

The **LOAN** *Orphanage*

**From Abandoned to Adopted:
A Loan Officer's Guide to Saving Your Mortgage**



Patrick Queally



Belmont City Press



**Belmont City Press
University**

Copyright © 2023 by Belmont City press LLC

All rights reserved.

No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher or author, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.

Patrick Queally is a licensed loan officer, nmls #26990.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Growing Up In The Mortgage Business	5
3. My Experience Is The Difference	13
4. The Anti-Salesman	17
5. The Ideal Client & Ideal Process	33
6. The VA Home Loan	51
7. Wicked Awesome Loan Officer	61

Chapter One

Introduction

When I meet somebody for the first time, I ask, “Who is the professional helping you manage your mortgage? Who is helping you manage your debt?” Typically, the answer I hear is “nobody.” So my response is always, “I have good news; let me tell you about my Mortgage Adoption Program...”

My name is Patrick Queally. I’m a Mortgage Loan Officer and I have been in the mortgage industry since 1993. For many years now, I have run “*The Loan Orphanage*” for clients either in the very early stages of the home-buying process or those abandoned by their mortgage professional. I “adopt” these consumers into my mortgage practice and help them manage their mortgages.

Your mortgage is generally the most significant financial expense you will ever have, and somebody needs to watch it for you, especially with the volatile swings in the market, which seem to happen more frequently in current times. Fortunately, many “orphaned homeowners” do not need to do anything right now, but things change fast in this business. As a result, there are often very brief windows of opportunity in the market to purchase a new home, an investment property, or refinance an existing mortgage debt when the market conditions or

life circumstances dictate. When I help my clients manage their debt by ensuring their mortgage is appropriately structured, we can often seize those opportunities when they arise.

Wouldn't you feel better knowing somebody was managing your mortgage over time? Would you feel comforted knowing you are in the exact position you should be in now and in the future? How would you feel knowing the professional managing your mortgage has the experience that comes with over \$300 million of mortgage debt under management in their practice? Best of all, how would you like to hear that it costs you nothing to be adopted besides a few minutes to review your current financing terms and future goals?

I tell people that I only serve two types of clients—those who own a home and those who want to. But, through the years, I have found that my clients typically fall into one of three categories when coming into my mortgage practice:

Abandoned First-Time Home Buyers: If you are beginning your home-buying process, I have a complete adoption program designed especially with you in mind. I understand that buying a home may be scary and unfamiliar for consumers who have never been through the process before. I was in the mortgage business for a few years when I bought my first home, and even though I understood the financing process inside & out, I was still nervous until I got the keys in my hand for the first time. To ease this kind of anxiety, I've created my initial consultation to be a personalized First Time Home Buyer course for each client. My goal is to walk you through everything you need to know about the process, so you'll know you're not alone when trying to purchase your first home.

Orphaned Consumers: My "orphaned consumers" program is for anyone not receiving any mortgage and financing advice. Usually, consumers in this category were the victims of a strictly transactional

relationship, where the Loan Officer they hired was only interested in getting them to the closing table, and there was little to no contact after that. I always tell my clients I'm not going away simply because we have reached the closing table. I'll be here to answer questions and concerns about any financing topic for years to come. I'm sticking around to help you manage the debt I helped you create so that we can adjust your mortgage financing accordingly when things change that impact your financial life.

Foster-Home Clients: It is interesting to note that some consumers are doing well and have a relationship with a mortgage professional, but something may be missing. There could be a need for additional services or essential advice. Many Real Estate Investors fall into this category—usually because of the more complex nature of their real estate transactions. I'm equally comfortable being a "Foster Loan Officer" for those in this category. With my years of experience, there aren't many scenarios I haven't encountered before, so I don't back down from complex loan files with many moving parts, which is typical of investors. I have the experience to structure the financing options correctly, play the "real estate financing chess game," and think a few moves ahead to anticipate any issues we'll face before we get to the closing table. Having been a landlord, flipped properties, assigned contracts, and built new construction from the ground up, I understand where Investors are coming from. That perspective, combined with my experience in the mortgage business, has proven my worth as a solid member of any Investor's team.

Overall, I'm lucky to have one of the best jobs in the world; it allows me to help my clients structure their mortgages to create and preserve wealth for themselves and future generations. I help clients minimize budgeting-related stress, reach their savings and retirement goals, and put their children through college. I find ways to maximize

and manage cash flow while minimizing tax and other non-preferred debt obligations. I love what I do because I help people use mortgages to change their lives.

So no matter which one of those categories a new client falls into or what complex scenario they present to me, I'll remind them when it comes to solving real estate and financing issues, it's easy if you know how. I'll be happy to put the 30 years of my real estate financing know-how to work for you.

Chapter Two

Growing Up In The Mortgage Business

My dad, also named Patrick, is from Doolin in County Clare, Ireland. If you have ever seen a tourism commercial for Ireland, you have undoubtedly seen one of the most famous landmarks in Ireland, The Cliffs of Moher. That's just a few miles away from where my father grew up.

My mom, Ellen, is from Connemara in County Galway, Ireland. It's a Gaeltacht, meaning Gaelic is the primary language in that area. Of course, everyone speaks English too, but most everyday interactions and conversations are still all in Gaelic.

They both emigrated to Boston around the same time, where they met and got married. My younger sister Christine and I were both born in Dorchester, which at the time was predominately an Irish-American blue-collar neighborhood within the city of Boston.

Even though I was born in Boston, I have been fluent in Gaelic since I was nine or ten years old because we spent every summer vacation in Ireland. When you're around another language for several months a year, every year, you can't help but be able to pick it up, especially as a kid--learning all the bad words was an easy start. Most people don't know that I can speak Gaelic, probably because I don't have much of an Irish accent. Many of my friends and family in Ireland often joke that I speak Gaelic with a Boston accent.

Both of my parents were hard-working Irish immigrants, and like most parents, especially immigrants, their labor focused on providing a better life for their children. Growing up in Dorchester, I was relatively quiet and somewhat shy. I don't remember getting into too much trouble as a kid. We all have moments of rebellion and testing limits, but I was a far cry from getting arrested for knocking over the liquor store on my way home from school.

Although I was a quiet kid and didn't say too much, I watched everything. Growing up, more than anything, I wanted to be like my dad. He was a plumber by trade but worked with his hands and could tackle almost any construction project you could think of: carpentry, painting, masonry, plastering, etc.

The hours my parents put in, days, nights, weekends, and sometimes working multiple jobs simultaneously. I learned the value of hard work, the value of a dollar, and putting it to good use for the benefits it can provide. We weren't rich, but I never felt we struggled to make ends meet. We never went without; there was always a roof over our heads, food on the table, clothes on our backs, and plenty of presents under the Christmas tree every year.

When I was 15yrs old, and my sister was 4, we moved back to Ireland, and I went to high school there. High school in Ireland was both challenging and rewarding. Because we were living in a Gaeltacht

all subjects were taught in Gaelic, and I mean everything. The only class taught in English was English. While I was reasonably fluent in Gaelic from spending my summers in Ireland, the more technical and academic terms were words I had never heard of or used before. So, in addition to being the new kid and making it through the school day trying to blend in and make friends, I was doing most of it in a second language. I am grateful to the teachers that helped me with every accommodation they could. With a lot of hard work, determination, and hours of translations, I was able to graduate.

When I started school in Ireland, I only knew a few kids around my age--a few of my cousins and some neighbors. Looking back on it now, it wasn't as horrible as you may think it would have been for a teenager moving to another country where you don't know too many people and attending a high school where classes are taught in another language. The friends I made in school and on the football pitch in Ireland are friends I still have today. Whenever I go back to visit, we pick up right where we left off, as if only days had passed, not months or years.

Their acceptance and kindness spoke volumes about the generous nature of the people in the community there. I bring those lessons to my business every day, especially when working with first-time buyers, particularly immigrants. To them, the mortgage process is like learning a foreign language, and I can relate to how that feels. I'm happy to welcome them into my "mortgage adoption" program, just like the community in my second home of Ireland had adopted me.

After finishing high school in Ireland, I returned to Boston. It didn't take me too long to figure out that I didn't inherit the hands-on mechanical skills my father had. Although it bothered me that working with my hands in a trade would not be the way my future would play out as I envisioned, I chose to pivot and set my sights on college.

I started taking college classes at UMass Boston while trying to figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up. Spoiler alert—although I landed in the mortgage business, I'm still trying to figure out what I want to be when I grow up.

I had no idea what career path I wanted to follow, so I started working at a temp agency which exposed me to many industries while I was still taking classes at UMass. Soon, I was placed in a long-term temp assignment at a Bank of Boston subsidiary. It went well, so at the end of that assignment, I applied for a permanent job anywhere in the bank. A few weeks later, my first interview was for a job in the mortgage department. At 18yrs old, I could barely even spell mortgage (that second "g" will get you every time), but that is how I got my start in the mortgage industry.

I spent almost a year in an entry-level position in Bank of Boston's mortgage department until a merger with BayBanks was announced. Then, facing a potential layoff due to the merger, some more experienced colleagues gave me very sound advice. They said, "If you like this industry, work for a small bank. You'll have your hands in a file all the way through and learn everything about the business that way." And they were right.

Starting in 1994 and for the following 8yrs, I cut my teeth and "grew up" in the business working at Massachusetts Co-operative Bank. Tony Paciulli was the VP in charge of the mortgage department at the bank, and much of my success in this business comes from the fact he not only gave me a shot and hired me as a loan processor, but also because the entire time I worked for him he helped me lay a solid foundation of how to be a professional in this business. Even though Mass Coop no longer exists after a few bank mergers, I always look back at my time working there with fond memories because its where I truly started my career. I was extremely fortunate to meet and work

with some great people there, especially Kathy (Connelly) O'Donnell. A lot of credit goes to Kathy--as the bank's mortgage Underwriter she taught me the nuts & bolts of how to process, underwrite and close a mortgage file. As a young adult, I continued to develop professionally with the help and support of these friends and mentors like Kathy & Tony. I took advantage of every opportunity they gave me to grow, take on responsibilities, and succeed. As a result, I quickly moved up the ranks within the bank.

While learning the mortgage business, I was happy to find that although I lacked the mechanical skills I wanted to succeed in the building trades, I had a knack for building a solid loan file. My tools became a pen and calculator instead of the saw and hammer I had in mind for myself. I wasn't on the building side of real estate like I had envisioned, but I was developing a different skill set that brought value to the marketplace. Eventually, I moved from the back office of processing & underwriting mortgage applications to become a Loan Officer working with consumers directly at the start of the process, helping them properly structure their financing applications. I initially built my book of clients with the many friends and relatives that were working in the trades on construction sites where I once I thought I would be making a living.

At the same time I was settling into my career in the mortgage industry, my uncle Dennis Queally opened a pub & restaurant in West Roxbury. He was looking for help to staff the restaurant for the busy weekend shifts, especially in the kitchen. I decided to give that a try as a second job. Again, the solid immigrant work ethic my parents had instilled in me came to the surface. My job at the bank was the traditional Mon-Fri 9-5, and the hours needed at the restaurant was the opposite of that with night and weekend shifts, so why not do both? Ahh, to be young and have that much energy again.

Like my early days in the mortgage industry, I didn't know what I didn't know about working in a restaurant when I started. I could barely boil water, but the head chef took me under his wing and taught me a lot. Despite zero culinary training, I became a good cook under his supervision. Not a chef by any stretch of your imagination, but a damn good line cook as far as I'm concerned. I worked there for years as my mortgage career was taking off, and I developed a love for cooking, which I still enjoy doing all these years later.

During this time, a friend I made during my years in Ireland, Kevin O'Donnell, had come to Boston. After high school we had lost touch for about a year and I didn't know he had we moved here until we bumped into each other-- in my uncle's pub, of course. Not long after that, Kevin & I became roommates, sharing an apartment in Quincy. A few months later, Kevin's niece Bernadette came from Ireland to visit Boston for a summer. Soon after her arrival, he introduced us. Believe it or not, she and I had been in high school together but never met until we were both in Boston, over 3,000 miles away. If you can't guess where the next part of the story goes, it's not exactly a surprise ending-- just a few years later Kevin was the best man at the wedding when Bernadette & I got married.

A couple of years after we got married, two life-changing things happened. First of all, we were expecting our first child. If you have kids, you know that becoming a parent changes your world. Your perspective and outlook on everything shifts and your motivation to provide for your family becomes a priority. With our first child on the way, we had to start making strides toward being responsible adults. We decided to take the advice I often give my clients, and my wife & I applied for life insurance policies which involved having blood tests. When the results came back, my pregnant wife was the perfect picture of health. But me, not so much. The second piece of life-altering news

I received was thanks to the blood samples taken and the extensive tests run I discovered I was a diabetic. The situation was severe enough that it took several years to get my condition under control, even to be considered insurable for the life insurance policy I sought.

Those blood tests saved my life. Even before this personal experience, I would always advise clients to seek out life insurance policies for financial reasons to protect and care for their families when the time comes. After this event, I gained a relatable story about how the blood test screening for the life insurance application is well worth the time and effort—it could literally be a lifesaver.

Another spoiler alert—thanks to those blood tests, I'm still here and enjoying life. Today my wife & I live on the South Shore with our two amazing daughters, Aoife and Ciara, and our two dogs, Doolin the Welsh Terrier and Clare the Goldendoodle.

Outside the office, I still enjoy putting the skills I learned in the restaurant to good use by finding new recipes to try on the smoker or the crockpot. Although it can be hard to find the time, the slow nature of cooking on the smoker requires that I make time. Consider this an open invite if you care to volunteer to help be a taste-tester for new recipes. I'd be happy to put your taste buds to work.

In the winter months when it's too cold to stand outside for hours using the smoker, I play in a darts league. The league is fun, not always super competitive, but good for a few laughs and stress relief during the week. We often joke that we're a drinking team with a darts problem. For a few seasons our darts team tried to play softball too, but we found out softball is a different skill set that didn't translate too well from darts. Through several seasons I don't think we won a single game before we all mutually agreed to "retire."

My daughters are active young athletes, so most of my "spare" time when I'm not in the office, or in front of the smoker or the dart

board is spent cheering them on at sports fields, tournaments, and competitions. And yes, much to my daughter's embarrassment, I'm the proud Dad taking pictures and videos and shouting their names throughout each event.

Chapter Three

My Experience Is The Difference

Over the years, so much has changed in the mortgage industry. It's fair to say that the only constant is *change*. In the early '90s, when I started in the business, handwritten applications were typical. Processing files included the skill of reading the hieroglyphics that Loan Officers used to fill out the forms. Taking those handwritten forms and manually typing them into loan software was the norm then; there was a lot of data entry, and attention to detail was crucial. I found that I was wired for that kind of work, so I excelled. Although software has taken over for a lot of that manual data entry, one thing remains the same: that data still needs to be reviewed and evaluated.

My years in this business, before the advent of technology and having software perform all the calculations, benefited me. I'm not solely relying on the software to handle the calculations without understanding what's behind those figures. Kind of like being in the 4th grade and your math teacher telling you to show all your work on the test to get full credit. To this day, I'll still do many calculations

on paper. Because I spend more time upfront reviewing documents and making manual calculations than the typical Loan Officer will, I can find solutions or opportunities that others may miss. Once we move forward, that time spent upfront almost always results in a faster timeline to get to the closing and a smooth overall process. Even though I didn't end up working in the trades I still know the value of that kind of planning, like the old saying, measure twice and cut once.

In my career, I have worked as Loan Officer for small community banks, larger regional banks, independent mortgage brokerages, and national correspondent lenders. I found that I am much more comfortable in smaller organizations than a large conglomerate with tons of red tape to cut through in every transaction. In many larger companies, a file is just another set of numbers that either fits neatly in the box and works or doesn't, and that's the end of it. In a smaller company, it's easier to relay the story behind the numbers and get cooperation to make the deal work for the client, even if the figures don't look great at first glance, which is essential when you're going to bat for your clients, especially for those clients with unusual circumstances in their financial picture.

I do relish the challenge of taking on a new client who has yet to be successful elsewhere or has been turned down for financing and figuring out how to get the deal done for them. For me, there is something about looking at a financial puzzle and figuring out how to combine the pieces and get a client to the closing table. Time, effort, and even some creativity goes a long way to help clients find solutions and realize a real estate opportunity. Who knew that mortgage financing could be a creative outlet?

Combining the analytical mind I developed from my years of processing & underwriting with tenacious problem-solving skills has helped define my career. It helps me stick with a problem or challenge

and work on it until I can find a solution. My overall attitude is: just tell me something can't be done and then watch me do it. I call it tenacity; my wife still calls it stubbornness.

One of the most significant changes in the industry happened after the "Mortgage Meltdown" that started in 2007 and lasting several years beyond that. Unsustainable mortgage products sold to unsophisticated consumers by Loan Officers with little to no training in fiscal literacy, all fueled by an insatiable desire for more from Wall St, combined into a perfect storm of bad economics that led to an epic collapse. Financial reforms were inevitable and sorely needed. Legislation such as The Frank-Dodd Act brought sweeping reforms to all areas of consumer financing, particularly the mortgage industry. As a result of the financial reforms, before being able to work as a Loan Officer, you must take pre-licensing classes and pass a test to obtain that professional license, along with annual continuing education classes to maintain the license. Even though it may not make me too popular among my colleagues, as a means to raise the industry's standards, education level, and professionalism of Loan Officers, I was totally in favor of licensing long before it was required. As far as I'm concerned, a license should be the bare minimum prerequisite to be in this business. Loan Officers should have at least a basic understanding of the financial markets and the economy—fiscal literacy is crucial to advise clients appropriately. I cannot understand how somebody in this industry can attempt to advise a consumer without at least a basic understanding of financial markets, yet I see it almost daily.

But it takes more than knowledge and fiscal literacy to be able to advise clients, you need to be able to relay that info in easily understood terms. Effective communication has become a cornerstone of my business. I deliver my market analysis, and good or bad news in a straightforward, no-BS manner. I don't sugarcoat my delivery, and

so often my clients have commented that my straightforward means of communicating news (good or bad) in simple terms they can understand was vital to them. My communication style, combined with the education I provide to first-time buyers, the technical transaction structuring I deliver for seasoned investors, is all designed to take the stress and complexity out of the process, making everything easier for my clients.

But you don't have to take my word for it, check out some of my reviews:



Chapter Four

The Anti-Salesman

I'm lucky to have fallen into the mortgage business at a young age. It feels like I grew up in the mortgage business. I was just 18, old enough to vote but not old enough to (legally) buy a beer, when I started in the mortgage department at a bank.

Starting my career so young gave me a head start on learning the business inside and out and gaining a ton of experience compared to my peers. I have been able to work in the industry through several real estate and interest rate cycles—both booms & busts. Thankfully I have navigated through it all and have been able to help and advise my clients to do the same through the good and the tough times.

My transition into the sales side of the business was rocky. I was a bit shy, and people saw me as inexperienced because I was ten to fifteen years younger than some of my colleagues, even though I had been in the mortgage business for more years than many of those same colleagues were. I was seen as this young kid trying to help a consumer fill out a mortgage application. Those ideas became limiting factors

stuck in my head and were a hurdle for me in a sales career. Top that off with the fact I started my career in the mortgage industry in operations; my roots were in the back office, so I never really had any formal sales training.

To make matters even worse, I'm not always outgoing, gregarious, and the life of the party as most people would associate with a person in a sales career. I am more of an introvert. That may shock some people who know me and have seen me teach classes or give presentations in front of large groups. However, I had to push myself to attend every networking meeting possible and accepted every opportunity to speak at an event or give a presentation. I forced myself out of my comfort zone that way and it has certainly put me in a position to be able to help more people with their finances.

Like any career in sales, a lot of a Loan Officer's time is spent prospecting for new business, making outbound contact by phone and in-person to potential clients and referral sources such as Real Estate Agents. But when I started this career, the one thing I struggled with was "call reluctance." Calling people I didn't know stressed me out, visions of being laughed at and hung up on were fears, and thoughts of "*stranger danger*," as my kids called it, danced in my head.

All of that combined led me to run my business as more of the "*anti-salesman*." I've never been too fond of the way stereotypical salespeople conduct themselves when working with a consumer—the pushy in-your-face attitude stinks of what I call "*commission breath*" – it's just saying whatever it takes to make a sale whether the info is true and accurate or not. I've come to find that in general a lot of people have the same unpleasant feelings about most salespeople. I never want my clients to have those same uncomfortable vibes when they work with me, so I have designed my mortgage practice to have a more relaxed, no-pressure interactive consultation type of process.

Once I pushed past the initial call reluctance, knowing that I have the experience and knowledge behind me that I can put together a solution to just about any financing challenge gives me enough quiet confidence that I don't feel the pressure to fall into that pushy commission-breath salesperson stereotype. Instead, I can remain where I'm comfortable as an advisor, more of a consultant role when helping my clients. I don't have to sell them anything. I present options and solutions for whatever real estate financing need they face and let the numbers speak for themselves. The results and feedback I have received over the years have been better than I could have ever imagined. It has proven that my approach is right for me and my career and a good fit for my clients.

Even now, there are still days I still hear that little voice telling me not to call people, they don't want to hear from me, I'm bothering them. But through the years, I found ways to manage my call reluctance. I intentionally sought out and surrounded myself with the kind of people that value my advice and respect my knowledge in the business, and those are the people that are happy to hear from me when I call. I feel extremely fortunate to have developed that kind of a business circle of incredibly good people who are great at what they do. I consider these people more than business contacts; they're friends. My call reluctance fades away because I'm calling on people that are friends rather than just calling a business contact looking to make a sale.

When it comes to making calls in general, one thing I came to appreciate in the industry is that proper communication is everything. "Deliver good news fast and bad news faster because a bad deal only gets worse" is one of the rules I have come to live by (with credit again to Tony Paciulli from Mass Coop Bank for that quote). Additionally, I offer some solutions to work through and overcome the bad news.

"Adopting" clients who had not been able to obtain financing provided me with this invaluable insight into the mortgage process: nothing is more frustrating to a client than not knowing what is going on. Early in my career, I was guilty of not communicating enough too. Maybe it was the call reluctance coming to the surface, but I realized I could have kept everyone in the loop better. So, after several transactions that were more difficult than they should have been due to my lack of communication, I finally understood that I needed to step up and be a better professional.

From those experiences, I realized there was a desperate need, a void to fill in the industry, so I built a business process around it. I have set up a system of outbound communications to everyone involved in every transaction, where my office reaches out at least once a week with a status update. We've been doing our Friday updates for years now, and even if we're already cleared to close several weeks ahead of schedule (which I'm proud to say happens often), my clients, the real estate agents, and attorneys involved still get a call on Fridays with their weekly status updates.

When we're ahead of schedule, and there aren't any new business items to take care of, those conversations end up being about the Bruins/Patriots/Sox/Celtics (in that order as my preference of sports conversations), which is just another example of the call reluctance fears being stripped away. Those calls became more like catching up with a friend. The feedback I have gotten from this simple process has been great. Everyone is always on the same page, and I work to ensure they stay there. There is nothing left to chance or assumptions, and it results in so much less stress and anxiety for everyone involved.

What I had come to realize before putting this process in place was if people involved in the transaction are waiting to hear a status update from me, they'll wonder what's going on and usually make up

their own story. This "story" often causes unnecessary anxiety because everything is generally going according to plan. Even if everything is on track, if I don't call them and tell them that, the client doesn't know. Hearing from me gives the reassurance they need to know everything is OK.

Even though I implemented it into my business, I cannot take full credit for the idea of the weekly update call. I learned of that idea from a class I attended long ago. Since the early days of my career, I have taken as many training opportunities, courses, and classes as possible. Way before webinars or Zoom calls, it meant going to a hotel ballroom for a day or two. I learned early on that taking these classes, investing in myself and earning designations were robust foundations for my career in the mortgage business. Still, to this day, I attend any classes, seminars, or courses I can, but it's much easier now, thanks to technology.

I hold several industry designations that you cannot obtain through a "rubber stamp of approval." These designations require studying and mastering the course material, passing a test, and annual continuing education requirements to maintain the designation, all of which are above & beyond the federal & state-required education and testing to hold a Loan Officer license.

I'm heavily invested in serving the Veteran community which I dive into more in Chapter 6 of this book and to support my Veteran advocacy efforts I have earned several designations that have given me a wealth of knowledge I put to use when serving our Veterans homeownership needs:

VMA (Veteran Mortgage Advisor),

CVLS (Certified Veteran Loan Specialist), and

MMBC Instructor (Military Mortgage Boot Camp).

However, one of the most challenging courses was that of CMA (Certified Mortgage Advisor). This course required a significant understanding of financial literacy and economics. Thanks to an industry icon, Barry Habib (CEO of MBS Highway), for putting that course of study together and elevating the level of education and professionalism in our industry.

At the time of writing this, I'm currently working on my CLA designation (Certified Liability Advisor), which applies and integrates several financial planning concepts into structuring mortgage financing, and a CDLP (Certified Divorce Lending Professional) along with an RSC-D (Real Estate Collaboration Specialist in Divorce), both of which are designed to help clients work through real estate financing while going through and post-divorce.

In addition to all that alphabet soup of industry designations, I belong to several other organizations. I'm an active member of several Real Estate Investor Associations (REIA). I have taught several financial/budgeting classes as a pre-marriage course at the Irish Pastoral Centre of Boston (IPC). Over the years, I have been a member of BNI (Business Networking International), Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, and Lions. In addition, I served on the Board of Directors for Manet Community Health Center and the board for Abington Youth Soccer. I also held a youth soccer coaching license.

In summary: I am a salesman who doesn't like traditional sales methods like in-your-face pushy cold calling. Instead, as an *anti-salesman*, I dedicate my time and effort to working with clients before, during, and after each transaction. I use my knowledge of financial markets and years of experience in the mortgage business to deliver solid advice on structuring and managing mortgages. In my humble opinion, as long as I serve my clients at a high level, it is pretty easy for them to become walking, talking billboards for me and my practice.

That's how my business has grown year after year—referrals and introduction is the currency I trade on. I tell every client that if they're happy with my services, the best way to reward me is to introduce me to the people they care about so they can experience the same level of service & advice and be adopted into the "loan orphanage" This method of growing my practice has worked for me for years, so I doubt I'll change that anytime soon.

I am lucky to have many client stories from over the years to prove the value they see in my services. If you don't believe me, check out what those clients of mine have to say, in their own handwriting:

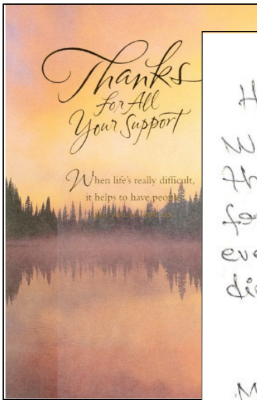
Dear Patrick,

Very much!

We cannot thank you enough for all your help in getting us our new home. Your diligence, honesty, and professionalism were appreciated throughout the entire process. Thank you so much for everything, we love our new home and wouldn't be here without you.

Thanks Again,
Tim and Kristel

P.S. ~ Thank you too for the Loew's Gift Certificate.. very generous!



Hi Patrick!
We want to thank you so much for your help and every think you did for us

With respect
Margarita &
Arben Geli

2-21-07

Dear Patrick,

I want to let you know how wonderful it was to work with you throughout my first home-buying experience. You made it very easy.

Many of my friends have recently bought their first homes and said their experiences with mortgage were a hassle and very confusing. Mine was just the opposite. You have constantly shown patience, knowledge, and understanding.

I am very happy with all of the great work you have done for me. Best success in the future.

Sincerely,
Leanne Dileo

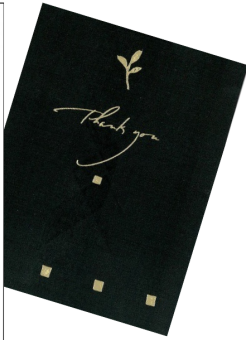


Dear Patrick,

Thank you so much for all your help with our new home - and for answering our many questions. We hope to send referrals your way.

Larry
Kover
+
Kevin

Patrick,
 I want to
 thank you for taking
 the time to look into
 my situation. Because of
 you I fully understand it.
 I thank you again and I
 hope we can do business in
 the future.
 Sincerely,
 h's Castrop



Thank
 You

Patrick, 8.3.09

Thank you so much for your help in the home buying process. We love the place! We had a lot to learn, but you were very patient in explaining the details of each piece of paperwork to us.

Thanks again! Best, Amy & Jeff



Patrick,
 Thank you so
 much for all your
 help with our
 mortgage. You explained
 everything and was
 very patient with us.
 Thanks for helping
 our dream come true.
 John + Brenda
 Fernandez



Patrick,

Thanks for your help &
 thoroughness. It's always a
 pleasure & a huge comfort
 working with someone so
 knowledgeable in their field!

Veronica & Mike.

Patrick

Couldn't have done it
without you.

We cannot thank you
enough for all of
your help with buying
our home!

You made a very
stressful experience
so much easier!
Thank you again!!

Margaret & John Paul.

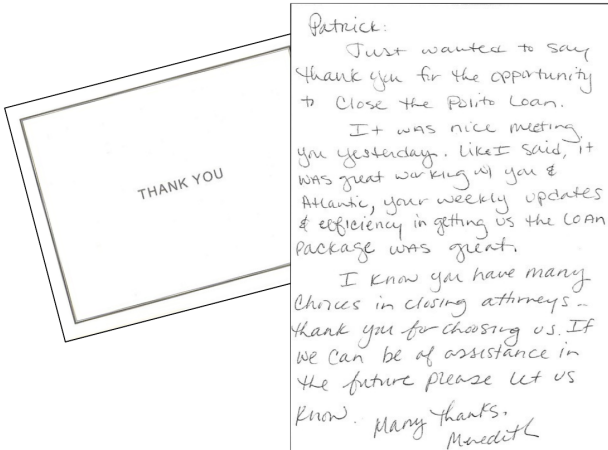
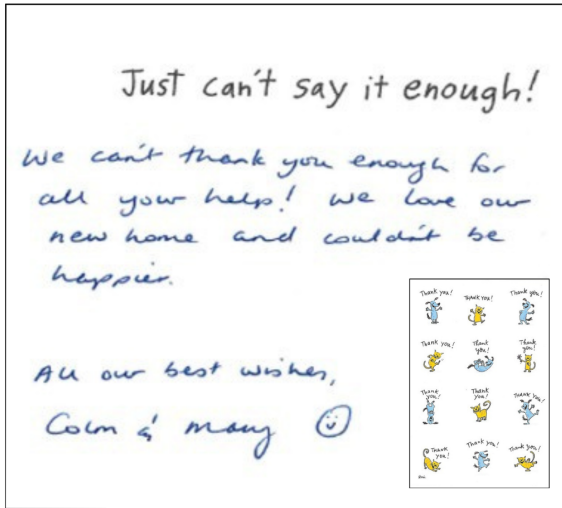


THANK YOU SO MUCH

... FOR EVERYTHING!

Patrick

Thanks very much
for the lovely picture
you gave us for the cards
that was nice of you
hope your family is good
when the cool weather
comes drop in to see us
Thanks again
Pat & Annie Morrison



Dear Patrick,

SO VERY MUCH

Just wanted to say a
 huge thank you for all
 your help with the mortgages
 over the past few months.
 We greatly value your advice
 and look forward to working
 with you again in the
 future. With much appreciation,
 Thanks!! Louise and
 Patrick Cullinane



To

Patrick,

Thank you for helping
 us purchase our home.
 Your knowledge and expertise
 were greatly appreciated,
 Sincerely,
 Mary Kavanagh
 Furesey Donnellan.

Dear Patrick

Thank you for all your assistance over the last six months.

I appreciate your advice you have given as well as the connections you have shared.

Your expertise and help have been invaluable.

James Sherba.



Patrick,

Thank you for your thoughtful gift and for all of your help. I felt that you were completely on top of things and it was great working with you. You helped keep things as stress-free as possible and I greatly appreciate that. Thanks so much for everything and I will definitely refer you to my family/friends if they are looking for a mortgage! Thanks! Amy Cadotte

Chapter Five

The Ideal Client & Ideal Process

One of the most significant parts of my business is educating people. Early in my career and well before classes were required for my professional license, I was lucky enough to have been encouraged to attend training courses on various mortgage and real estate industry topics. Starting from there, I have continued seeking as many courses and seminars as possible to expand my knowledge in the industry. I then share everything I have learned with my clients.

As slow as some industry regulations are to change, many changes happen quickly as the industry evolves. The only way to keep up with all the changes is through education. I need to stay on top of the regulations and guideline updates as they happen so that I can continue to serve all my clients best.

I have come to enjoy my job's education aspect, not just learning about the industry but also teaching. For me, the teaching aspect goes beyond the typical first-time buyer classes most Loan Officers hold. Conducting courses for Real Estate Agents and other service industry

professionals about sales, marketing & advertising and using social media to grow their business is a lot of fun. It can be a lot of work, but helping other professionals succeed in their respective companies is also rewarding.

I run an organization called the "Agent Acceleration Academy" (agentaccelerationacademy.com), where I teach various classes for real estate agents and other service industry professionals. Each month is a different class covering general business concepts such as business planning & forecasting, sales & marketing, budgeting, new tech tools, and use of social media to generate business. I also offer a few multi-class series that last a few sessions because I can't adequately cover some subjects in an hour or two. These series include topics such as a new "Real Estate Agent Jumpstart" to help brand new agents get off to a fast start to their new career and a whole suite of social media classes where I demonstrate how to generate business organically without a penny spent on paid ads.

Monthly I teach a class about the VA home loan to industry professionals, and Vets are always welcome to attend too. The overriding concept in all the VA home loan classes is "myth-busting." Each course focuses on busting the myths and false beliefs regarding how the VA home loan works. I'm thrilled to use the knowledge I gained through courses of study to earn the designation that allows me to teach classes directly to Veterans on how to use their home loan benefit, as well as to the real estate industry professionals on working with Veterans.

For consumers, I teach home buyer & home seller classes via Zoom twice monthly. One series is a complete first-time home buyer seminar, and the other series is not specifically for first timers but covers topics that are helpful to any buyer or seller, including understanding credit & credit scores, budgeting, wealth building through real estate, and buying investment properties.

Several times a year, I team up with business partners such as Realtors and Attorneys to teach the Zoom-based classes in person. While teaching courses via Zoom may be more convenient, and despite my public speaking nervousness, I prefer in-person teaching. Being in the room and seeing the reaction when somebody learns something new or hearing their success from implementing something taught in a previous class is very rewarding.

FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS

When it comes to First Time Home Buyers, often they don't know what they don't know, so they're not even sure what to ask. My initial consultation with First Time Home Buyers is more of an individualized first-time buyer course. With my years of experience, there isn't any scenario I haven't encountered before. After years of answering similar questions in just about every consultation, I have built a consultation format for first-time home buyers that answers the typical questions about the financing process before they can even ask. This way, the first-time home buyer walks away with information about the overall process, a personalized strategy, and knowing exactly where they fit in regarding buying a home. My consultation takes a complex, abstract process of applying for mortgage financing, and I break it down to explain it in simple terms using everyday language that everyone can understand. In particular, within the first-time buyer population, I enjoy working with immigrants to the US, pursuing the American Dream of homeownership. I can understand and empathize with their specific struggles because both of my parents were immigrants to the US, and although I was born here, I emigrated to Ireland and lived there for several years before moving back to Boston and becoming a homeowner myself. It's rewarding professionally with all first-time home buyers to be at a closing table and see my clients get

handed the keys to their first home. That moment is tough to top from a professional satisfaction point of view.

INVESTORS

I'm a member and regular guest speaker at several REIA's (Real Estate Investment Associations), where I can teach existing Investors and those just starting, how to launch and maintain a successful investing career by understanding the how-to's of conventional, commercial, and private lending. My presentations typically cover lead generation and attracting new business via social media using organic methods instead of paid advertising.

It's a common belief in that community that an investor makes their money when they BUY the property--as long as they're buying the right property at the right price. I like to remind Investors that I'm here to help them realize the profits—by assisting them with financing when they buy a property, especially for a fix & flip project. I also help by providing financing for the buyer in the form of an end loan. Getting to the closing table quickly is crucial to Investor transactions because, with commercial or private lending costs, time IS money. Because of my processing & underwriting background, understanding of complex loan files typical of investors, and personal experiences investing in real estate, I am uniquely positioned to educate Investors. I'm always happy to be a solid member of any Investors team.

VETERANS

I have thoroughly studied the VA lending handbook 26-7 (the VA's underwriting guidebook for VA home loans) and have gone through several industry certification programs to earn designations, all dedicated to serving veterans' home financing needs. I feel so strongly about helping the financing needs of our Servicemembers that I devoted the next chapter of this book to the topic of the VA home loan financing.

Whether I am meeting with an Investor, First-time Home Buyer, or Veteran, I can only assume what people know about the mortgage process. First-time Home Buyers should start at the very beginning of the process to better understand the whole process. But for seasoned individuals, I never presume their previous Loan Officer spent the time or had the knowledge to educate the consumer, so I treat each new-to-me client consult the same way. And with Veterans there is so much misinformation about the VA home loan its almost a deprogramming effort before equipping them with the right info. When I adopt those new clients into my Loan Orphanage, I communicate how my mortgage practice works, how I stay in business, and how I continue to grow because of how I run my practice.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING WITH ME

At my first meetings with clients, I usually share a true story or two about clients that didn't follow my advice and did something they shouldn't do before closing, like opening a new credit card to buy furniture for the new home, spending the funds set aside for closing costs on a new motorcycle, or losing the money needed for the closing at the casino because they "had a good feeling" about a bet. Yes, those are all true stories. I'll withhold names to protect the less-than-innocent. As a result of those crazy situations, I've changed the language I use when advising clients to make it as clear and straightforward as possible. I tell clients, "Pay all your bills on time. Don't open or apply for new loans or credit card accounts. And until you have the keys to your new home in your hand, you're only allowed to spend money on gas and groceries—THAT IS IT!"

In most cases, that's enough to get new clients scared straight, ensuring they follow the do's and don'ts list I provide them at our first meeting. The list is a short guide of "Do and Don't" that help buyers reach a closing table successfully.

**IMPORTANT “DO’S” AND “DO-NOT’S”
TIPS FOR A SMOOTH LOAN APPROVAL**

- **DO** continue making your mortgage or rent payments
- **DO** stay current on all existing accounts
- **DO** keep working at your current employer
- **DO** keep your same insurance company
- **DO** continue living at your current residence
- **DO** continue to use your credit as normal
- **DO** call me if you have any questions
- **DON’T** make a major purchase (ex. car, boat, jewelry, etc.)
- **DON’T** apply for new credit (even if you seem pre-approved)
- **DON’T** open or close a any credit card accounts
- **DON’T** transfer any balances from one account to another
- **DON’T** max out or over charge on your credit card accounts
- **DON’T** consolidate your debt onto 1 or 2 credit cards
- **DON’T** open or close any installment loans
- **DON’T** pay off charge offs without a discussion with us first
- **DON’T** pay off collections without a discussion with us first

- **DON'T** pay off loans or credit cards without discussing with us
- **DON'T** buy any furniture on credit
- **DON'T** open or close any bank accounts
- **DON'T** start any home improvement projects
- **DON'T** open a new cellular phone or gym membership accounts

One set of clients who took my advice always stands out in my mind. A sweet young couple buying their first place, they were a bundle of nerves but followed every bit of instruction precisely. Well, they waited until about two weeks after closing to nervously call me from one of the big box stores on a Saturday afternoon and ask if it was OK to buy a new washer & dryer set. Of course, two weeks after they closed on a home, they no longer needed my approval for any large purchases. But I appreciated their sincere regard for my efforts to help them and how much they didn't want to screw anything up.

WHY SO MUCH PAPERWORK?

Obtaining a mortgage has its fair share of necessary paperwork. I try to prepare clients for this upfront, but invariably I get asked, "Why so much paperwork?"

Wouldn't you be cautious if you had strangers borrowing hundreds of thousands of dollars from you? Of course you would! The same is true for your mortgage lender. At the beginning of your transaction, mortgage lenders will ask many questions about you, your finances, and your credit, and you'll be requested to send in paperwork to match up with all of the answers you gave. You should disclose everything

asked of you. If you try hiding something, I can guarantee it will come to light eventually. Why? I explain to clients that the mortgage process is like a weird opposite of the US legal system. In the US courts, everyone is innocent until proven guilty. During the mortgage process, it's a little like everyone is guilty of hiding something or committing fraud until we prove otherwise.

I joke a bit with my clients when I let them know I'm not their Doctor, Lawyer, or Priest, but just like any of those professions, you need to tell the whole truth and give me all the paperwork to back it up in order for me to be able to help you. As long as I have all the information, chances are there is a way to structure your transaction with those facts and get you to the closing table.

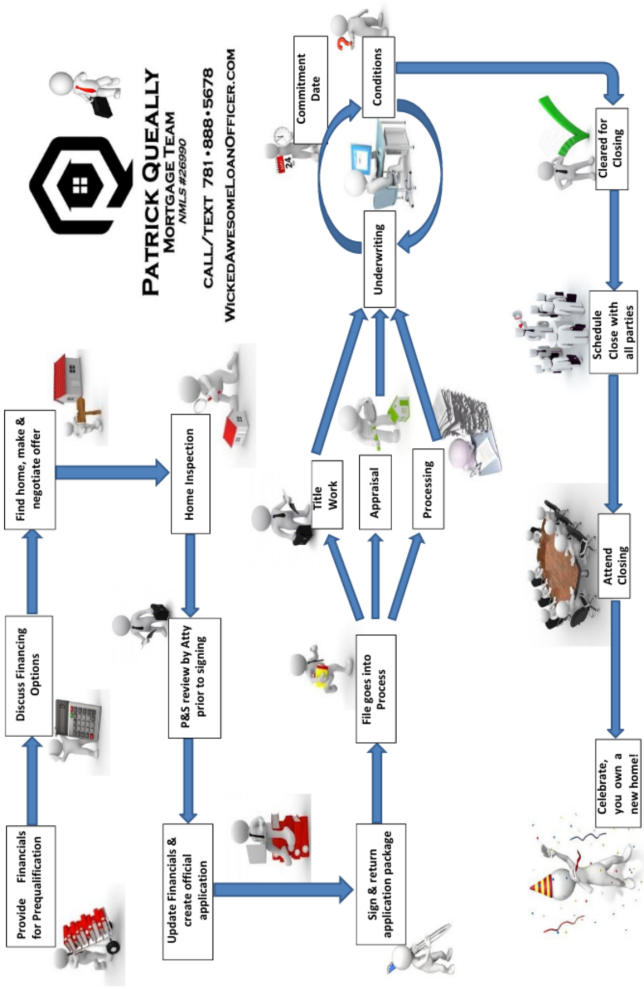
For some, gathering and submitting the paperwork can be overwhelming, while others are more accepting of requests for what they think is redundant documentation necessary for lender approval. But most people don't realize that there are several sets of eyes on every file. A Loan Officer is the first set of eyes on your application. Next would be a Processor. The Underwriter is the third set of eyes. And finally, the Closing & Doc Prep departments are the fourth & fifth sets of eyes. Each group looks at the documents differently and may ask for additional information or paperwork at each stage. What can be a frustrating part of the process is when paperwork is submitted and reviewed, it often leads to further questions and requests for more documents. I always ask for as much paperwork as possible upfront to avoid opening Pandora's box of paperwork. Regardless, making those documents available as soon as possible will make the approval process more manageable.

To help yourself out, let me offer some advice. If asked for a specific document, provide *precisely* the document that is being requested, not what you think "should be OK." Because without exception, it won't

be OK. The approval process can go off the rails at this point. For instance, if we ask for a bank statement and there are five pages in your bank statement, send all five pages, not just the summary or the pages that show the balances, or a screenshot. We need all five pages, even if one of them is blank. It's a running joke in the Loan Officer community that we're lobbying to remove any financial statement where the last page states, "This page is intentionally left blank." That one blank page causes more headaches than anything else.

Current underwriting standards are in place to prevent problems, such as the mortgage crisis of the "mortgage meltdown" in the early 2000s. Back then, too many people were lying and committing fraud on mortgage loans, which ultimately led, in part, to the real estate collapse. As a result, lenders are much more cautious and verify that borrowers can repay the loan—and the Federal & State regulations dictate that we must do it that way. When a consumer doesn't want to provide any necessary documentation, like that 'blank page five' of their Bank statement, the question on a lender's mind is usually, "What are you trying to hide?" It may sometimes be frustrating, but it is all for a good reason.

With all those moving parts many clients find a flow-chart like this to be a good visual of all the steps from start to finish.



INDUSTRY PET PEEVES AND RED FLAGS

While it bothers a lot of consumers, my pet peeve in the mortgage business isn't all that paperwork or the back & forth to review it all; my biggest pain point isn't even specifically part of the mortgage business. It's the mass media. The mass media has trained consumers to evaluate loan officers using only two items; the rate offered and the quoted closing costs. The mass media has pushed the industry to be treated like a commodity. Any licensed Loan Officer can quote an interest rate and closing costs. But it takes more competence to present appropriate financing options and the pros & cons of each option. A loan officer needs to review clients' financials under current market conditions and assist them in deciding the best fit for their current and projected future financial situation.

Rather than shopping for just interest rate & closing costs, a consumer should be interviewing their potential loan officer. Consumers must understand they are hiring a loan officer to help them create a liability worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Unfortunately, taking the advice from the mass media and simply choosing the lowest bidder can result in the kind of horror stories you may have heard that tarnish the industry.

Lets not be foolish about it, we can all agree that the interest rate and closing costs are integral parts of the financing structure, but the reality is that a consumer can have any rate they want. But the rate and the cost associated with it are two opposite ends of a seesaw. Lower rate means higher cost and vice-versa. So a consumer just needs to decide which is more important, a lower rate & payment or lower cost & cash out of pocket at closing.

So, if you can have any rate or closing costs you want, the qualifications and experience of the loan officer should be more critical to the consumer. In many transactions, it's not a matter of IF something

goes wrong, it's a matter of WHEN something will go wrong. Is that any surprise when in every transaction there is so much paperwork and there are so many people involved-- the loan officer, real estate agents, closing attorney or title insurance company, home inspector, appraiser, and more? But add to it that each of those individuals has their support staff, each with their own skill set and experience levels, and there are hundreds of details to be aware of and time constraints at each stage of the process. Each consumer needs a professional who can explain the details clearly, work with dozens of others in the process, keep them all on the same page, and most importantly has the experience to resolve any issues that will inevitably show up.

Interview a Loan Officer like you're hiring them for a job--because you are! You can do that with a few steps. First of all, research them, specifically look at:

- their business background and experience level (check their work history by visiting "NMLSConsumerAccess.org" and search the national registry of mortgage loan officers)
- check their references (Who referred you to them? What does your Real Estate Agent or Attorney say?)
- online reviews (Zillow and Google reviews)
- scroll through their social media profiles (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.)

In addition to your research about them, here are four simple questions that your Loan Officer must be able to answer correctly for you to trust them to advise you on the most critical financial obligation of your life. And if they do not know the answers or cannot explain the answers in plain language that you can understand, I say. "*Run, don't*

walk. Run!” to a Loan Officer who can answer these questions and explain so you can understand how important these details are.

What are mortgage interest rates based on?

The only correct answer is Mortgage-Backed Securities or Mortgage Bonds, NOT the 10-year Treasury Note. While the 10-year Treasury Note tends to move in the same direction as Mortgage Bonds, it is not unusual to see them move in opposite directions. DO NOT work with a Loan Officer who has their eyes on the wrong indicators.

What is the next Economic Report or event that could cause interest rate movement?

A professional Loan Officer will have a calendar of economic events at their fingertips! A pro needs to be aware of and monitor weekly financial reports and events that may cause rates to fluctuate.

When the Fed “changes rates,” what does this mean, and how does this impact mortgage interest rates?

The correct answer may surprise you. When the Fed makes a move, they can change the “Fed Funds Rate” or “Discount Rate.” These are both very short-term rates that impact credit cards, home equity credit lines, auto loans, and other short-term borrowing rates. On the day of the Fed move, Mortgage rates most often move in the opposite direction as the Fed change. I’ll spare you the entire economics lesson here, but this is due to the dynamics within the financial markets in response to inflation.

Do you have access to live, real-time mortgage bond quotes?

Suppose a Loan Officer cannot explain how Mortgage Bonds and interest rates are moving in real time and warn you of a costly mid-day price change. In that case, you are talking with someone still reading yesterday’s newspaper and probably not a professional with whom to entrust your home mortgage financing. Would you work with a stockbroker who can only grab yesterday’s paper to tell you how a

stock traded yesterday but had no idea what the movement looks like now and what market conditions could cause changes shortly? No, neither would I.

Once you have asked those questions and are satisfied that you are working with a top-quality professional mortgage advisor and still want to shop, here are the rules and secrets you must know to “shop” effectively.

IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS.

But you didn’t need me to tell you that, did you? Mortgage money and interest rates come from the same place (the bond market, specifically mortgage-backed securities), so nobody has a monopoly on the lowest cost of funds to offer way below market terms to a consumer. If something sounds unbelievable, you better ask a few more questions and find the hook. Is there a prepayment penalty? If the rate seems incredible, are there extra fees? What is the length of time for the rate lock-in? If fees are discounted, is it built into a higher interest rate?

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR.

If you are looking for the cheapest deal out there, understand that you are placing a hugely important process into the hands of the lowest bidder. Best case, expect very little advice, experience, and personal service. Worst case, expect that you may not close at all. All too often, you don’t know until it’s too late that the cheapest isn’t BEST. But if all you want is the cheapest quote, go ahead and search, as somebody will always promise you what you want to hear, and I’ll wish you good luck. Just remember that if you’ve heard any horror stories from family members, friends, or coworkers about missed closing dates or big surprise changes at the last minute on interest rates or fees, these are often due to working with a discount or desperate lenders who may have a severe lack of experience or understanding on how to structure your financing correctly.

Most importantly, please remember that the cheapest rate on the wrong strategy can cost you thousands more in the long run. A mortgage is the largest financial transaction most people will make in their lifetime. That being said – I know I am not always the cheapest quote available; it's impossible always to be the lowest because there is always someone that can come along and work for next to nothing—and deliver service to match. I also know that I'm not always the most expensive quote available either. Of course, the rates and costs I provide to my clients are very competitive, but I have also invested in the systems and the team needed to ensure the top-quality experience you deserve.

MAKE CORRECT COMPARISONS.

When looking at estimates, don't simply look at the bottom line. You must compare lender fees to lender fees, as these are the only ones the lender controls. And make sure lender fees are not "hidden" down amongst the title or state fees. A lender is responsible for quoting other fees involved with a mortgage loan. Since they are third-party fees – they are often under-quoted up front by a lender to make their bottom line appear lower since they know that many consumers only look at the bottom line! What about APR (Annual Percentage Rate)? That can be easily manipulated as well, and overall, APR is an antiquated and relatively worthless tool of comparison when it comes down to choosing financing options.

UNDERSTAND THAT INTEREST RATES AND CLOSING COSTS GO HAND IN HAND.

This means you can have any interest rate you want – but the lower the rate, the more you'll pay in costs. On the other hand, you can pay discounted, reduced, or no fees at all, but understand that this comes at the expense of a higher interest rate. Think of the interest rate and cost equation like a seesaw, lower rate = higher fees and vice-versa.

Which side of the seesaw is up and which is down for your transaction depends on your financial goals. A professional lender will be able to offer the best advice and options in terms of the balance between interest rate and closing costs that correctly fits your personal goals. And that's part of the beauty of structuring mortgage financing today; it's not a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, each transaction is highly customizable for each client's specific situation.

UNDERSTAND THAT INTEREST RATES CAN CHANGE DAILY, EVEN HOURLY.

This means that if you compare lender rates and fees – this is a moving target hourly. For example, if you have two lenders that you just can't decide between and want a quote from each, you must get this quote at the same time on the same day with the same terms and loan characteristics, or it will not be an accurate comparison.

Ultimately, it all boils down to understanding who you're working with is as vital as the rates and closing costs they quote. The rates and closing costs quoted are only valuable if the Loan Officer can perform their job and get you to the closing table with those terms.

UNDERSTANDING RATE QUOTES



WHAT IS YOUR RATE TODAY???



YOU CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE ONLINE...
NOT ALL MORTGAGE LOANS OR RATE QUOTES
ARE CREATED THE SAME

HERE ARE THE TOP FACTORS THAT DETERMINE
AN **ACCURATE** RATE QUOTE FOR ANY TRANSACTION.

1. Loan Amount
2. Loan Type
3. Loan Term
4. Loan Amortization
5. Purchase or Refi
6. Loan to Value
7. Combined Loan to Value
8. Property Location
9. Property Type
10. Property Condition
11. Occupancy
12. Credit Scores
13. Debt to Income Ratios
14. Liquid Assets available to close
15. Assets for reserves post closing
16. Seller credits & concessions
17. Employment Status
18. Co-Borrowers / Co-Signors
19. Rate Lock Term
20. Mortgage Insurance
21. Escrows
22. Automated or Manual Underwrite

IF YOU HAVENT TAKEN **ALL**
OF THESE INTO CONSIDERATION,
YOU DON'T HAVE AN **ACCURATE** QUOTE

Chapter Six

The VA Home Loan

I must admit that early in my career, I fell in line with most loan officers in the industry and stayed away from VA loans due to a lack of knowledge, which led to misunderstandings, incorrect beliefs, fear and a negative bias against working with that kind of loan program. Thankfully today, after a lot of education and experience working with Veterans, I consider myself an expert in VA lending and I'm willing to share my expertise as often as possible with anyone willing to listen.

So many Loan Officers either don't offer the VA program, or worse, they do offer it but work the applications very poorly. That results in Veterans that are often underserved or flat-out given incorrect information about using their home loan benefits. It's also part of why the VA loan has a reputation of being too difficult to close in many markets. Overall, many Veterans often miss out on an opportunity to have their offer to purchase a home given fair consideration because

of the negative bias that all causes. That's why I am doing my part to ensure the VA home loan is more clearly understood.

In reality, the VA home loan is the best and easiest to work with financing product available without question. If more Loan Officers devoted time and energy to learning how the program works, separating fact from fiction, and understanding how to use the guidelines to help our Veteran clients, they would have an easier time utilizing their benefits. After all, they earned it! Putting in the time to learn about the program is doing the work to become the kind of citizen worthy of the Servicemember's sacrifices.

My time living outside of the US gives me a unique perspective on the freedoms and opportunities available to us here in the US. I firmly believe in and support the Active Duty Servicemembers and Veterans of the US Armed Forces who tirelessly stand guard to protect those freedoms for all civilians.

To demonstrate my gratitude to the Veteran community, I sought ways to help them where I feel I can have the most significant impact, and that's within my area of expertise—home loan financing. So as a mortgage professional, I set a goal of correcting the misunderstandings and setting the record straight to help Veterans and show them how to make the best use of the benefits they have earned with the VA home loan.

By taking courses and certification programs with ongoing continuing education and networking with groups of like-minded Veteran advocate Loan Officers from all across the country, I earned a slew of nationally recognized designations within the mortgage industry that are central to the mission of helping Veterans. I currently have designations from VMA (Veteran Mortgage Advisor), CVLS (Certified Veteran Loan Specialist), and MMBC Instructor (Military Mortgage Boot Camp). The specialized knowledge from those courses has en-

abled me to teach Veterans and Real Estate Industry professionals alike about the VA home loan program and what the realities are compared to the misunderstandings that led to negative bias leading to Veterans not taking advantage of the benefits they earned from their time in the military.

I have learned many truths about the VA home loan and the real estate industry in general through my endeavors to help Veterans. I have come to know that without any doubt, no better financing option exists; the VA home loan is THE SUPERIOR financing option.

So how does a civilian Loan Officer like me help a Veteran with mortgage financing? It starts with asking specific questions to determine if the consumer you're speaking to is eligible to use a VA home loan. These are the questions to ask every new client, without exception:

- Are you, or is your spouse, a Veteran?
- Are you the surviving spouse of a Veteran or a POW? (The spouse of a deceased Veteran or spouse of a POW may be eligible for VA financing under a specific set of circumstances)
- Are you entitled to any disability income from the VA, and/or have you ever filed a claim? (A disability rating will make a difference in the financing terms, specifically with the VA Funding Fee)
- Do you have your COE? (Certificate of Eligibility)

Why do I ask those questions? So that my Veteran client does not become part of the statistics:

- Only 66% of Veterans who had a home reported they used the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program.

- 33% of Veterans that have a mortgage indicated they did not know about the VA Program.
- 46% of Veterans Reported their lender had not brought up the VA Loan as an option for financing.

The more I work with Veterans, the more I find those numbers disturbing and unacceptable.

But worse than those figures is the VA home loan's bad rap in the real estate marketplace, especially with real estate professionals. I can understand where that negative bias comes from—an older version of a VA loan with misunderstandings on requirements and processes performed by poorly trained Loan Officers that lead to horror stories which grew and were perpetuated for years, just like that old game of telephone—the stories get exaggerated each time they're retold. But once you peel back all the generalizations and get to the facts, as I have with my courses and training, I can firmly state all the following statements to be true when it comes to the VA home loan:

- The VA is **not** the problem.
- Veterans are **not** the problem.
- Lender overlays **are** the problem.
- Inexperienced Loan Officers **are** the problem.
- Uneducated home sellers **are** the problem.
- Misinformed real estate agents **are** the problem.

With those facts in mind, I have designed classes to dispel the myths and bring the truth to light. The central theme of my classes is “VA Mythbusting,” where I take a series of popular beliefs & assumptions

about the VA home loan and show how and why those are all just myths. A few of the most common myths that I bust during classes are:

MYTH: 100% financing means the buyer is less qualified, financially weak, and/or not financially stable.

I can understand the perspective that if a homebuyer is not giving a down payment, that means the buyer must be financially weak if they cannot afford a downpayment. But here are three facts that utterly shatter this myth.

1) Zero down is a benefit that the Veteran is entitled to based on their service, which comes after they sign a blank check to the USA for an amount up to and including their life. So how much is that worth? It's not zero; it's not nothing. In my opinion, it's everything. Their service and willingness to give their life in defense of this country are worth a hell of a lot more than a dollar amount for a down payment on a real estate purchase.

2) Regarding qualifications, on every measurable, meaningful statistic (such as credit score, household income, funds available, and debt-to-income ratios), the average Veteran buyer is superior and more qualified than their average civilian counterpart.

3) Zero down payment does not mean zero earnest money deposit. When a Veteran signs an Offer to Purchase or a Purchase & Sales Agreement, they should, and in my experience, they always do, give an earnest money deposit which is in jeopardy if they don't perform under the terms of the contract, just like any buyer taking conventional or FHA financing.

MYTH: Appraisals take too long/never meet value/require too many repairs.

First of all, there is no such thing as a "VA Inspection." It's an appraisal and the data set the appraiser is pulling from is the same as for

any other loan program: the same market data, the same comparable sales, and the same methodology for adjustments.

Regarding timelines, VA appraisers are held to a strict timeline for delivery of a completed report (the timeline varies from state to state, at the time of this writing, it's ten days in MA, where I write most of my loan applications with clients). On national averages, the turn time on completed report delivery for a VA loan appraisal is one day *quicker* than conventional loans. Bet you didn't see that one coming!

As far as value is concerned, there are two distinct opportunities to influence the decision of value with a VA loan, and these are written into the VA handbook as part of the financing process. The first opportunity is when the field appraiser invokes "Tidewater," informing the real estate professionals involved that more info and data is needed to reach a value that supports the contract price. After a Tidewater notice we have 48hrs to respond and provide additional data and comparable sales that support the sales price. If the value still comes in short after review of additional data, the second opportunity to influence the value is a request for an ROV (Reconsideration of Value), which is similar to a desk review on a conventional loan. We send the appraisal and additional data that supports a higher value to an RLC (Regional Loan Center), where a VA Underwriter will review and has it within their authority to increase the value by up to 15%. (just try to do that with a conventional or FHA loan!!). As of the time of writing, the VA reported that 92% of appraisals initially gave a value that supported the purchase price. Of the remaining 8% that did not originally meet value and an ROV was requested, 79% of those ROV requests were approved with an average increase in value of \$28,000. (Again, try to get that done on a conventional or FHA loan!!!)

The last issue regarding VA appraisals is the repairs that may be performed before closing. The VA has a set of MPRs (Minimum

Property Requirements), all of which boil down to ensuring the Veteran gets into safe, sanitary, and secure housing. Veteran or not, isn't that the standard that every buyer wants?!?

Often misunderstood, but the reality is that cosmetic repairs and old fixtures are NOT issues when it comes to MPRs. If everything is functional and does not represent an obvious safety hazard, no updates or repairs will be required. It bugs me to see listings that specifically state the seller will not consider VA-financed offers-- usually because the real estate agent told the seller that the older condition of the home would be a problem with a VA appraisal. To combat that, here is another thing that cannot be done on a conventional loan: Even if the field appraiser cites an item that needs repair (something that they feel does not meet the MPRs), it is possible to request a waiver of that MPR. Similar to the ROV process mentioned above, the MPR waiver is issued by the RLC after submission of the appraisal for review so long as the home is habitable and deemed to be safe, sanitary & secure. Once again, this is virtually impossible on a conventional FHA loan, but it is written into the financing procedure for a VA loan. Tell me again why you're biased against VA financing???



Wondering what the MPR's are? Download a copy of the checklist from the VA Minimum Property Requirements (MPR) Summary on my website. This list is for reference only and does not guarantee compliance with VA MPRs. The MPR's are to ensure the health and safety of the occupants and/or the marketability of the property. In general, the property must have space necessary to assure suitable living, sleeping, cooking

and sanitary facilities. Home must have an adequate kitchen, bathroom and sleeping area. Overall the appraisal is to ensure the Veteran is purchasing housing that is Safe, Sanitary and Secure.

MYTH: Any Loan Officer can take a VA loan application; there's no need for a VA home loan specialist.

Would you hire a painter to fix your plumbing? Or a carpenter to wire your electrical panel?

No? Why not?? They're all tradesmen, and they're all in construction. It's obvious why you wouldn't do that, and it should be just as evident that you don't want to hire just any Loan Officer to work on your VA home loan.

Too often, I have heard the stories of Loan Officers with little to no experience with VA home loans trying to talk a Veteran out of using a VA loan because it will be "*easier*" to go with a conventional Fannie/Freddie loan or FHA financing. Easier for *WHO*? Easier for the Loan Officer that can barely spell VA, that's who.

If you're a Loan Officer or a Real Estate Agent reading this, I beg you--please don't be a "*Blue Falcon*". Vets will know what I mean. Civilians, please google it just like I had to the first time I heard the term.

You should not hire a generalist to work on a very specific type of transaction. You need a Loan Officer who has invested in themselves to obtain the certifications & designations from hundreds of hours of education & study. You're in luck because I just happen to know a guy that fits that description (hint—you're reading the book he wrote)

I could go on for a whole novel about VA financing, but that's not the point of this book. The items listed above are just the tip of the iceberg. There are dozens of other myths to bust, such as:

- A Veteran can only have one VA loan at a time (wrong)

- A VA home loan is just a one-time use (nope)
- Loan amount restrictions mean you can't have a "jumbo" VA loan (false)
- Underwriting on VA loans is too complex (no, it's not)
- VA loans take too long to close (absolutely not)
- Sellers have to pay Veteran buyer's closing fees (they do not)
- Veterans can only buy a single family with a VA loan (not true)
- VA loans are just like FHA (not even close)

If you want to see how I bust all of these myths and more, you're invited to attend one of my VA Myth-busting classes. If you are a Veteran encountering difficulties based on any of these obstacles I'll happily give you a personalized one-on-one class to assist with overcoming obstacles in your way. Visit WickedAwesomeLoanOfficer.com



Chapter Seven

Wicked Awesome Loan Officer

So what's the deal with "Wicked Awesome Loan Officer?" It's pretty common knowledge that nobody gets to pick their own nickname. Sometimes a name just sticks.

Several years ago, I attended an industry conference about marketing, mainly video marketing. It was hosted by a good friend in the industry and well-known video blog host Brian Stevens of The National Real Estate Post, at his offices in Vacaville, CA. (Check out Brian at TheNationalRealEstatePost.com, tell him I sent you). We were catching up with each other during a break, and he called over some friends of his that I hadn't met yet. With his worst, thickest Boston accent impersonation, said, "Hey guys, you gotta meet my friend, Patrick, he's a *Wicked Awesome Loan Officer from Boston.*"

Of course, everything from Boston is Wicked Awesome, but his Boston accent was laughable, like Good Will Hunting on steroids. But it was funny, it was memorable, and it stuck. I have used the "*Wicked*

Awesome Loan Officer" branding ever since. How about them apples? Funny how things work out.

WickedAwesomeLoanOfficer.com is now my central hub for all of my sales & marketing activities. That's usually the best way to connect with me, the landing page has outbound links for clients to fill out a mortgage application, schedule an appointment with me, or read the Wicked Awesome reviews other clients have written about their experience working with me.



PATRICK QUEALLY
MORTGAGE TEAM
NMLS #26990

CALL/TEXT 781 • 888 • 5678

WICKEDAWESOMELOANOFFICER.COM

Since Brian landed on that branding for me, I have used the "Wicked Awesome" theme on several sales and marketing ventures, my favorite being "*The Wicked Awesome Report*." It's a video/podcast series where guests include local and national small

business owners & entrepreneurs, covering topics from sales and marketing, current events, and general interest stories. I interview one guest per show to spotlight their business or a charity they're promoting. Guests have included real estate agents, attorneys, financial planners, and bookkeepers. The overriding theme always emphasizes local businesses and supports the "shop local" movement. If you're a small business owner and you would like to be part of the Wicked Awesome Report, please reach out, I always welcome the opportunity to connect and put the spotlight on a small business.

I also host an interview series exclusively for Real Estate Agents called the "*Real Estate Rapport*." It is incredible that in such a competitive industry, successful agents are willing to share their knowledge & experience to help other agents. But I suppose the successful agents have more of an abundance mentality than the average person, so

sharing their “secrets to success” isn’t something they are afraid to do. If you’re a Real Estate Agent reading this and want to know more about Real Estate Rapport, please contact me.

Offline and in-person, I host a monthly business mixer on the first Thursday evening of every month at a local pub & restaurant. I call it the Thirsty Thursday BASH (Business Associates Social Hour). There is no cover charge, no guest speakers, and no agenda other than meeting local small business owners—it’s not limited to just professions tied to real estate. I tell everyone I want to be “the straw that stirs the drink” by putting some good people in a room for cold drinks and warm conversation. It’s a casual event that always results in meaningful business connections and support of local businesses. To date, I know several of the guests have invested in each other’s business, and some have entered into new business ventures together because they met during one of the mixers—precisely the kind of results I was hoping for those that attend.

While it’s not my event, I am a member and occasional guest speaker at several local REIA’s (Real Estate Investor Association), speaking about financial markets and mortgage lending structures that may help the members with their real estate investing careers. Often those talks drift into marketing strategies which lead to ideas for generating business on social media.

In addition to being a host of several online & in-person events, I’m often a guest on local and national podcasts & shows. You never really know where I’ll end up, but you can be confident that wherever that is, I’ll talk about real estate, financing, marketing, social media, and Veteran advocacy.

For those clients and video guests that do want to see me in person, my office is in Rockland, MA, less than a mile from exit 35 off Route 3. It’s reasonably convenient to get to, especially for me;

it's only a 3-mile commute from my house, which makes getting to the kids' games and after-school activities super easy. The building is well-maintained with plenty of parking, which is ideal because I often host events at my office. On-site events I host have included a shredding van for the day where clients can come by to dispose of paperwork securely; another day was an ice-cream social with an ice cream truck for clients and kids to enjoy a sweet summer treat on me, and every year I give away pies just before Thanksgiving. Having a location that's easy to get to with plenty of parking makes those events much easier to host.

The inside of my office suite has a unique setup, with one of the rooms used as the "Podcast Pub," where I host the Wicked Awesome Report. The Podcast Pub has a fully stocked bar, high-top tables, and a dart board. It's a relaxed pub-like atmosphere to welcome people as they arrive as guests of my podcast, client meetings, or just to stop by to hang out. Since the COVID pandemic, Zoom and other online platforms have made an office's physical location less important, but should clients or guests decide to pop in, the office is a great place to be.

I love that online mortgage applications and Zoom calls are convenient for clients. It's also great that so many people are saving time lost due to driving back and forth to work and appointments. (It's a little-known fact, but even on a good day, Boston is actually an hour's drive away from Boston.) With technology, I can conveniently work with clients in and outside my local community while making it easy for clients to come to my office when they want to. It's the best of both worlds. I'm set up to provide modern online convenience and old-fashioned in-person meetings in a relaxed office environment.

When it comes to in-person meetings, I attend every closing my schedule allows for, especially on the purchase loans for a first-time

buyer, or a Veteran. Even though I'm stopping by with a little housewarming gift for them, it never ceases to amaze me the number of clients that bring me a gift at closing—usually something to keep the Podcast Pub fully stocked. Totally unnecessary because I was doing my job, but also totally appreciated because I could tell what a difference my help and advice made in their lives with the purchase of their first home.

Warning—shameless plug ahead—If you are looking to connect with me, whether to watch/listen to interviews I have conducted or schedule me to be interviewed for your media; check out the schedule and attend an event I'm hosting; or connect with me on socials or just stalk my profile; or if you're a consumer looking to be adopted and start a financing application or set up a time to meet in person or online, the best place to start with all of that is my website WickedAwesomeLoanOfficer.com.

If you have read this far, thanks for your interest in my story. I hope you found it useful, informative, and maybe a little humorous. I'll always welcome the opportunity to “adopt” you into my Loan Orphanage so please reach out if there is anything I can help you with.