



Trowel Talk

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SERVING ALL OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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BUILD/BUY USA: KEEP COMMUNITIES STRONG THROUGH CONSUMER ACTION



Article by: Dennis D. Williams, President, International Union, United Automobile Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW)

The "Buy American" movement isn't new, but it looks different from how it did in the 1970's. Back then there were almost 20 million workers making goods in factories across the country. These workers made the clothes we wore, the goods we bought for our homes, the televisions we watched, and the toys our children enjoyed.

We shopped for and purchased these goods at stores in our communities - maybe even down the block in our neighborhood. Now, there are only 12.3 million workers making goods in factories. Neighborhood stores have disappeared and our communities have changed because we shop online or drive to shopping centers to buy stuff that was made thousand of miles away - most likely by nonunion workers who don't have a voice in there workplace. Build it Here In 2017, we can't just declare, "Buy American!" because after decades of anti-worker/pro-corporate profit polices, there's not much made here anymore.

We know making products here builds stronger communities because the last 30 years have taught us about the importance of a strong manufacturing base in the U.S. According to a 2016 report by the Manufactures Alliance for Productivity and Innovation, one new full-time job created in manufacturing leads to three or more

full-time jobs in related non-manufacturing industries. Bringing back manufacturing jobs won't be easy, but we have to fight for our children and grandchildren's future, and rebuild our communities that have lost good manufacturing jobs. We also need to develop a strong industrial policy in this country.

Most developed countries have well thought out industrial policies. In the U.S., we have is backward: our "industrial policy" reveals itself after tax subsidies have been awarded and the decisions are already made regarding trade, the environment, job training, investment in infrastructure and education.

We give companies economic subsidies to build factories that pay our workers less than what taxpayers are giving the companies to locate here. Our country's agenda should lift everyone, not make it easier to race to the bottom. This is our government and we need to hold lawmakers accountable when they don't support policies that help working families or when they favor trade deals that exploit workers in other countries. And as we demand that manufacturing jobs be created here, we have to remain mindful that not all jobs are equal.

Our goal should be well-paying and safe jobs where the workers have a seat at the table.

Taking action is about more than just political engagement; we can do so many things in our daily lives. Shopping is one example. We look at products for good value, but measuring that value is more

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than just looking at the sticker price. As consumers, make your voice heard by encountering and commending stores for carrying union/USA products.

Each purchase is a choice. Use the power of your wallet to support good-paying jobs. When you shop, consider these categories of goods:

Imported, Made by Nonunion Labor: This is the majority of consumer goods that are imported into the U.S. These goods are sometimes cheaper, but often come with a price. Were the workers who made it exploited? Are there serious health and safety issues at the worksite? **Imported, Made by Union Labor:** Solidarity is global. In fact, the UAW vehicle guide includes cars made by UAW members and union brothers and sisters who are part of Unifor in Canada. But not all unions are free and independent and a global union label is meaningful only if those workers truly have a seat at the table.

Made in America by Nonunion Labor: It's great that a company is building it here and creating jobs. But we have to go deeper to distinguish that "USA made" products are made by nonunion workers and we have to call out the employers who are socially irresponsible. If a company engages in anti-union campaigns, breaks environmental laws, scoffs at safety regulations, or takes advantage of the community with no regard for the people who've been living there, there is no benefit to buying its "USA-made" products.

Made in America by Union Labor: Though union density in the private sector is 6.4 percent, labor unions are among the most ardent advocates for keeping jobs in the U.S. Through collective bargaining, workers have a voice in their working conditions and are mindful of safety on the job. Collective bargaining lifts wages not only for workers covered by the contract, but also those in the area and industry.

Free trade agreements have allowed corporations to exploit workers in other countries at our expense in return for cheap goods and higher profits. Asking people to "Buy American" makes no sense unless there are things to buy. Furthermore, asking people to "Buy American" makes no sense if the corporation treats its workers unfairly, engages in despicable business practices, and pays low wages with no benefits.

We can reward good employers with our purchasing power while investing in a future for the next generation. Bringing strong, well-paid and sustainable manufacturing jobs to the United States can happen if we demand it. We can have the future we want, but it won't happen through grand-standing or flag-waving. By working together, our actions and choices can bring change. Let's have 2018 be the year that we get this right. Build/Buy USA: Build it here, so we can buy it here.

THESE 3 TICKING TAX TIME BOMBS COULD DESTROY YOUR RETIREMENT



Smart savers work hard to keep the taxman at bay as long as possible. But there's only so much you can do to put off having to pay some taxes. Eventually, the IRS wants its cut -- and it's best either to be prepared for the consequences or to take steps early on to avoid the problem in the first place.

Millions of Americans have tax time bombs lurking among their assets. Often, it's a smart strategy to put these investments to good use, as long as you don't forget about their potential downsides. Below, we'll look at three of the most common tax time bombs that you'll find and what you can do to keep them from doing irreparable damage to your finances.

1. TRADITIONAL IRAS AND QUALIFIED RETIREMENT PLAN ACCOUNTS

Perhaps the largest ticking time bomb from a tax perspective comes from the money that Americans have in IRAs, 401(k) plans, and other qualified retirement plans. 401(k)s have about \$5.3 trillion in assets, according to the Investment Company Institute, and total retirement assets amount to \$27.2 trillion. That second number

includes annuities and traditional pensions, and both figures consist of both traditional and Roth-style IRAs and 401(k) plans. Nevertheless, it's fair to assume that there's somewhere between \$10 trillion and \$20 trillion in pre-tax assets held in retirement plans.

The problem with traditional IRAs, 401(k)s, and similar retirement accounts is that when you withdraw money from them, you have to pay income tax on what you pull out, and that reduces the size of your effective after-tax nest egg. For example, if you have \$100,000 in a traditional IRA and are in the 25% tax bracket, you'll have to pay \$25,000 in taxes as you withdraw that balance. That means that even though your statement says you have \$100,000, you really only have \$75,000 in after-tax money to go toward spending.

Even if you don't want to withdraw your pre-tax retirement money, these accounts are almost universally subject to required minimum distribution rules that kick in at age 70 1/2. Once you reach that age, you have no choice: You must start withdrawing a portion of your account and paying taxes on it.

What's more, the withdrawals you have to include in taxable income can subject other sources of income to tax. The most common example is Social Security, where benefits become taxable if your outside income lifts you over certain threshold amounts.

One solution is to make greater use of Roth IRAs and Roth 401(k) plan options. Roth accounts let you save after-tax money, with distributions being tax-free in retirement. Not all employers offer Roth 401(k)s, but conversions of existing traditional retirement assets to Roths are generally available.

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2. SAVINGS BONDS

Many people own savings bonds without even knowing it. As popular gifts from older generations to children, savings bonds differ from most bonds in that they accumulate interest on a tax-deferred basis. You don't have to pay taxes on the income that they generate each year.

The price you'll pay, though, is that you have to pay tax when you cash in your bonds. Because currently issued savings bonds stop earning interest after 30 years, you either have to cash them in and suffer the tax consequences or allow them to sit without earning any interest at all after their final maturity date.

Fortunately, one solution is to take the money from maturing bonds and transfer it into a 529 college savings plan account. Doing so lets you exclude the accumulated interest from taxation. Otherwise, you'll have to pay tax on the entire increase in value from what you paid for the bond and what you received when you cashed it in.

3. YOUR HOME

Finally, your personal residence can be a ticking tax time bomb. Most homeowners get the benefit of one of the most lucrative tax breaks on the books: the capital gains exclusion of up to \$250,000 for singles or \$500,000 for joint filers. What that means is that if

a couple saw their home rise in value from \$300,000 to \$800,000 over their lifetimes, they can sell it and pay no tax at all.

So how is this a tax trap? The potential problem is that the exclusion is available only for property that's been used as your principal residence during at least two of the five years preceding the sale. There are special rules that reduce that requirement to just one year if you need to leave your home for long-term care in a nursing home or other institution, but failing to meet the requirement can eliminate the exclusion entirely. Moreover, if you decide to change the nature of the home to a nonqualified use -- such as renting it out -- then capital gain that's attributed to the period of nonqualified use can be taxable.

The solution is to sell your home long before there's any danger of losing the personal residence exclusion. Otherwise, you could turn the most profitable investment of your life into a major tax hassle.

BE TAX SMART

Using these strategies wisely can save you huge amounts of tax. Yet by being aware that they can cause unintended problems if you're not careful, you'll be able to take full advantage of these strategies while avoiding the downsides.

Two huge things people get wrong about retirement



So much for the golden years.

About 28% of recent retirees complain that life is actually worse in retirement than it was when they were working, according to a recent survey by Nationwide.

The cause may be mismatched expectations. Pre-retirees tend to overestimate two factors that will be important to their wellbeing, the survey suggested: their future retirement income and their future health.

When either or both of these wind up falling short, disappointment ensues. About a quarter of recent retirees say their Social Security payment is less than they expected. And an even larger group -- one third -- say health problems are interfering with their retirement.

Of those with health issues, the majority report their condition cropped up more than five years sooner than expected.

"Many people think their health will maintain where it is currently, and they are surprised when they start experiencing issues earlier than expected," says Tina Ambrozy, president of Nationwide Financial Distributors. "It really affects their happiness in retirement."

The survey of 1,012 U.S. adults ages 50 and older -- both current and future retirees -- was conducted by Harris Poll on behalf of the Nationwide Retirement Institute.

Medical appointments can devour considerable time and mon-

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ey, resources that many retirees would prefer to devote to fun activities. What's more, health care costs tend to rise at a rate much higher than general inflation – while retirees receive only modest, inflation-based bumps in their annual Social Security payments.

This gap grows over time, leading to some alarming projections: An average 66-year-old couple retiring this year will require 59% of their Social Security benefits to cover their total health care costs in retirement, according to HealthView Services, a Danvers, Mass.-based company that provides retirement health care cost data and tools to financial advisors. A 55-year-old couple retiring at 66 will need 92%

of their benefits, and a 45-year-old couple will need a frightening 122% of their Social Security benefits to cover their retirement health care needs.

Proper planning can help alleviate these funding shortfalls – and, one hopes, increase retirees' happiness. Too many people still wing it when it comes to retirement finances. Experts advise beginning concrete preparations – estimating retirement expenses and income, for example, and considering when to claim Social Security – by the time you're 50.

As it stands, Ambrozy says, "there's a lot of guessing going on."

20 Tips for Planning a Successful House Remodel



1. KNOW YOUR END GOAL

Before you decide how extensively to renovate, you need to know what your end goal is for your home. Are you renovating to raise the resale value of your home, or will you be staying put for years to come? Consider the condi-

tion of your neighborhood before you begin, and know which renovations are a good return on investment, and which will be considered overdoing it for the area. Having a specific plan in place for your future will help you decide how deep to go with your project.

2. HAVE A BUDGET

Knowing your budget—and sticking to it—is one of the most important parts of renovation planning. Remember to add in a contingency fund for any unexpected costs—and expect to use it—as well as incidental costs like the cost of eating out for a kitchen reno, or even taking a hotel for a night or two.

3. CONSULT THE CALENDAR

If you're hoping for a brand new home for a particular event or holiday, make sure you look at your end date and work your way backward. Be sure to pencil in a few weeks to a month at the end for wiggle-room in case there are delays on the way to avoid disappointment.

4. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Take the time to chat with friends, family, and neighbors about the renovation work they have done, and the challenges they have faced during the process. Having a wealth of information from homeowners who have been in your shoes can be invaluable in the planning process, and this information may alter your end plan.

5. KNOW YOUR LIMITS

DIY renos are a great way to save money, have a sense of accomplishment, and involve the entire family, but they can turn disastrous if you don't know what you're doing. Know which tasks you can safely tackle, and which should be handled like the pros, like a potentially load-bearing wall, asbestos or lead paint.

6. ASK FOR REFERENCES

Any good contractor will have no problem providing references, and copies of liability insurance before a job begins. Don't rely solely on client testimonials, search out actual customers that can give you a firsthand account and answer any questions you may have. For any project, ask to see before and after images of a contractor's prior work, and most importantly—trust your gut and know which questions to ask.

7. PACK UP

To make any house remodel as simple as possible, declutter, pack up or move any items in the renovation zone. For a whole-home remodel, consider renting an offsite locker or onsite storage pod to keep all your belongings secure and clean during the process.

8. CONSIDER YOUR ROUTINE

If you're an experienced DIYer, you are likely good at working around the disruptions of a house remodel. However, if you've hired a contractor for any part of the job, be sure to be clear about your daily routine, and work with the contractor to come up with start and end times that cause the least disruption in your family's day. After all, no one wants to encounter tradespeople while you're still in your bathrobe.

9. ESTABLISH MISSION CONTROL

There's nothing more frustrating than being in the middle of a job when you can't find the tool you need. Before you begin your remodel, reserve an area of your home to act as mission control to keep all your tools, materials, manuals and checklists in one place.

10. PROTECT THE KIDS

A house remodel is a perfect way to get the kids involved in DIY, but for very little ones it can be dangerous too. Be sure to install child safety gates, electrical safety covers and store sharp tools well out of the way of curious tots, especially on off-hours where there may not be adequate supervision in the remodel zone.

11. DON'T FORGET THE PETS

The temporary chaos of a home under renovation can be stressful at the best of times for the human occupants of the house, let alone the four-legged family members. When doing a house remodel, consider the safety and care of your pets, which could mean having a family member or friend pet-sit while the bulk of the work is getting done. This is especially true when the doors will often be open to bring tools and materials in and out.

12. PLAN FOR OUTAGES

If your home is lacking plumbing shut-off valves in the area you are working on, you may have to shut the water off at the main valve, leaving your home without access to running water. Plan ahead and

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place containers of water in the fridge for drinking, on the counter for cooking and have buckets of water available to flush the toilet. An easy way to do this is to fill the bathtub with water and place a bucket nearby to pour into the toilet bowl.

13. MAKE A MASTER LIST

To have the best chance of success, and to help in the budgeting process, make a master checklist of items you need, from administrative tasks like permits, right down to rollers for the paint. It's helpful to separate the list by items you have, and items you need to purchase. In the case of tools, making a list can help you decide which tools you can rent to save on costs versus purchasing new.

14. CREATE DRAWINGS

You don't have to be an engineer to create job drawings, and chances are you'll require some form of drawing to obtain a permit for your house remodel. Be sure to note square footage, heights and widths of doors and windows, and current locations for any services like electrical, gas or water.

15. OBTAIN PERMITS

Many homeowners consider obtaining a building permit as an unnecessary headache which can slow down the renovation process, but permits are a necessary part of the process in most cases, which can come back to haunt you if not obtained in the first place. Building permits are necessary to ensure your house remodel meets structural and fire safety requirements and code inspectors in most jurisdictions can make you rip out non-conforming work if not up to snuff. This can create a very expensive headache when looking to sell your home down the road. It's always advisable to think ahead and ensure the permit process is followed.

16. PLAN A RENO-FREE ZONE

Before starting all the mess of a remodel, it's a good plan to designate a renovation-free zone for your family to gather in semi-relaxation. Make sure you have everything you need in one place, such as a kettle or microwave, so you have one functional space to gather, eat

or just unwind at the end of the day.

17. SCHEDULE CLEANUP

After a long day of renovating, it can be tempting to just turn the light off and leave the mess for tomorrow. Unfortunately, this can cause delays, lost tools and lost sanity along the way. Be sure to write in an ample amount of time in your renovation plan to tidy up at the end of the day. Your future self will thank you!

18. PLAN AHEAD

Even in a cosmetic remodel, there can be an opportunity to enhance the function or money-saving capability of your home. When ripping out an entire room, for instance, this may be the perfect time to add insulation to the walls, upgrade your electrical panel or add additional light or electrical fixtures. The key is to think ahead to how you will use the room and take advantage of cosmetic updates to enhance the structure of your home.

19. BOOK THE HELP

If you know a renovation is on the horizon, it's time to call in favors from those handy family and friends. Give them ample time to arrange their schedule to help and provide plenty of reminders as the project approaches. (An offer of free food also helps!) If hiring a contractor, make sure you allow enough lead time to snag your desired timeline, otherwise you could be stuck waiting on them. Consider a message center to keep everyone informed as they come and go to make life easier on everyone.

20. CHECK THE WEATHER

Even if you're planning a spring or summer remodel, don't bank on having gorgeous weather to do it. Be sure to check the long and short-term forecasts before beginning a job, and schedule jobs that require outside access, like spray painting or wood cutting on days that have the best outlook. Consider heat and cold on days you may have to cut power to your furnace or air conditioner for comfortable working conditions and be sure to stay alert to unexpected changes in the weather.

Next CPR/First Aid Classes in English & Spanish



English: Saturday, March 3, 2018 @ 6:30 am
Spanish: Saturday, April 7, 2018 @ 7:00 am
Call Local 200 to add your name on the list.

OSHA 30 English & Spanish

We have openings for OSHA 30 class in English & Spanish. The class is 4 consecutive Saturdays. Spanish classes start Saturday, March 10, 2018 @ 6:30 am. Spanish Classes will take place at the Plaster Tenders Local 1414 office: 1055 W 2nd St. Pomona, CA 91766. English classes start Saturday, April 7, 2018 @ 6:30 am. English classes take place at Local 200. To get on the list call the union at (800) 559-2701

Tenemos aperturas para la clase OSHA 30 en ingles e español. La clase sera 4 sábados consecutivos. La clase en español comienza el sábado, 10 de marzo de 2018 a las 6:30 am. Las clases en español se llevaran a cabo en la oficina Local 1414 de Plaster Tenders: 1055 W 2nd St. Pomona, CA 91766. La clase en ingles comienza el sábado, 7 de Abril de 2018 a las 6:30 am. Las clases en ingles se llevaran a cabo en la oficina Local 200. Para ingresar a la lista, llame al sindicato al (800) 559-2701.

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