space depends on knowing the types of properties available, the dynamics of rental markets, and the key metrics that inform smart investment decisions.

**The Role of Rental Properties in Wealth Building.** Rental properties generate wealth in several ways. The most immediate is cash flow, which refers to the income generated from tenants after deducting operating expenses. Over time, properties typically appreciate in value, allowing investors to profit from both rental income and the eventual sale of the property.

Real estate also offers leverage opportunities—using borrowed money (like a mortgage) to control a large asset that increases in value over time.

Rental properties can generate wealth through multiple avenues:

- **Cash Flow:** The most obvious benefit of rental properties is the ability to generate cash flow, which is the money you receive after paying expenses like the mortgage, taxes, insurance, and maintenance.
- **Appreciation:** Over time, properties tend to increase in value, creating wealth when sold or used as leverage for additional investments.
- **Leverage:** Real estate allows you to use other people's

money (e.g., a mortgage) to buy a property. By investing a portion of your own money, you control a larger asset that appreciates over time.

**Types of Rental Properties.** There are various types of rental properties, each with its own set of advantages and challenges. Single-family homes are often the starting point for many investors due to their simplicity and ease of management. Multi-family units, like duplexes or triplexes, offer the potential for higher income streams because you're renting to multiple tenants in one building.

Commercial properties—such as office spaces, retail stores, and warehouses—can generate higher returns but come with increased management responsibilities. Lastly, short-term rentals through platforms like Airbnb can be lucrative in high-demand areas, though they require more hands-on management.

Different types of rental properties offer various opportunities and risks:

- **Single-family homes:** A classic choice for new investors. They are easier to manage but may have lower cash flow than multi-unit properties.
- **Multi-family units:** Properties with two to four units can generate more rental income, spreading the risk across multiple tenants.
- **Commercial rental properties:** Office buildings, retail stores, and warehouses offer higher income potential but require more expertise and capital.
- **Short-term rentals:** Platforms like Airbnb have popularized short-term rentals, which can offer higher returns in tourist-heavy areas but come with increased management responsibility.

**The State of the Rental Market.** Understanding the rental market's current condition is essential for making informed decisions. In the Philippines, the demand for rental properties is influenced by economic factors such as urbanization, foreign investments, and the rise of business districts in areas like Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao.

Globally, rental markets vary widely, with factors like supply and demand, government regulations, and economic stability playing key roles in determining rental yields and investor opportunities. Whether you invest locally or internationally, understanding these market dynamics will help you choose the right areas for property investment.

**Finding and Acquiring Rental Properties.** Acquiring the right property is the cornerstone of a successful rental business. It's not just about finding a good deal—investors need to consider factors such as the property's location, financing options, and long-term potential. A thorough understanding of your investment goals and how to assess property values will help you make informed decisions that align with your financial objectives.

**Setting Investment Goals.** Defining your investment goals is the first step in determining the type of rental property that best suits your needs. Are you looking for a property that generates immediate cash flow, or are you more focused on long-term appreciation? Some investors prioritize short-term cash flow from rental income, while others seek properties that will significantly increase in value over time. Knowing whether you plan to buy and hold, flip properties, or diversify across different types of rentals will influence your investment strategy.

Before diving into property acquisition, it's crucial to define your goals:

- Are you looking for immediate cash flow or long-term wealth through appreciation?
- Will you focus on buy-and-hold strategies or flipping properties to rent them out at higher rates? Clarifying these goals will inform the type of property and location you choose.

**Location, Location, Location.** The old adage in real estate—"location, location, location"—holds true, especially for rental properties. A property's location significantly impacts its rental potential, appreciation, and long-term profitability.

When choosing where to invest, consider the area's economic growth, job opportunities, and the local housing market's demand. Look for neighborhoods with good schools, public transportation, and proximity to shopping centers, as these factors typically attract renters. Safety is also a key consideration, as high crime rates can deter prospective tenants.

The success of your rental property hinges on its location. A property in a thriving urban area with access to transportation, employment, and schools will typically have higher demand.





- **Economic growth:** Look for areas with job growth and development projects.
- **Proximity to amenities:** Tenants are often willing to pay more for properties near schools, hospitals, parks, and shopping centers.
- **Crime rates:** Higher crime can deter tenants and lower property value.

**Analyzing Properties for Investment.** Evaluating potential rental properties requires a mix of financial analysis and intuition. Start by calculating the expected cash flow, which is the income left after covering all expenses like the mortgage, property taxes, insurance, and maintenance. Cash flow is crucial for ensuring that your property generates a profit.

The capitalization rate, or Cap Rate, helps you assess a property's return on investment by dividing the net operating income by the property's purchase price. Other helpful metrics include the 1% rule (the rent should be at least 1% of the property's price) and the 50% rule (half of the rental income should cover operating expenses).

Evaluating potential properties is critical to maximizing returns:

- **Cash Flow:** To determine potential cash flow, subtract your total expenses (mortgage, taxes, insurance, maintenance) from your expected rental income.

- **Cap Rate:** The capitalization rate (Cap Rate) is calculated by dividing the property's net operating income by the purchase price. A higher cap rate means better returns but may also indicate higher risks.
- **1% Rule:** This rule of thumb suggests that a property should rent for at least 1% of its purchase price to generate sufficient cash flow.

**Financing Your Rental Property.** Financing is one of the most important steps in purchasing a rental property, and there are multiple options available. Many first-time investors opt for conventional mortgages, which typically offer lower interest rates but require a significant down payment and strong credit. Investor-specific loans are also available and designed to meet the unique needs of property buyers looking to rent.

Creative financing solutions—such as private lenders, partnerships, and seller financing—allow investors to acquire properties with less upfront capital, although they often come with higher interest rates and stricter terms.

Several financing options are available for investors:

- **Conventional mortgages:** Suitable for first-time investors with good credit and low debt-to-income ratios.
- **Investor loans:** Loans designed specifically for real estate investors often come with different terms and interest rates.



- **Creative financing:** Options like private loans, seller financing, or even partnerships can help investors with limited capital get started.

**Negotiating the Deal.** After identifying the right property, negotiation is key to securing a favorable deal. Real estate is a competitive market, and getting the best price requires strategic thinking. Always make offers contingent upon inspections and financing approval to protect yourself from unforeseen issues.

Negotiation doesn't stop at the price; request concessions like covering closing costs or performing necessary repairs before purchase. A professional real estate agent can guide you through this process, ensuring that all legal paperwork is handled correctly and that you close the deal under optimal terms.

After identifying a property, negotiation becomes crucial:

- **Offers:** Make your offer contingent upon inspections and financing approval to protect yourself.
- **Inspections:** Always perform a thorough property inspection to identify any potential issues.
- **Closing the deal:** Ensure a real estate attorney properly files and reviews all necessary legal documents.

**Managing Rental Properties.** Owning a rental property is not just about acquiring an asset—it's about managing it effectively to ensure consistent cash flow and long-term profitability. Successful property management involves tenant screening, maintaining the property, handling rent collection, and building good relationships with your tenants. These tasks can be time-consuming, but with the right systems in place, they become manageable and can even be outsourced to professionals.

**Setting Up Your Rental Business.** Before you start renting out your property, setting up your business properly is essential. Consider creating a legal entity such as a corporation to protect your personal assets in the event of lawsuits or liability issues. Use property management software to streamline tasks like rent collection, maintenance requests, and tenant communication. By keeping accurate financial records and separating your business expenses from your personal accounts, you'll be better equipped to manage multiple properties and maximize your tax deductions.

Managing rental properties is easier when you set up systems from the start:

- **Legal entity:** Consider forming a corporation to protect your personal assets.
- **Property management tools:** Use property management software to efficiently handle rent collection, tenant communications, and maintenance requests.

**The Importance of Screening Tenants.** Choosing the right tenants is one of the most critical aspects of managing rental properties. A thorough screening process can help you avoid problem tenants who might damage your property or fail to pay rent. Begin by having prospective tenants fill out an application that includes income verification, credit checks, and references from previous landlords.

Conducting background checks and reviewing rental histories will give you a better understanding of the tenant's reliability.

Good tenants make all the difference in successful property management:

- **Application process:** Create a solid application that includes income verification, credit checks, and references.
- **Background checks:** Screen tenants for criminal history, previous evictions, and rental history.

**Setting Rent Prices.** Determining the right rent price is crucial to both attracting tenants and ensuring profitability. The best way to set a competitive rent is by researching comparable properties in your area to see what similar units are charging. While setting rents too high can lead to vacancies, setting them too low can cut your profits. Keep an eye on inflation and the local rental market to adjust rent prices periodically. Offering incentives like discounted rent for long-term leases can also help reduce tenant turnover.

Setting the right rent price is critical to maximizing cash flow while staying competitive:

- **Market research:** Compare rents in your area by checking listings and asking local property managers.
- **Adjusting rents:** Factor in inflation, market conditions, and upgrades to justify rent increases over time.

**Managing Tenant Relations.** Good tenant relations can make property management much smoother and reduce the risk of vacancies. Open communication is vital—set expectations upfront through clear lease agreements and be responsive to tenant concerns. Whether it's maintenance requests or disputes between tenants, addressing issues promptly and professionally can build trust and encourage tenants to renew their leases.

Property managers can also handle day-to-day tenant interactions, which can be especially useful if you're managing multiple properties or are an out-of-state investor.

Good tenant relationships can help ensure long-term occupancy:

- **Clear communication:** Set expectations from the start through a solid lease agreement and consistent communication.
- **Handling disputes:** Address tenant complaints promptly and professionally to prevent conflicts from escalating.



**Maintenance and Upkeep.** Keeping your property in good condition is essential for attracting quality tenants and avoiding costly repairs. Budgeting for regular maintenance is important—expect to spend about 1-3% of the property's value annually on upkeep.

Regular inspections will help catch minor issues before they become big, expensive problems. Cosmetic improvements like fresh paint, landscaping, and updated appliances can make your property more appealing, leading to higher rents and shorter vacancy periods.

A well-maintained property attracts tenants and reduces turnover:

- **Budget for repairs:** Plan for both ongoing maintenance and unexpected issues.
- **Regular inspections:** Preventative maintenance can help you catch minor issues before they turn into costly repairs.

**Dealing with Problem Tenants.** Despite your best efforts, you may encounter problem tenants. Whether it's late rent payments, property damage, or breaking the terms of the lease, dealing with these issues quickly and legally is essential. Have a clear policy for handling late payments, including grace periods and fees.

In extreme cases, eviction may be necessary, but this should always be a last resort. The eviction process varies by jurisdiction, so be sure to follow local laws to avoid complications.

Not every tenant will be perfect:

- **Late payments:** Have a clear policy for handling late rent, including grace periods and fees.
- **Eviction:** Follow legal steps carefully, and use eviction only as a last resort.

**Maximizing Profits from Your Rental Property.** Once you've acquired and managed a rental property, the next step is to find ways to maximize its profitability. Whether through strategic upgrades, leveraging tax benefits, or adjusting for market fluctuations, there are numerous methods to boost your rental property's income potential and protect your investment during tough economic times.

**Strategies for Increasing Cash Flow.** Adding value is one of the most effective ways to increase your rental property's profitability. Simple upgrades, such as modernizing kitchens and bathrooms or adding in-unit laundry, can increase the property's rental rate.

If your property has unused space, consider converting it into an additional rental unit or storage space that can generate more income. Reviewing and renegotiating service contracts with vendors (such as landscaping or property

“Regular inspections will help catch minor issues before they become big, expensive problems.”

management companies) can also cut operating costs, leading to higher net profits.

There are many ways to boost your property's income:

- **Upgrades:** Simple renovations, like updating the kitchen or adding in-unit laundry, can increase the rent you can charge.
- **Additional services:** Charge for extras like parking, storage, or utilities to generate more income.

**Reducing Vacancy Rates.** Vacancy is one of the biggest threats to a rental property's profitability. It's essential to minimize vacancies by ensuring that your property is attractive to potential tenants and that you have systems in place for tenant retention.

Start by maintaining your property's curb appeal and keeping the interior clean and up-to-date. Offering flexible lease terms or discounts for early renewals can encourage tenants to stay longer. Marketing your property effectively—through online listings, social media, and word of mouth—can also help you quickly find new tenants when vacancies occur.

**Reinvesting Profits into New Ventures.** Once your rental properties are generating steady income, reinvesting that profit into new ventures can accelerate your wealth-building process. Diversifying your investments—whether through stocks, bonds, or real estate investment trusts (REITs)—spreads risk and creates additional income streams.

Expanding into other types of real estate, such as

commercial or vacation rentals, can also open up new avenues for profit. You'll continue growing your wealth by consistently reinvesting a portion of your rental income into new ventures.

Reinvesting your profits from rental properties into other wealth-building ventures can help diversify your portfolio and reduce risk:

- **Stocks and REITs:** Consider reinvesting profits in stocks or real estate investment trusts (REITs) for more passive income streams.
- **Diversification:** Building a diverse portfolio can protect your wealth from market downturns.

**Scaling Your Rental Property Portfolio.** Scaling your rental property business is the ultimate goal for most investors who aim to build long-term wealth. Expanding your portfolio can multiply your income streams, but it requires careful planning and management to avoid becoming overwhelmed. From financing additional properties to outsourcing tasks, scaling your real estate investments involves strategic growth at every step.

**When to Expand.** Knowing when to expand your rental property portfolio is crucial. Timing is everything in real estate—market conditions, interest rates, and your personal financial situation all play a role in determining the right moment to purchase new properties.

Expanding too quickly without proper planning can lead to financial strain, while waiting too long may mean missing out on prime opportunities. Make sure you have a solid cash flow from your current properties and access to financing before expanding your portfolio.

Once your first property is generating income, you can use that cash flow or property equity to purchase more properties:

- **Equity leverage:** Use the equity from your current property to finance your next investment.
- **Leveraging financing:** Banks often offer more favorable terms to experienced investors.

**Financing Multiple Properties.** Financing multiple rental properties requires a different approach than acquiring your first investment. Traditional mortgages may limit the number of properties you can own as lenders become wary of over-leveraging.

Commercial loans, portfolio loans, or working with private lenders can offer more flexibility when financing additional properties. Maintaining a solid credit score and financial health is also important, as this will impact your ability to secure favorable loan terms.

**Managing Multiple Properties Efficiently.** As your portfolio grows, managing multiple properties becomes more complex.





Outsourcing tasks to professional property management companies can help you focus on strategic growth rather than day-to-day operations.

Property management firms handle tenant relations, maintenance, and rent collection, freeing up your time to focus on acquiring new properties and growing your business. While management fees typically range from 8-12% of monthly rent, the time saved can make it a worthwhile investment for many landlords.

Managing multiple properties can be challenging, but it's manageable with the right systems:

- **Consolidate operations:** Simplify operations using the same software, contractors, and policies across all properties.

**Diversifying Your Property Types.** As you scale, consider diversifying the types of properties in your portfolio. Owning a mix of residential, commercial, and vacation rental properties can reduce your risk and provide multiple income streams. Each type of property responds differently to economic conditions, meaning that a downturn in one market may be offset by better performance in another.

Diversifying your property types also allows you to learn new markets and strategies, keeping your investment portfolio dynamic and responsive to changing market conditions.

As you grow your portfolio, consider diversifying into commercial properties or short-term rentals:

- **Commercial properties:** These can offer higher rents but come with different management requirements.
- **Short-term rentals:** Platforms like Airbnb can be lucrative in high-tourism areas but require more intensive management.

**Building Lasting Wealth.** Rental properties offer a proven path to building wealth through consistent cash flow, long-term appreciation, and valuable tax benefits. By understanding the rental market, acquiring the right properties, and managing them efficiently, you can create a steady stream of income and long-term financial security.

With patience, persistence, and a focus on scalability, rental properties can become a cornerstone of your wealth-building strategy. Whether you're just starting with a single property or looking to grow an established portfolio, real estate investing can provide the financial freedom you seek.<sup>MS</sup>



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# Financing Your Real Estate Investments in the Philippines

By CARLOS GONZALES

**R**eal estate is one of the most profitable investment opportunities in the Philippines. Investing in real estate can yield long-term financial rewards, whether it's a house, condominium unit, commercial property, or land. However, not everyone has the capital needed to buy properties outright. Financing is often the key to unlocking these opportunities, providing you with the funds to acquire property and build your portfolio.

Understanding how to finance your real estate investments is crucial to maximizing returns. Several financing options—traditional loans, government programs, and alternative methods—cater to various investor profiles. With the right strategy, you can leverage financing to acquire properties, manage your debt effectively, and expand your real estate portfolio over time.

In this guide, we'll delve into the different financing methods available to investors, outline the pros and cons of each option, and offer tips on how to make the most of your real estate investments.

**Traditional Financing Options in the Philippines.** For many real estate investors, traditional financing options remain the most accessible. These include bank housing loans, government-backed programs like Pag-IBIG, and in-house financing from developers. Each option offers unique advantages, especially for those just starting in the real estate market.

**Bank Mortgages.** Banks in the Philippines offer housing loans designed to cater to real estate investors and homebuyers alike. These loans allow you to borrow a significant portion of the property's value, with the remainder typically covered by a down payment. Bank loans tend to have lower interest rates compared to other financing options, but they often

come with stringent requirements, such as a stable income, a good credit history, and a substantial down payment.

Some of the largest Philippine banks that offer competitive housing loans include BDO, BPI, Metrobank, and Security Bank. The Philippine Veterans Bank even offers to return your money at the end of the loan!

Each bank has its own set of interest rates, loan tenures, and down payment requirements. The interest rate you're offered will depend on several factors, including your financial standing, the bank's risk assessment, and whether you choose a fixed or variable interest rate.

## Key Features of Bank Housing Loans:

- **Loan amount:** Up to 80% of the property's appraised value, depending on your creditworthiness
- **Interest rates:** Vary by bank, typically between 6-8% per annum for fixed-rate loans
- **Loan tenure:** Up to 20-25 years for residential properties
- **Down payment:** Typically 20-30% of the property's selling price
- **Application requirements:** Proof of income, tax returns, credit history, property documents

**Example:** Let's say you're purchasing a condominium unit worth ₱5 million. If the bank agrees to cover 80% of the appraised value, you would need to pay a 20% down payment of ₱1 million. The remaining ₱4 million would be financed through a bank loan. With an interest rate of 7% and a loan tenure of 20 years, your monthly payments would be approximately ₱31,000.

Banks also offer loan pre-approval, which allows you to determine how much you can borrow before you start looking for properties. This is important for serious investors who want to streamline the purchasing process and ensure they don't waste time looking at properties outside their budget.

**Pag-IBIG Housing Loan.** The Pag-IBIG Fund offers one of the most affordable housing loan programs in the Philippines. Created to help Filipino workers purchase homes, Pag-IBIG is a government-backed savings and housing loan program that offers low interest rates, especially for lower-income earners.

Pag-IBIG is particularly useful for first-time homebuyers or real estate investors looking to purchase rental properties, as it offers lower down payments and longer loan terms compared to most banks. Additionally, because Pag-IBIG is designed to help Filipinos of all income levels, the loan approval process tends to be more lenient than that of traditional banks.

## Key Features of Pag-IBIG Housing Loan:

- **Loan amount:** Up to ₱6 million, depending on your contributions and repayment capacity
- **Interest rates:** As low as 5.375% for socialized housing, standard rates start at 6%
- **Loan tenure:** Up to 30 years
- **Down payment:** Can be as low as 10% depending on the loan amount
- **Eligibility:** Must be a Pag-IBIG member with at least 24 months of contributions

**Example:** Imagine you are purchasing a ₱3 million house and lot. Under the Pag-IBIG housing loan program, you can borrow up to 90% of the property's value, which means your down payment could be as low as ₱300,000. The remaining ₱2.7 million can be financed at an interest rate of 6%, with a loan tenure of 30 years. This setup would give you a monthly payment of around ₱16,000, making it a very affordable option.

Pag-IBIG's housing loan program also offers the flexibility of multi-purpose loans, such as home improvement,

renovation, or refinancing existing loans. This makes it an excellent option not just for homebuyers but also for investors seeking to upgrade or expand their rental properties.

**In-House Financing by Developers.** In-house financing is another option offered directly by real estate developers. It is particularly attractive to those who may not qualify for traditional bank loans due to a lack of credit history or income documentation. This type of financing is easier to secure but typically comes with higher interest rates and shorter repayment terms than bank loans.

Many large property developers in the Philippines, such as SMD, Ayala Land, and Megaworld, offer in-house financing for their properties. The primary advantage of in-house financing is its convenience—developers often provide flexible payment terms, and the approval process is faster compared to bank loans.

## Key Features of In-House Financing:

- **Loan tenure:** Typically 5-10 years
- **Interest rates:** Can be as high as 12-18%, depending on the developer
- **Down payment:** May be lower than bank loans, sometimes as little as 10-20% of the property price
- **Pros:** Easier to qualify, quicker approval process
- **Cons:** Higher interest rates, shorter loan terms, and substantial balloon payments





**Example:** If you purchase a condominium unit from a developer for ₱4 million and use in-house financing, the developer might require a down payment of 20% (₱800,000) and offer a loan for the remaining 80% (₱3.2 million) at an interest rate of 15% per annum over ten years. This would result in monthly payments of around ₱43,000—higher than what you’d pay with a traditional bank loan but with fewer eligibility requirements.

**Alternative Financing Solutions.** For investors who may not qualify for traditional loans or those looking for more flexible financing options, alternative solutions can provide the funding needed to acquire properties. These methods may come with higher interest rates or risks but can be invaluable for those seeking to grow their portfolio or who need to act quickly in competitive markets.

**Private Money Lending.** Private money lending involves borrowing from individuals or private companies rather than banks or government institutions. These private lenders are often more flexible in their requirements and are willing to finance projects that traditional lenders might avoid. Private money loans are ideal for investors who need quick access to cash or who may not qualify for conventional financing.

In the Philippines, private lenders often include individual investors, real estate groups, or companies that specialize in short-term lending for real estate purchases. These loans are secured by the property, making them attractive for investors with poor credit or inconsistent income streams. However, the higher interest rates associated with private money loans can eat into your profits, especially if you’re holding the property for a long time.

**Key Features of Private Money Loans:**

- **Loan tenure:** Usually 1-5 years
- **Interest rates:** Typically higher than banks, around 10-15%
- **Loan-to-value ratio:** Up to 70-80% of the property’s value
- **Pros:** Faster approval, less strict requirements
- **Cons:** Higher interest rates, shorter repayment terms

**Example:** You want to purchase a small apartment complex for ₱10 million but can’t qualify for a bank loan. A private lender offers to finance 70% of the purchase price (₱7 million) at an interest rate of 12% over three years. Although the interest rate is higher than a bank loan, you secure the property quickly and have the flexibility to refinance with a traditional lender once your financial situation improves.

**Hard Money Loans.** Hard money loans are similar to private money loans but come from private firms or groups of investors who specialize in real estate lending. These loans are typically short-term, with high interest rates, and are secured by the property itself. They are often used for property flipping or other short-term investments.

In the Philippines, hard money lenders are not as common as in more developed real estate markets, but they exist. These loans are ideal for experienced investors who need fast financing to close deals or fund renovations.

**Key Features of Hard Money Loans:**

- **Loan tenure:** Usually six months to 2 years
- **Interest rates:** 12-18% per annum
- **Loan-to-value ratio:** Up to 70% of the property’s value
- **Pros:** Quick access to funds, minimal requirements for approval
- **Cons:** High interest rates, short loan terms, not ideal for long-term holds

**Creative Financing Strategies.** Creative financing strategies allow real estate investors to acquire properties without using their own money or by minimizing the amount of cash they need to put down. These methods are especially useful for investors looking to scale their portfolio quickly without tying up too much capital in any one deal.

**Seller Financing.** Seller financing occurs when the property owner agrees to finance part or all of the purchase price, allowing the buyer to pay in installments over time. This method can be a win-win for both parties: the buyer can

acquire the property without needing to secure a traditional loan, and the seller earns interest on the financed amount. This is often used when the buyer doesn’t qualify for bank financing or when the property is difficult to finance through traditional means.

**Pros of Seller Financing:**

- Lower upfront costs
  - Flexible payment terms
- Quicker closing process

**Cons:**

- Higher interest rates than traditional loans
- Not all sellers are willing to offer this option

**Example:** You’re looking to purchase a property worth ₱2 million, but your bank application is denied. The seller agrees to finance the property themselves, allowing you to make a 10% down payment (₱200,000) and pay the rest over five years at an interest rate of 10%. This will enable you to secure the property without going through the traditional loan process.

**Lease-to-Own Arrangements.** A lease-to-own agreement (also known as rent-to-own) allows you to lease a property with the option to buy it after a certain period. This arrangement can be an excellent way for real estate investors to “test drive” a property before committing to a purchase. A portion of your rent payments will go toward the purchase price, allowing you to build equity over time.

**Pros of Lease-to-Own:**

- Allows you to secure a property without immediate financing
- Gives you time to improve your credit or financial situation
- Lower upfront costs compared to outright buying

**Cons:**

- Higher rent compared to traditional leases
- If you don’t buy the property, you may lose the equity built through rent

**Example:** You’re interested in a ₱3 million house but aren’t ready to commit to a full purchase. The seller offers a lease-to-own arrangement where you pay a monthly rent of ₱25,000, with ₱5,000 of that going toward the purchase price. After three years, you’ve built up ₱180,000 in equity, which can be applied to your down payment if you decide to buy the property.

**BRRRR Strategy.** The BRRRR (Buy, Rehab, Rent, Refinance, Repeat) strategy is a popular creative financing method that allows investors to acquire undervalued properties, renovate them, rent them out, and then refinance the property to pull

out equity. This equity can then be used to invest in more properties, allowing you to scale your portfolio quickly.

**Steps of the BRRRR Strategy:**

- **Buy:** Purchase a distressed property below market value.
- **Rehab:** Renovate the property to increase its value.
- **Rent:** Rent the property to generate cash flow.
- **Refinance:** Refinance the property to access the increased equity.
- **Repeat:** Use the equity to buy another property.

**Example:** You purchase a fixer-upper house for ₱1.5 million and spend ₱500,000 on renovations. After the rehab, the property is worth ₱3 million. You rent it out for ₱20,000 per month and refinance the property to pull out ₱1 million in equity, which you use to buy your next investment property.

**Maximizing Returns Through Smart Financing.** After securing financing for your real estate investments, maximizing your returns through strategic debt management, refinancing, and leveraging tax benefits is important. Properly managing your debt and taking advantage of tax incentives can significantly improve your cash flow and long-term profitability.

**Effective Debt Management.** Effective debt management is crucial to maintaining a healthy real estate portfolio. While taking on debt allows you to acquire more properties, avoiding over-leveraging can strain your cash flow and put your investments at risk.

**Tips for Managing Real Estate Debt:**

- Refinance high-interest loans when possible to reduce your monthly payments.
- Pay down high-interest debt first to free up cash for new investments.
- Keep an emergency fund to cover unexpected expenses, such as repairs or vacancies.

**Building Wealth Through Real Estate Financing.** Real estate financing offers a wide range of options to help you acquire, grow, and manage your property investments. Whether you’re utilizing traditional bank loans, tapping into Pag-IBIG housing loans, or exploring creative financing strategies like seller financing and the BRRRR method, understanding the various financing tools at your disposal is critical to long-term success.

The journey to building wealth through real estate is not a one-size-fits-all process. It requires careful planning, strategic financing, and a willingness to adapt to changing market conditions. By choosing the right financing strategy, managing your debt effectively, and leveraging tax benefits, you can maximize your returns and build a robust, profitable real estate portfolio over time.<sup>MS</sup>





# The First-Time Homebuyer's Guide

By ANDY CRUZ

Buying your first home is one of the biggest milestones in life, especially in the Philippines, where owning a house is seen as a major symbol of stability and success. However, the process can be both exciting and daunting for first-time homebuyers, with a maze of financial, legal, and logistical considerations to navigate.

This guide aims to demystify the home-buying process in the Philippines, offering essential tips, insights, and practical advice to help you make an informed decision. Whether you're eyeing a condo in Metro Manila, a house and lot in Cavite, or a beachfront property in Cebu, understanding the steps and strategies involved will empower you to make the right choice for your financial future.

**Why Buy a Home? Key Reasons for Homeownership in the Philippines.** Before diving into the nitty-gritty of home-buying, it's important to reflect on your reasons for purchasing a property. While renting may offer flexibility, homeownership provides long-term security, equity building, and potential appreciation.

For many Filipinos, the key motivations include:

- **Long-term investment:** Property values in key urban areas like Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao continue to rise, making real estate a sound investment.
- **Stability and security:** Owning a home provides a sense of permanence and protection from rising rental prices.
- **Personalization:** As a homeowner, you have the freedom to modify and renovate your space as you see fit, which isn't always possible when renting.
- **Legacy:** Many Filipinos see property ownership as something they can pass down to their children, securing their family's future.

**Setting Your Budget: Understanding How Much You Can Afford.** One of the first steps in home-buying is determining how much you can afford. This will depend on several factors, including your income, savings, monthly expenses, and the loan terms you qualify for.

## Factors to Consider When Setting Your Budget

- **Monthly Income:** Lenders generally recommend that your monthly housing costs (mortgage payments, property taxes, and insurance) do not exceed 30% of your gross monthly income. For example, if you earn ₱60,000 per month, your maximum housing budget should be around ₱18,000 to ₱20,000.
- **Down Payment:** Most home loans in the Philippines require a down payment of 10% to 20% of the property's value. For a ₱3 million property, this means you need to save between ₱300,000 and ₱600,000 for the down payment alone.
- **Loan-to-Value Ratio:** This ratio represents the amount of your loan compared to the value of the property. Banks in the Philippines typically offer loans that cover 70% to 90% of the property's value, with the rest covered by your down payment.
- **Other Costs:** Don't forget additional expenses such as closing fees, legal fees, appraisal fees, property taxes, and moving costs. These can add up to about 5-8% of the property's value, so be sure to account for these in your budget.

## Tips for Budgeting

- **Build a down payment fund:** Start saving for your down payment as early as possible. Set aside a portion of your monthly income specifically for this purpose.
- **Reduce debt:** Pay off existing debts to improve your credit score, making it easier to secure favorable loan terms.
- **Check your financial standing:** Regularly review your credit report and financial statements to gauge your readiness for a home loan application.

**Financing Your First Home in the Philippines.** Financing is often the biggest hurdle for first-time homebuyers. Fortunately, several loan options are available in the Philippines to make homeownership more accessible. Understanding the different financing schemes will help you choose the one that best suits your financial situation.

**Pag-IBIG Housing Loan.** The Pag-IBIG Housing Loan is one of the most affordable financing options for Filipinos. It's a government-backed program that offers competitive interest rates and flexible terms, making it an ideal option for first-time homebuyers, especially those with limited income.

## Key Features:

- **Loan amount:** Up to ₱6 million
- **Interest rate:** Starts at 5.375% per annum for loans up to ₱750,000 (socialized housing), with standard rates around 6-8%
- **Loan term:** Up to 30 years
- **Eligibility:** Must be a Pag-IBIG member with at least 24 months of contributions

Pag-IBIG allows members to borrow up to 90% of the property's value, making it an excellent choice for first-time buyers who may not have a substantial down payment saved.

**Bank Housing Loans.** Many banks in the Philippines offer housing loans with competitive interest rates and flexible payment terms. Major banks such as BDO, BPI, and Metrobank provide loan products tailored to different buyer profiles, from salaried employees to self-employed individuals.

## Key Features:

- **Loan amount:** Typically up to 80% of the appraised property value
- **Interest rates:** Vary between 6-8% per annum for fixed-rate loans
- **Loan term:** Up to 25 years
- **Eligibility:** Requires a steady income, proof of employment, and a good credit history

Banks generally require a 20% down payment, so be prepared to set aside a significant sum before applying for a loan. Additionally, bank loans may come with stricter requirements, including a high credit score and a longer application process.

**In-House Financing.** Many property developers offer in-house financing, allowing buyers to pay for the property directly to the developer over several years. This type of financing typically has higher interest rates but may be easier to secure, especially for those who cannot qualify for a bank or Pag-IBIG loan.

## Key Features:

- **Interest rates:** Can be as high as 12-18%
- **Loan term:** Typically 5-10 years
- **Down payment:** Can be as low as 10% of the property's price
- **Approval process:** Faster and more flexible than bank loans

## Other Financing Options:

- **Private Lenders:** Some private lenders offer real estate loans, though interest rates may be higher and terms less favorable than traditional loans.
- **Lease-to-Own:** A rent-to-own scheme allows you to lease a property with an option to buy it after a set period. A portion of your monthly rent goes toward the eventual purchase price.

**Choosing the Right Property.** Once you've set your budget and secured financing, the next step is to choose the right property. This decision will depend on several factors, including location, property type, and long-term goals.

**Location.** Location is one of the most important considerations when buying a home. The value of a property is heavily influenced by its proximity to essential services, transportation, schools, and employment hubs.

## Things to Consider:

- **Proximity to work:** Consider your daily commute. Homes near central business districts (CBDs) like Makati, BGC, or Ortigas will likely be more expensive but may save you commuting time and transportation costs.
- **Amenities and services:** Look for properties near schools, hospitals, supermarkets, and public transport routes. Areas like Quezon City, Pasig, and Alabang offer a good mix of residential and commercial developments.
- **Flood-prone areas:** Be wary of properties in low-lying or flood-prone areas, especially during the rainy season. Checking the property's flood history is essential in places like Marikina, Pasig, and certain parts of Manila.

**Property Type.** The Philippine real estate market offers various properties, each with advantages and challenges.

- **House and Lot:** Offers the most flexibility and space but comes with higher costs and more maintenance.





- **Condominium:** Ideal for urban living, with amenities like pools and gyms. However, condo units typically come with association dues and less privacy.
- **Townhouse:** A middle ground between a house and lot and a condo, offering more space than a condo but less than a traditional house.
- **Lot-only properties:** Allows you to build your own home, giving you total control over design and construction. However, you will need additional capital for building costs.

**New Development vs. Resale**

- **New Developments:** Developers often sell these properties at pre-selling prices, which are generally lower than post-construction prices. However, you may have to wait several years before the property is completed.
- **Resale Properties:** These are properties being sold by current owners. They are move-in ready but may require renovations or repairs.

**Legal Considerations: Understanding the Fine Print.**

Navigating the legal aspects of home-buying in the Philippines can be tricky, especially for first-timers. It's crucial to understand the paperwork and processes involved to avoid any legal complications down the line.

**Title Verification.** Before purchasing a property, you must verify that the seller has the legal right to sell it. This involves checking the title at the Registry of Deeds to ensure there are no existing liens, encumbrances, or disputes.

**Documents to Verify:**

- **Transfer Certificate of Title (TCT):** For lots and houses
- **Condominium Certificate of Title (CCT):** For condominium units
- **Tax Declaration:** Ensures that the property's

**Additional Considerations for First-Time Homebuyers.**

As a first-time homebuyer in the Philippines, there are several additional considerations and tips that can further streamline your home-buying journey and ensure a successful investment.

**Understanding Market Trends.** Before committing to a purchase, being informed about current market trends is essential. The Philippine real estate market can vary significantly depending on location, economic conditions, and other factors. Keeping up with these trends can help you make a more informed decision and potentially negotiate a better deal.

**Tips for Staying Informed:**

- **Research Market Reports:** Regularly review real estate market reports from reputable sources such as the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) or real estate agencies like DMCI Homes or Ayala Land.

“Before purchasing a *property*, you must verify that the seller has the legal *right* to sell it.”

- **Attend Property Expos:** Property expos and seminars can provide valuable insights into market trends, available properties, and financing options.
- **Consult Real Estate Agents:** Experienced real estate agents deeply understand market dynamics and can offer personalized advice based on your preferences and budget.

**The Role of Real Estate Agents.** Real estate agents play a crucial role in the home-buying process. They can help you find properties that meet your criteria, negotiate prices, and guide you through the paperwork. Choosing the right agent can make a significant difference in your home-buying experience.

**How to Choose a Real Estate Agent:**

- **Experience and Reputation:** Look for agents with a proven track record and positive reviews from previous clients.
- **Local Knowledge:** Choose an agent familiar with the area where you want to buy. They'll have insights into neighborhood trends, property values, and local amenities.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication is key. Ensure that the agent listens to your needs and provides timely updates throughout the process.

**Evaluating Property Value.** Properly evaluating the value of a property is crucial to ensure you're making a sound investment. Overpaying for a property can lead to financial strain and diminished returns.

**Steps to Evaluate Property Value:**

- **Comparative Market Analysis (CMA):** Request a CMA from your real estate agent. This analysis compares the property you're interested in with recently sold properties in the same area.

- **Professional Appraisal:** Hire a professional appraiser to assess the property's value. This provides an objective, third-party opinion and is often required by lenders.
- **Property Inspection:** Conduct a thorough inspection to check for any issues that might affect the property's value, such as structural problems, pest infestations, or outdated systems.

**Legal and Regulatory Requirements.** Navigating the legal and regulatory aspects of home buying is essential to ensure a smooth transaction and avoid future legal complications.

**Key Legal and Regulatory Aspects:**

- **Property Registration:** Ensure that the property is properly registered with the Registry of Deeds. This confirms that the seller is the legitimate owner and that the property is free of legal encumbrances.
- **Tax Clearance:** Verify that the property's taxes are paid up-to-date. Request a tax clearance certificate from the seller to confirm this.
- **Zoning and Land Use:** Check local zoning laws and land use regulations to ensure that the property complies with local ordinances and is intended for your planned use.

**Insurance and Protection.** Protecting your investment with appropriate insurance is crucial. Several types of insurance can safeguard your home and finances.

**Types of Insurance to Consider:**

- **Home Insurance:** Covers damage to the property and its contents from events such as fire, theft, and natural disasters.
- **Title Insurance:** Protects against issues related to the property's title, such as legal disputes or undiscovered claims.
- **Mortgage Insurance:** Required by lenders if your down payment is less than 20%. It protects the lender in case you default on the loan.

**Post-Purchase Tips for First-Time Homebuyers.** The journey doesn't end there once you've successfully purchased your home. There are several post-purchase steps and ongoing responsibilities to manage to ensure your new property remains a valuable and comfortable asset.

**Maintaining Your Property.** Regular maintenance is vital to preserving the value and condition of your property. Establishing a maintenance schedule can help prevent costly repairs and ensure that everything remains in good working order.

**Maintenance Tips:**

- **Routine Inspections:** Regularly inspect your property for signs of wear and tear, such as leaks, cracks, or electrical issues.

- **Cleaning and Upkeep:** Keep up with routine cleaning and minor repairs to prevent larger problems from developing.
- **Seasonal Tasks:** Perform seasonal maintenance tasks, such as clearing gutters, servicing air conditioning units, and checking for mold or pests.

**Managing Property Expenses.** Effective management of property expenses ensures that your home remains a financially sound investment. Keep track of all related costs to stay within your budget and plan for future expenses.

**Expense Management Tips:**

- **Track Expenses:** Use a budgeting app or spreadsheet to monitor expenses related to your property, including mortgage payments, utilities, maintenance, and insurance.
- **Create a Reserve Fund:** Set aside a portion of your income in a reserve fund for unexpected expenses or major repairs.
- **Review Insurance Policies:** Regularly review and update your insurance policies to ensure adequate coverage and competitive rates.

**Building Equity and Value.** As you settle into your new home, consider ways to enhance its value and build equity over time. Strategic improvements and investments can increase your property's worth and provide a return on your investment.

**Strategies for Building Equity:**

- **Home Improvements:** Invest in renovations or upgrades that add value to your property, such as kitchen remodels, energy-efficient features, or curb appeal enhancements.
- **Increase Property Value:** Focus on improvements that are likely to yield a higher return when selling, such as adding an extra bedroom or upgrading the property's exterior.
- **Regular Maintenance:** Consistent upkeep and minor upgrades can prevent deterioration and maintain the property's market value.

**Your Path to Homeownership.** Purchasing your first home in the Philippines is a significant achievement and a crucial step toward long-term financial stability and personal satisfaction. By understanding the various aspects of the home-buying process—such as setting a budget, securing financing, choosing the right property, and managing post-purchase responsibilities—you can confidently navigate this journey and make informed decisions.

Remember that buying a home is not just about the financial transaction but also about creating a space where you and your family can thrive and make lasting memories. With careful planning, strategic choices, and ongoing management, your new home can be a valuable asset and a source of pride for years to come.<sup>MS</sup>



# Stock Market Cycles: Understanding Boom and Bust Phases

By CARLOS GONZALES

The stock market is a dynamic entity that moves in cycles, with periods of growth (boom) and contraction (bust). These phases are a natural part of the market's behavior, reflecting changes in the economy, investor sentiment, and external factors such as geopolitical events. While these cycles may seem unpredictable, understanding them can help investors make more informed decisions and navigate through the volatility.

In this article, we'll explore the key characteristics of the boom and bust phases of the stock market, what causes them, and how investors can manage their portfolios during these periods.

**What Is a Stock Market Cycle?** A stock market cycle refers to the recurring pattern of growth and decline in stock prices. These cycles don't follow a fixed timeline but can span months, years, or even decades. The two main phases of a stock market cycle are:

- **Boom (Bull Market):** A period of rising stock prices, strong investor confidence, and positive economic growth.
  - **Bust (Bear Market):** A period of declining stock prices, negative investor sentiment, and economic contraction.
- Understanding where the market is in its cycle can help investors anticipate potential risks and opportunities.

**The Boom Phase: Characteristics of a Bull Market.** A bull market is characterized by sustained increases in stock prices, typically over months or years. This phase often occurs during periods of economic growth when companies report strong earnings, high consumer spending, and low unemployment.

## Key Features of a Bull Market:

- **Rising Stock Prices:** Investors are optimistic about future

- growth, driving demand for stocks and pushing prices higher.
- **Strong Economic Growth:** Economic indicators such as GDP growth, low unemployment, and high consumer confidence are positive during a boom.
- **Increased Investor Confidence:** Investors are willing to take on more risk, leading to higher trading volumes and more investment in equities.
- **High Corporate Earnings:** Companies report strong profits, which further fuels stock price increases.
- **Expansion of Credit:** Low interest rates and easy access to credit encourage borrowing and investing, contributing to the bull market's momentum.

**What Drives a Bull Market?** Several factors can contribute to the boom phase of the stock market:

- **Positive Economic Data:** Strong growth in critical sectors, rising employment, and increased consumer spending can all create the conditions for a bull market.
- **Low-Interest Rates:** Central banks often keep interest rates low to stimulate borrowing and investment, which can drive stock prices higher.
- **Corporate Profits:** When companies consistently report strong earnings, investors are more willing to invest in stocks, driving prices up.
- **Market Sentiment:** Positive investor sentiment, driven by optimism about future economic growth, can lead to more buying and higher stock prices.

## Investor Behavior During a Boom:

- **Buy-and-Hold Strategy:** In a bull market, many investors adopt a long-term approach, buying stocks and holding them to benefit from rising prices.
- **Growth Stocks:** Investors often favor growth stocks that promise high future earnings, even if they're more expensive or risky.
- **Increased Speculation:** Some investors may engage in speculative trading, chasing quick gains in high-risk assets like tech stocks or cryptocurrencies.

**The Bust Phase: Characteristics of a Bear Market.** A bear market is a prolonged period of declining stock prices, usually by 20% or more from recent highs. Economic downturns, poor corporate earnings, or adverse investor sentiment often trigger this phase.

## Key Features of a Bear Market:

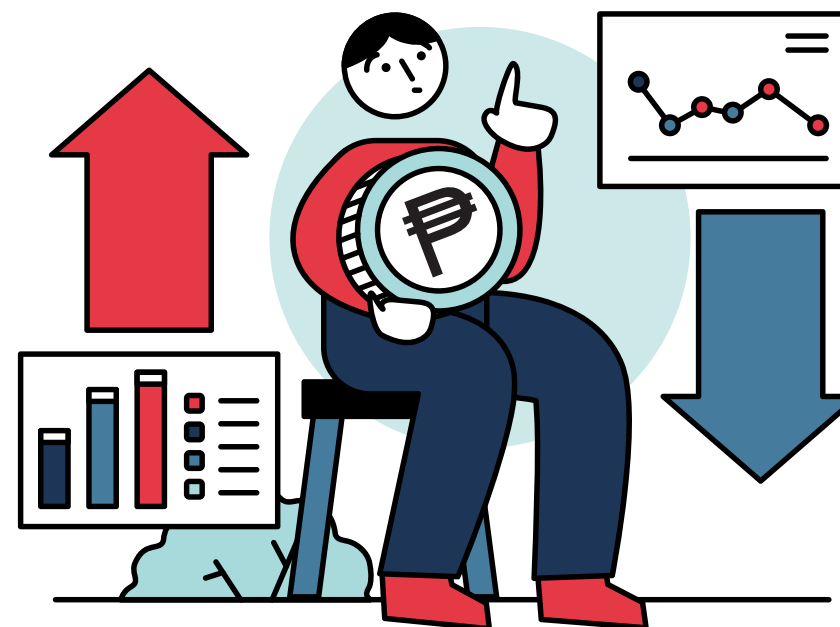
- **Falling Stock Prices:** As investor confidence wanes, demand for stocks decreases, and prices begin to fall.
- **Economic Contraction:** During a bust, economic growth slows, unemployment rises, and consumer spending declines.
- **Negative Investor Sentiment:** Fear and uncertainty dominate the market, leading to more selling than buying.
- **Declining Corporate Earnings:** Companies report lower profits or losses, contributing to falling stock prices.
- **Tighter Credit:** Higher interest rates or reduced access to credit make it harder for individuals and businesses to borrow and invest.

**What Triggers a Bear Market?** Several factors can cause bear markets:

- **Economic Recession:** A recession, marked by negative GDP growth, high unemployment, and reduced consumer spending, can trigger a bear market.
- **High-Interest Rates:** When central banks raise interest rates to curb inflation, borrowing becomes more expensive, and investments in stocks tend to decrease.
- **Geopolitical Events:** Wars, political instability, or trade wars can create uncertainty and lead to market downturns.
- **Financial Crises:** Bank failures, credit crunches, or market bubbles bursting (like the dot-com bubble or housing bubble) can result in sharp declines in stock prices.

## Investor Behavior During a Bust:

- **Flight to Safety:** During a bear market, investors often sell off riskier assets and move into safer investments like bonds, gold, or cash.
- **Panic Selling:** Fear can drive many investors to sell their stocks at a loss, exacerbating the market decline.
- **Value Stocks:** Some investors seek out undervalued companies with solid fundamentals, betting on their long-term recovery once the market stabilizes.



**The Four Phases of a Stock Market Cycle** Stock market cycles can be broken down into four distinct phases:

- **Accumulation Phase:** This phase occurs after a market bottom when experienced investors begin to buy stocks at lower prices, anticipating future growth.
- **Markup Phase:** As the economy begins to recover, stock prices rise, and more investors jump into the market, pushing prices higher.
- **Distribution Phase:** During this phase, stock prices reach their peak, and smart investors begin to sell their shares, expecting an eventual downturn.
- **Downtrend Phase:** In this phase, stock prices start to fall, often triggered by economic factors or changes in investor sentiment. This marks the transition into a bear market.

**How to Invest During Boom and Bust Phases.** Navigating the stock market during boom and bust phases requires a combination of strategy, patience, and risk management. Here are some tips for investing during both market conditions:

## Investing During a Boom

- **Diversify Your Portfolio:** While stock prices are rising, it's essential to diversify your investments across different sectors and asset classes to reduce risk.
- **Avoid Overconfidence:** Booms can create a sense of complacency. Stay disciplined and avoid chasing speculative stocks that may be overvalued.
- **Review Long-Term Goals:** Ensure that your investment strategy aligns with your long-term financial objectives, even during periods of rapid growth.

## Investing During a Bust

- **Don't Panic Sell:** While feeling anxious during a market downturn is natural, selling your investments out of fear can lock in losses.
- **Look for Buying Opportunities:** Bear markets can offer opportunities to buy quality stocks at a discount, particularly if you have a long-term investment horizon.
- **Focus on Defensive Stocks:** During a bear market, consider shifting part of your portfolio to defensive stocks—companies in industries like healthcare or utilities that tend to perform well even in economic downturns.

The stock market's boom and bust cycles are an inherent part of investing. While these cycles can be unpredictable and sometimes daunting, understanding their characteristics can help you make better investment decisions. The key is to remain calm, stay focused on your long-term goals, and adjust your strategies as needed to navigate the market's ups and downs.

By recognizing the signs of each phase and preparing accordingly, you can capitalize on opportunities during a bull market and protect your portfolio during bear markets, ensuring a more balanced approach to investing. <sup>MS</sup>



# Understanding Property Taxes and Fees in the Philippines

By CARLA CONCEPCION

Investing in real estate in the Philippines can be highly rewarding, but it's crucial to understand the various taxes and fees involved in buying, owning, and selling property. Knowing these costs upfront will help you avoid surprises and manage your investment effectively.

This guide will walk you through the essential taxes and fees you need to consider, from the initial purchase to ongoing ownership and eventual sale of your property.

**1 Real Property Tax (RPT).** Real Property Tax (RPT) is an annual tax imposed by the local government on all types of real estate properties, including residential, commercial, and industrial properties.

**How is RPT calculated?** The amount of real property tax you need to pay is based on the assessed value of your property. The assessed value is a percentage of the property's fair market value (FMV), determined by local assessors. RPT rates vary depending on the location and type of property.

**For residential properties:**

- **Metro Manila:** Up to 2% of the assessed value.
- **Outside Metro Manila:** Up to 1% of the assessed value.

**How to pay real property tax:**

- **Local Government Unit (LGU) Payment:** RPT is paid annually at your local city or municipal hall.
- **Due Dates:** RPT is usually due at the beginning of the year, but you can also pay in quarterly installments.
- **Penalties for Late Payment:** Late payments are subject to interest charges, typically 2% per month, up to a maximum of 36% per year.

**Tax deductions:** Some local governments offer discounts for early payments, typically around 10% if you pay your RPT in full before the deadline.

**2 Transfer Tax.** When purchasing a property, the local government imposes a transfer tax to transfer ownership from the seller to the buyer. This fee is payable when registering the property with the local Register of Deeds.

**Transfer tax rates:**

- **Metro Manila:** Up to 0.75% of the property's selling price or the zonal value, whichever is higher.
- **Provinces:** Typically around 0.5% of the property's value.

**Who pays the transfer tax?** Typically, the buyer shoulders the transfer tax as part of the property acquisition process, although in some transactions, parties can negotiate who will bear this cost.

**3 Documentary Stamp Tax (DST).** The Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) is a tax imposed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) on the sale, donation, or transfer of real estate. It applies to both the property title and the mortgage.

**DST calculation:**

- 1.5% of the selling price, zonal value, or fair market value, whichever is higher.
- For mortgages, DST is ₱1 for every ₱200 of the loan amount.

**Who pays the DST?** The buyer typically pays for the DST on the transfer of ownership, while the seller pays the DST on the capital gains tax (if applicable).

**4 Capital Gains Tax (CGT).** Capital Gains Tax (CGT) is a tax imposed on the sale of real estate classified as capital assets. CGT is calculated based on the gross selling price or the zonal value of the property, whichever is higher.

**CGT rate:** 6% of the gross selling price or the zonal value, whichever is higher.

**Who pays the CGT?** The seller is responsible for paying the capital gains tax. However, in some cases, parties may negotiate the tax payment terms, depending on the transaction.

**Exemptions from CGT:** Sales of properties classified as ordinary assets (e.g., those held by businesses for resale) are subject to different taxes, such as the ordinary income tax or value-added tax (VAT), depending on the nature of the transaction.

**5 Notarial Fees.** All property transactions must be notarized to ensure they are legally binding. Notarial fees are typically based on the property's contract value or selling price.

**Notarial fee rates:**

- Usually between 1% to 2% of the property's selling price.
- Notarial fees may vary depending on the complexity of the sale and the agreement between the buyer and the notary public.

**6 Registration Fee.** Once the sale is completed, the buyer must register the property with the Register of Deeds to secure legal ownership of the property. A registration fee is required to finalize this process.

**Registration fee rates:** Calculated based on a graduated schedule set by the Land Registration Authority (LRA). Generally, it's about 0.25% of the selling price or the property's assessed value, whichever is higher.

**7 Estate Tax.** In the event of the property owner's death, an estate tax is imposed on the transfer of property to the heirs. This tax must be settled before the property can be transferred.

**Estate tax rate:**

- 6% of the net estate, after deductions such as funeral expenses, medical bills, and unpaid debts.

**How to settle estate tax:**

- The heirs must file an Estate Tax Return with the BIR.
- Once the tax is paid, the BIR will issue a Certificate

Authorizing Registration (CAR), allowing the heirs to transfer the property title to their name.

**8 Other Miscellaneous Fees.** When purchasing or selling a property, there are other minor fees you might encounter:

- **Zonal valuation fee:** This is a fee for determining the property's zonal value.
- **Tax declaration fee:** This fee is used to update the tax declaration of the property.
- **Homeowners' association dues:** If you're buying a property in a subdivision or condominium, you may need to factor in monthly or yearly association dues.

**How to Budget for Property Taxes and Fees.** When investing in property, it's essential to consider the purchase price and the associated taxes and fees. Here are a few tips to help you budget:

- **Factor taxes and fees into your total budget:** Include all taxes and fees in your calculations to avoid underestimating the investment cost.
- **Work with a trusted real estate agent or lawyer:** They can guide you through the legal and tax implications, ensuring all obligations are met.
- **Negotiate:** Some taxes and fees can be negotiated between the buyer and seller. For instance, parties may agree to split the cost of the capital gains tax or notarial fees.
- **Pay early to avail discounts:** For real property tax, paying early often allows you to take advantage of discounts offered by the local government.

Understanding the various taxes and fees involved in property transactions in the Philippines is essential for any real estate investor. While they may seem overwhelming at first, knowing when and how to pay these taxes will save you time and money in the long run. Whether you're purchasing your first home or building a real estate portfolio, proper tax planning is critical to maximizing your investment's value.<sup>MS</sup>





# Best Places to Buy Home Furniture and Décor in the Philippines

By CARLA CONCEPCION

When it comes to furnishing and decorating your home, finding the perfect pieces that reflect your style, budget, and needs can be a rewarding but sometimes overwhelming process. The Philippines offers a variety of stores that cater to different tastes—whether you're into modern minimalism, rustic charm, or something more eclectic.

To help you navigate the vast array of options, here's a curated list of some of the best places to buy home furniture and décor in the Philippines.

**1 SM Home.** If you're looking for a one-stop shop for affordable yet stylish furniture and home décor, SM Home should be on your list. As part of the SM Store, they offer a wide range of products, from minimalist furniture to trendy home accessories, making it easy to find pieces that suit any room or style.

#### Why Choose SM Home:

- **Budget-friendly:** SM Home provides great options for those who want stylish furniture without breaking the bank.
- **Extensive Selection:** Whether you're looking for sofas, dining tables, storage solutions, or decorative pieces, SM Home has a broad catalog.
- **Convenient Locations:** With branches in most SM malls nationwide, it's easy to find an SM Home near you.

**Tip:** Keep an eye out for their seasonal sales, which often feature significant discounts on furniture and home décor.

**2 IKEA Philippines.** When it comes to furniture and home décor, IKEA is a global favorite, and their Philippine store offers the same variety, affordability, and practicality that customers have come to love.

#### Why Choose IKEA:

- **Scandinavian Design:** Known for their clean, functional

designs, IKEA furniture is ideal for those who appreciate minimalist aesthetics.

- **Flat-Pack Furniture:** If you're up for a bit of DIY, IKEA's flat-pack furniture allows you to assemble pieces yourself, saving on costs.
- **Wide Range of Products:** From beds and wardrobes to kitchenware and lighting, IKEA has almost everything you need to furnish your home.

**Tip:** Shop online or visit the Pasay City store, one of the largest IKEA outlets in the world. They also offer home delivery for large items.

**3 Our Home.** Our Home is a go-to store for trendy, contemporary furniture pieces that perfectly balance comfort and style. They offer a wide range of living room, dining room, and bedroom furniture and are known for their chic and functional designs.

#### Why Choose Our Home:

- **Contemporary Style:** If you're into sleek, modern furniture, Our Home offers an extensive selection that aligns with current design trends.
- **Customizable Options:** They provide options for customizing some furniture pieces, like sofas and beds, to better match your space.
- **Frequent Sales:** Our Home often has sales where you can get high-quality furniture at discounted prices.

**Tip:** Check out their website for promos and online-exclusive discounts. They also offer free interior design consultations to help you plan your home's layout.

**4 West Elm.** West Elm is a premier choice for those with a bigger budget who are looking for unique, high-end furniture and décor. Their offerings range from furniture to home accessories, focusing on sustainability and craftsmanship.

#### Why Choose West Elm:

- **Luxury and Sustainability:** West Elm is known for its eco-friendly, artisan-crafted furniture and homeware, appealing to buyers looking for high-quality, ethical pieces.
- **Stylish and Versatile:** West Elm offers a wide array of stylish products from mid-century modern designs to bohemian-inspired accents.

- **Exclusive Designs:** You'll find exclusive furniture and décor collections not available in other stores.

**Tip:** Visit their website for curated collections and seasonal offers. While West Elm's prices are on the higher end, their pieces are built to last and make a statement in any room.

**5 Crate and Barrel.** Another option for high-end furniture and sophisticated home décor is Crate and Barrel, known for its timeless, elegant designs. From dining sets to bedding, they offer a broad selection of products for those who want to elevate their home interiors.

#### Why Choose Crate and Barrel:

- **High-Quality Materials:** Crate and Barrel's furniture is crafted from premium materials like hardwood and leather, ensuring durability.
- **Classic Design:** Their pieces feature timeless designs that can quickly adapt to various interior styles, making them excellent long-term investments.
- **Home Accessories:** They offer a vast selection of stylish home décor, including tableware, rugs, and wall art, perfect for putting the finishing touches on your space.

**Tip:** Their in-store sales are worth waiting for, as they offer steep discounts on both furniture and décor items.

**6 Furniture Source Philippines.** Furniture Source Philippines is an online and physical store that offers affordable, quality furniture sourced from different parts of the world. They cater to a wide range of tastes, from modern minimalist to

rustic farmhouse.

#### Why Choose Furniture Source Philippines:

- **Affordable Imports:** They bring in furniture and décor from countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia, offering imported styles at competitive prices.
- **Quick Delivery:** With an efficient delivery system, Furniture Source ensures that your orders arrive on time, making it convenient for busy customers.
- **Great Online Shopping Experience:** Their website is user-friendly and showcases a variety of pieces, making online shopping easy.

**Tip:** Check their social media accounts for flash sales and promotions. They frequently update their inventory with the latest trends.

**7 H&M Home.** H&M Home brings the same fast-fashion approach to home décor, offering stylish and trendy pieces at affordable prices. While they don't focus on large furniture, their home accessories are perfect for adding personality to any space.

#### Why Choose H&M Home:

- **Trendy Décor:** If you're looking for the latest trends in home décor, from modern tableware to cozy textiles, H&M Home keeps up with seasonal trends.





- **Budget-Friendly:** Their affordable pieces make it easy to refresh your home's look without spending too much.
- **Online Convenience:** H&M Home's products are available online, with regular promotions and new arrivals.

**Tip:** Take advantage of their frequent seasonal collections to give your home a fresh, updated look throughout the year.

⑧ **Urban Concepts.** Urban Concepts offers a wide range of affordable furniture pieces for homeowners seeking value-for-money furniture with modern designs for living rooms, bedrooms, and home offices. Their practical designs make them a favorite among budget-conscious buyers.

**Why Choose Urban Concepts:**

- **Affordable Prices:** Urban Concepts provides stylish, durable furniture at reasonable prices.
- **Space-Saving Solutions:** They offer space-saving furniture perfect for condo living, such as multifunctional sofas and compact dining sets.
- **Wide Availability:** They have showrooms in Metro Manila and an online platform for easy browsing and shopping.

**Tip:** Urban Concepts often offers package deals that include multiple furniture pieces for a discounted price—perfect for furnishing a new home.

⑨ **Home Cartel.** Home Cartel is a boutique furniture store in the Philippines that focuses on trendy, affordable pieces for small and large spaces. They specialize in modern and industrial designs that appeal to younger homeowners.

**Why Choose Home Cartel:**

- **Compact and Trendy Pieces:** Perfect for condo living or smaller homes, Home Cartel's pieces are designed to be both functional and stylish.
- **Frequent Sales:** They regularly offer sales and discounts, allowing you to score trendy items at great prices.
- **Customization Options:** They also offer some customization on furniture, allowing you to tweak pieces to fit your home better.

**Tip:** Home Cartel has a physical store in Mandaluyong and an online shop, making it easy to browse and purchase at your convenience.

Whether you're redecorating your home or moving into a new space, the Philippines offers a variety of furniture and home décor stores that cater to different budgets and design preferences. From affordable options like SM Home and IKEA to high-end retailers like West Elm, and Crate and Barrel, there's something for every style. Be sure to explore physical stores and online shops to find the best deals and pieces that resonate with your vision for your home. <sup>MS</sup>



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