Monica Vendituoli Earned Media and Public Relations Portfolio

Contents

Earned Media Coverage

MAV Media and Messaging – Startup Clients

Business Insider: You could soon get thousands of dollars in downpayment assistance if you give Wall Street a stake in your home. The nation's second-biggest homebuilder is partnering with a startup to make that a reality.

Link: Homebuyers Could Get Down-Payment Help If They Give up Equity - Business Insider

Saving enough cash for a down payment is often the first hurdle to homeownership. A new startup is partnering with one of the nation's largest homebuilders to help buyers come up with that money — in exchange for a cut of their home's future value.

HomePace, founded in September 2020, currently gives existing homeowners up to $250,000 cash in exchange for a percentage of each home's appreciation. These "home-equity investments" give owners the chance to tap into their equity without selling their house or turning to traditional debt options, such as a home-equity line of credit, or a cash-out refinancing.

Today, HomePace and competitors like Point, EquiFi, and Hometap originate these deals and then sell the contracts to large investors, effectively giving Wall Street a stake in homes across the country.

Now, HomePace is looking to provide a similar service for buyers who have yet to land a dream home. The company said it would begin offering new buyers home-equity investments of up to

15% of a home's value — which could total tens of thousands of dollars, since the typical American home costs $365,000 — within the next year.

In December, HomePace closed on a $7 million Series A funding round led by LenX, the venture-capital arm of Lennar, the nation's second-largest homebuilder by revenue. The backing from one of the biggest players in real estate will help HomePace begin offering investments to prospective homeowners and could signal a new frontier in the quest to capitalize on the roughly $26 trillion that Americans have tied up in home equity.

HomePace's founding team features several Wall Street veterans, including its CEO, Joe Cianciolo, and its chief operating officer, Megan Graf, both of whom are BlackRock alums, as well as its chief investment officer, Jeboah Joerg, who worked in derivatives trading at Goldman Sachs.
After leaving BlackRock in early 2019, Cianciolo served as a vice president at Unison, another home-equity investment company, where he said he realized the space was ripe for new entrants.

Partnering with new homebuyers is more challenging than working with existing owners, Cianciolo said, because it requires closer coordination with the mortgage lender to make sure the home transaction goes smoothly. But the upside is that it opens up an entirely new customer base and helps buyers get into homes they might not otherwise be able to afford, Cianciolo said.

Other participants in HomePace's latest funding round included its prior investors Bling Capital, NextView Ventures, and Ride Ventures.

In a statement announcing the funding round, Eric Feder, the president of LenX and a member of HomePace's board of directors, said the company had been closely monitoring the emerging landscape of home-equity investments and saw it as "an affordable instrument to offer to our homebuyers in the years to come."

LenX's investment in HomePace is just the latest sign that longtime players in real estate are taking home-equity investments seriously, Cianciolo said.

ThinkAdvisor: CFP Wants to Help His 207,000 TikTok Fans Retire by 60

Link: CFP Wants to Help His 207,000 TikTok Fans Retire by 60

Nate Hoskin, founder of Hoskin Capital, has a whopping 207,000-plus followers on TikTok. But unlike many of the platform's other stars, eccentric antics aren't the way the financial advisor, 24, has grabbed attention.

"I want to portray myself as someone who's an expert in his field rather than someone who's trying to be entertaining just for the sake of getting more followers," Hoskin tells ThinkAdvisor in an interview.

He is serious — about his online presence and about helping Gen Zers and millennials retire between the ages of 55 and 60.

"If you start [retirement planning] as early as possible, that's where you can add the most value," Hoskin says in the interview.

He himself is all about being early: By age 9, the precocious future financial advisor was already immersed in learning about finance.

By 22, he had earned the CFP designation. That was the same year — 2020, the height of the coronavirus pandemic — that he launched his own firm.

His availability and popularity on TikTok go far to begin the client bonding process even before a first meeting.

In the same age group as his target clients, Hoskin not only advises them but also supports their lifestyle. That helps to "empower them toward [reaching their] goals because we see eye to eye," he says.

On TikTok, he focuses on financial education and often posts one new video a day.

A big hit has been flowcharts he creates to explain finance, such as "The Retirement Waterfall," which illustrates the process of allocating assets among various accounts.

Hoskin spent fewer than three years working at a financial firm — Pacific Investment Research — before starting his own Denver-based company to serve folks in their 20s and 30s. No asset minimum is required.

Compensation comes from two-hour hourly-rate consultation fees, financial plan creation, portfolio management and a financial education membership program. Assets under management total $1.8 million.

ThinkAdvisor recently interviewed Hoskin, who was speaking by phone from Denver.
Eventually, he talked about long-term plans: expanding the firm but personally limiting his book of business to 100 clients whom he can serve "from their 25th birthday to their 90th birthday."

Here are highlights of our conversation:

THINKADVISOR: You don't post zany TikTok videos, as many people do. Why did you decide to use a serious approach?
NATE HOSKIN: I take my online presence very seriously. I want to portray myself as someone who's an expert in his field rather than someone who's trying to be entertaining just for the sake of getting more followers.
I'd rather have fewer followers who are really getting valuable content than having millions of followers simply because they think I'm interesting to watch.

How does being on TikTok help your business?
The No. 1 thing is that when people want to work with me; it's almost like they already know me because I'm so available on TikTok [as if I'm] talking to [them] directly. It's almost like we've had conversations in the past.

It creates a level of familiarity that allows people to feel very comfortable. In many cases, finances are a naturally uncomfortable matter.

So anything I can do to break down those walls and make someone a little more comfortable talking about these sensitive things, makes our conversation that much more productive.

But why are your videos so popular?
People in their early 20s who are on TikTok want to find people who are reliable sources of information that they can learn from.

I provide financial education and talk about a lot of things that I'm teaching my clients.

I filled that [education] niche early on when TikTok was becoming popular. That's how people found me and followed me: They wanted to learn more about what I was sharing.

How did you build up to hundreds of thousands of followers?
If you have a video that a lot of people are commenting on and who are following you as a result, the TikTok algorithm ["gets"] that that's a valuable video and will share it with more people.

So the more positive interactions I had with people, the more I created content that they wanted to see, and it was shown to more and more people.

What's one of the main things you provide educationally on TikTok that's had real impact?
I create flowcharts that amplify specific financial topics. For example, I have a chart called "The Retirement Waterfall": Depending on the amount of money you're able to save, what account should that money go into?

Following that chart, you can take a very broad topic and fit it into your specific situation.
That's been a really big hit because it's hard to visualize where all your money should go dollar by dollar.

You're 24 years old and have had comparatively little experience as a financial advisor. Why would young people who are green about finance choose you as their financial advisor?
One factor is that we share many of the same interests. So to many of the people I interact with, I'm not only an advisor but also a supporter of their lifestyle.

When they tell me about their goals and aspirations in the near term, I help empower them toward those goals because we see eye to eye.

We really understand each other rather than their feeling that they have to explain themselves.

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FOXBUSINESS: Choosing to rent or buy? Rise in home affordability can make it an easy decision

Link: https://www.foxbusiness.com/money/cheaper-to-rent-or-buy-home-affordability

By Tara Mastroeni Published April 14, 2021

One bright spot in the coronavirus pandemic is that it has made home-buying an affordable option for many Americans. Specifically, from a personal finance perspective, mortgage rates continue to be low despite a recent upward trend.

That said, the spike in mortgage applications indicates that there is also more competition for potential home buyers, which can drive home prices up in many cases.

If you've been thinking about becoming a first-time homeowner, now maybe the time to take the plunge and take advantage of today's lower cost of owning property. You can explore your home loan options by visiting Credible to compare rates and mortgage lenders.

Though, many home buyers are also considering an age-old real estate question: Is it cheaper to buy or rent? Read on to learn how you can make this decision based on your own personal finance situation.

Is buying cheaper than renting?
Buying a home is cheaper than renting in most cases, according to a recent ATTOM Data Solutions report. The property data firm's "2021 Rental Affordability Report" found that you can save money by owning a home in nearly two-thirds of the country. In particular, the report compared the cost of owning a three-bedroom home to the cost of renting a three-bedroom in various housing markets. On a broad scale, owning a home was cheaper than renting.

Brady Miller, the CEO of Trelora, a real estate tech firm, also believes in the benefits of homeownership. "When you buy a home, your monthly payments are going to stay the same even as the property appreciates, which means that the money you invest will be worth a lot more in future dollars," he explains. "When you're renting, you don't get the value of appreciation and the costs can increase over time."

However, it's important to note there are cases where homeownership is not cheaper than renting. Specifically, the report found renting was cheaper than buying in most of the country's most densely populated areas.

How to decide between renting and buying

The answer to whether it makes more financial sense to buy or rent is largely going to depend on where you want to live and your future plans. However, your personal finance circumstance, like if you have bad credit, may also play a role in your home loan eligibility. Use the two tips below to help you decide on whether home buying is for you.

1. Think about how long you plan to stay
How long you plan to stay in the home will factor into your decision to rent or buy. As Miller puts it, "Every time you buy or sell a home, you're responsible for paying closing costs, which can eat into your equity."

As a rule of thumb, home buying usually makes sense if you plan to stay in the area for at least five years. A Betterment study found that it takes an average of four years to break even on the upfront costs of closing a home, which means that maintaining a five-year outlook would save money from your home loan.

You can use Credible's online mortgage calculator to figure out what your monthly payments could be if you decide to buy.

2. Look at your personal finance circumstances
In order to make the cost of owning a home more affordable, you'll likely want your finances to be in the best shape possible when you're ready to buy. Mortgage lenders look at your credit history and debt ratios to determine your loan eligibility and mortgage rates.

Potential first-time home buyers with lower credit scores may be given higher mortgage rates, which can cost them more money over the life of the loan. In light of that, it's a good idea to better your financial profile, like improving your credit score, as much as possible before applying for a home loan.

You'll also want to compare rates and fees from a variety of mortgage lenders to ensure that you choose the mortgage with the best possible terms. Credible's free online tool can help you find your preapproved mortgage rates.

The bottom line
In the end, the decision of whether to buy or rent a home is a personal one as much as a financial one. It's a good idea to reach out to a financial advisor if you're having trouble making the decision on home affordability on your own. They can look at the specifics of your personal finance situation and help guide you toward which decision is right for you.

If you think you're ready to own a piece of real estate, visit Credible to further explore your mortgage options.

FORBES: This Is How You Can Stress Test Your Retirement Savings Before It's Too Late

Link: https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriscarosa/2020/07/24/this-is-how-you-can-stress-test-your retirement-savings-before-its-too-late/?sh=392156deebe5

By Chris Carosa, July 24, 2020

It might make sense to treat your retirement savings like the government treats banks. Your savings will, after all, become your bank when you retire.

Historically, banks' internal procedures periodically called for accounting "stress tests." Similar to what your doctor might order you to take to test the strength of your heart, bank stress tests measure the strength of their finances.

"In general, a stress test is any kind of test that pushes the limits on the subject using extreme scenarios," says Tim Bain, President of Spark Asset Management Group, LLC in Statesville, North Carolina. "Specifically, the bank stress test applies what-if scenarios to determine if the bank has sufficient assets to survive during periods of economic stress. These could be high unemployment, low GDP, periods of significant inflation or deflation, a stock market crash, etc…"

When the credit markets seized up in 2008/2009, many banks teetered on the brink of disaster. What had been merely "best practice" for financial institutions soon became law.

"Bank stress tests are now required to be performed for banks with at least $10 billion in assets," says Mark J. Alaimo, a member of the AICPA Personal Financial Specialist Committee based in Lawrence, Massachusetts. "This was because if these banks failed, it would impose a meaningful strain on the FDIC insurance fund and would likely require governmental intervention to ensure the depositors were not harmed by the loss."

But you can let the government worry about the "too big to fail" banks. You need to worry about your own retirement savings "bank." Still, what you learn from the lessons of these mega banks may help protect you in retirement.

"Bank stress tests were created in response to the 2008 financial crisis," says Macedon, New York-based Richard Barrington, a senior financial analyst for MoneyRates.com. "They are designed to show what would happen to bank finances should they experience some business setbacks. The idea is to find out how close to the edge the banking system would be in a bad economy. People can apply the same approach to their retirement plans."

This isn't just an academic exercise. If you can judge from history, stress testing your retirement savings has real practical implications.

"Today's retirees may experience three or more major market declines during retirement," says Sheryl O'Connor, Founder and CEO of IncomeConductor in Hartford. "Since retirees today depend on their savings as the primary source of income, they simply do not have the luxury of 'riding out' these times of crisis as those accumulating assets can. Therefore, retirees need to utilize strategies that protect their savings and income during times of economic crisis or high market volatility."

Just look at what has happened in the last twenty years. In the early 2000s you saw the dot-com bubble implode. In the late 2000s you saw real estate prices collapse and credit freeze. Just this year you, along with everyone else, are living through a once-in-a-century pandemic event. Imagine if you had to experience these crises during retirement.

Banks have learned to live with this possibility. You should, too.

“Stress testing one’s retirement savings is very similar to stress testing a bank,” says Alaimo. “If a bigger bank were to fail, it would impose a significant hardship on the economic safety nets in place. Likewise, if your retirement savings endure a meaningful hit that isn’t provided for at an inopportune time, it could cause significant harm to the retirement lifestyle one expects.”

You shouldn’t confuse this kind of retirement savings stress test with a different kind of risk analysis tool used by many financial planners. Called a “Monte Carlo” simulation, it’s used primarily to test various investment portfolio strategies. This computer-generated series of random outcomes tests the odds your investment will yield the results you need.

“Simulation analyses, such as a Monte Carlo simulation, can model various economic conditions over a long period of time,” says James Ciprich, Partner & Wealth Advisor at RegentAtlantic in Morristown, New Jersey. “It will incorporate sequence of return risk, and provide a probability of success. A positive result may be a plan that works 80% of the time or more, whereas a failing plan may have a probability of success below 75%.”

While incorporating many of the same variables, Monte Carlo simulations offer only a narrow risk assessment as it pertains to the range of likely returns on your investments.

You need to conduct a more thorough stress test. Although your financial status is relevant, a proper comprehensive analysis will introduce elements that further test the viability of your retirement savings. Before you begin, you need to establish a baseline. This is similar to what a doctor does when you undergo a heart stress test. First, you take a measurement of your heartrate before you get on the treadmill. It’s the same idea with your retirement savings stress test. Here’s what this baseline entails and why it’s important.

“Many financial professionals take a probability-based approach to income distribution where it is difficult to demonstrate the impact of economic crises, hyper-inflationary periods, and/or unforeseen medical events,” says O’Connor. “It’s critical to use a strategy and technology that creates a written plan that is customized to an individual’s retirement goals. Once you have a ‘base plan’, these negative events can then be modeled to determine their impact on the plan. For example, if the crisis analysis results in the individual’s savings running out before they die, or a reduction of income that is unacceptable, they can then consider their options to address these impacts.”

With that foundation in place, you can now proceed to examine various worst-case scenarios to test their impact on your retirement. Here’s one that you’d be surprised to know many people ignore (at their own peril).

“Given that we are all living longer, a long-term healthcare event test helps to give you peace of mind,” says Clari Nolet, Senior Financial Advisor at Team Hewins in Redwood City, California. “If an event of needing nursing home or in-home care lasts 2-3 years (average from data) at age 75 and/or 80, will your savings/investments take care of your living expenses for the rest of your lives or the lives of the people you are responsible for? If not, and you are young enough for it to make sense and you can qualify, you can look into long term care insurance (LTCi) to ensure you do not run out of money. If you do not run out of money, then you are able to be what is called ‘self-insured’ to weather this type of event.”

If this example applies to you, what kind of practical mid-course corrections are available to you should LTCi not be an option? Nolet suggests you “leave less to your children, reduce expenses to save more, look at reverse mortgages and finally look at part-time work after you planned to retire, or working longer.”

It’s not just this specific need (long-term care), in general, there are other stress inducing factors that arise with advanced age. How can you test this?

Press Release Writing

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HomePace Series A Media Launch

HomePace Secures $7M Series A Round to Help Homeowners Access Their Home Equity

HomePace to expand its partnerships and introduce new homebuyer solution to help homeowners and homebuyers via Home Equity Investments

Park City, Utah – April 27, 2022 – HomePace, which helps homeowners easily access their home equity without taking on additional debt or interest payments, announced that it has secured $7 million in Series A funding led by LENX, the corporate venture arm of Lennar, one of the nation’s leading homebuilders.

HomePace’s home equity investments allow homeowners to convert their built-up home equity into money today in exchange for sharing a portion of the gains or losses in their home’s value over time. Customers can use the money they receive however they see fit without taking on additional debt or monthly interest payments.

“We have been closely monitoring this emerging landscape of home equity investments and recognize it is an innovative way for homeowners to access record levels of home equity in a non-intrusive manner,” says Eric Feder, President of LENX and member of HomePace’s Board of Directors. “We look forward to working with HomePace’s founding team to expand the business into the new home market as an affordable instrument to offer to our homebuyers in the years to come."

HomePace's founding team includes CEO Joe Cianciolo and COO Megan Graf, who were previously directors at BlackRock, and CIO Jeboah (Bo) Joerg, a former Vice President in Derivatives Trading at Goldman Sachs. Cianciolo and Graf were among the first 25 employees at FutureAdvisor, an early digital wealth management platform that BlackRock later acquired.

Prior investors Bling Capital, NextView Ventures, and Ride Ventures joined LENX in funding the round.

"We are extremely impressed with the founding team. They have helped scale fintech companies from 0 to 100 at FutureAdvisor and have relevant domain experience from working at BlackRock and Goldman Sachs," said Melody Koh, Partner at NextView Ventures.

HomePace is focused on reaching homeowners through partners including Silverdale, Washington-based Connection Credit Union, Los Angeles, California-based University Credit Union, and Tucson, Arizona-based Vantage West Credit Union, and will utilize the new funding to expand its partnerships.

The company also plans to use the additional funding to introduce its new homebuyer solution, which will provide homebuyers with funds upfront to use as part of their down payment when purchasing a home in exchange for sharing a portion of their home's future value.

"Prior to founding HomePace, the challenge of a large down payment required to purchase a home is something my wife and I faced personally when buying our first home for our two children. We're excited to help others facing a similar situation," said CEO and co-founder Joe Cianciolo.

Expansion of this new homebuyer solution will be accelerated by HomePace's alignment with LENX which drives a focused strategy within Lennar to integrate technology solutions across the homebuilding industry.

HomePace

Founded in September 2020, HomePace provides homeowners and homebuyers with financial flexibility through accessible home equity. Instead of charging monthly interest, HomePace aligns itself with homeowners by sharing in the home's gain or loss when the homeowner chooses to sell in the future. Homeowners receive up to $250,000 in cash. As a passive investor, HomePace allows homeowners to stay in complete control of their property. HomePace has already helped homeowners in Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, and Washington. For more information about HomePace, please visit https://homepace.com/.

Lennar Corporation

Lennar Corporation, founded in 1954, is one of the nation's leading builders of quality homes for all generations. Lennar builds affordable, move-up, and active adult homes primarily under the Lennar brand name. Lennar's Financial Services segment provides mortgage financing, title, and closing services primarily for buyers of Lennar's homes and, through LMF Commercial, originates mortgage loans secured primarily by commercial real estate properties throughout the United States. Lennar's Multifamily segment is a nationwide developer of high-quality multifamily rental properties. LENX drives Lennar's technology, innovation, and strategic investments. For more information about Lennar, please visit www.lennar.com.

CSG – Startup Clients

Trelora Doubles National Footprint, Capitalizes on Successful Fair Fee Model that has Helped over 6,000 Clients Save $65 Million

Link: https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2021/03/17/2194763/0/en/Trelora-Doubles-National Footprint-Capitalizes-on-Successful-Fair-Fee-Model-that-has-Helped-over-6-000-Clients-Save-65- Million.html

March 17, 2021 11:00 ET | Source: Trelora

Disruptive residential real estate brokerage expanding into five new markets enabling consumers in Atlanta, Charleston, Charlotte, St. Louis and Tucson to save thousands on fees

DENVER, Colo., March 17, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Trelora, a modern residential real estate brokerage that is revolutionizing the home buying and selling process and putting the consumer first, today announced that its successful and disruptive low-cost, fair-fee model has enabled it to double its nationwide footprint, breaking into five new markets: Atlanta, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina; St. Louis, Missouri; and Tucson, Arizona.

Since its founding in 2011, Trelora's model has combined fee transparency with experienced agents and the latest technology to successfully help over 6,000 clients buy and sell their homes, saving them more than $65 million in fees along the way.

Through this expansion, Trelora, which is now available in seven states nationwide, will help home buyers and sellers in these new markets save thousands of dollars on their real estate transactions by taking advantage of Trelora's low, fair fee model. The entire process is made simple and transparent due to its proprietary technology and top-rated team of specialized agents.

"I'm proud to see Trelora revolutionizing the real estate transaction much the way we were able to change fast food at Chipotle, by combining an extraordinary experience with great value. And we're doing it the same way: by empowering our top-performing teams to deliver exceptional service to our customers," said Trelora's Chairman, and former Chipotle Co-CEO, Monty Moran. "Trelora is leading the charge to take the expense and stress out of real estate, and we look forward to helping homeowners in Charlotte, Tucson, St. Louis, Charleston, and Atlanta get excellent service at an affordable price."

Traditionally, real estate agents charge high agent fees on each transaction, often collecting as much as 6% in commissions, regardless of the work they do. In addition, fees are often hidden so the consumer has no idea how much they are paying their agents. With Trelora, sellers receive an exceptional, transparent and full-service experience for a low, fair fee while buyers pay nothing out of pocket and receive up to $6,000 in closing cost savings, a model that has saved its customers over $65 million since 2011.

“Industry-wide disruption due to an innovative technology is not a new concept. There have been countless examples of industries that have been disrupted over time, offering consumers a better experience at a lower cost, and yet the real estate industry has remained stagnant,” said Brady Miller, CEO of Trelora.

About Trelora

Since 2011, Trelora has been bringing clarity, convenience, and consistency to each home buying and selling transaction, offering a transparent, fair-fee model that saves consumers thousands of dollars. By using proprietary technology, Trelora’s local, specialized agents can streamline the process, making the home buying and selling process both simple and transparent. It’s a model that has worked for more than 6,000 customers, saving them more than $65 million along the way. Trelora is revolutionizing the real estate industry, one happy client at a time. For more information visit trelora.com. Follow Trelora on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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