

Timeshare Consumers Alliance

Resource guide to your timeshare options



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1-14

1.HOW DID I GET HERE?
2.NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF
3.PRESSURE AND THE GIFT
4.A LIMITED TIME TO BACK OUT
5.ARE THEY STILL SELLING THESE THINGS?
6.MEXICO TIMESHARES
7.HOW THEY REALLY MAKE MONEY
8.DREADED MAINTENANCE FEES
9.WHY CAN'T I SELL MY TIMESHARE?
- 10.....MY LIABILITY
- 11.....THE BEST AND SOMETIMES ONLY WAY
- 12.....HOW DO I KNOW WHO TO TRUST?
- 13.....WAS I LIED TO?
- 14.....GET OUT LEGALLY, SAFELY AND PERMANENTLY

1. INTRODUCTION - HOW DID I GET HERE?

Consumers all over the country are dismayed with their timeshare ownership. If, for whatever reason, you have found yourself wanting out of your timeshare, this report can serve as a resource for you. Use this to make the most informed decision for you and your family. Additionally, it will help you avoid pitfalls along the way. You will learn what not to do, should you choose to attempt to exit your timeshare.

When you purchased your timeshare you may have been led to believe that you could travel the world. Perhaps you were told that it would save you money and yet others were told that because it was Real

Estate, it would be a good financial investment. Inevitably you probably found that this to not be the case.

"Despite the fact that sales tactics used against consumer can be unscrupulous and unethical, a signed timeshare contract is a legally binding as a mortgage."

You may already be aware that most timeshares turn out involving more than just yourself. Your family will likely have to bear some of the burden of your timeshare obligations. More on that later.

Let's be honest, the idea of a timeshare sounds exciting when it is first pitched to you. Usually timeshares are purchased while you are on vacation. It is for this reason that the sales approach is so effective. You and the family are in a vacation mindset. Think about it, would you have

purchased your timeshare if you were home at the time that the opportunity was presented to you? Probably not.

In this resource guide, we will touch on the psychological aspects of timeshare sales. You will discover how timeshare sales teams are highly trained to target your emotions. Furthermore you will learn why so many people return home feeling that they've been coerced into a long-term contract.

Despite the fact that sales tactics used against consumers can be unscrupulous and unethical, a signed timeshare contract is as legally binding as a mortgage. This can create frustration for the consumer and a feeling of being trapped. Imagine owning something you no longer want. You can't throw it away, you can't give it away, and if you sell it you still have liability (see section 9).

2. NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF

Feeling bad about your purchase? You are not alone. According to a Redweek article, Dr. Amy Gregory, assistant professor at the University of Florida has been studying the impact of buyer remorse and rescissions. She discovered that many timeshare buyers regret their decision. “*A whopping 85 percent of all buyers regret their purchase.*” (Jeff Weir, 2017) In fact, over 15% of all timeshare buyers reportedly try to cancel within their legal recession period. The timeshare developers have people who answer the phone that are trained to “save the deal.” These “phone warriors” are good at what they do.

Bottom line, you should not beat yourself up. Most of the time, the consumer has no idea of how carefully plotted and choreographed their timeshare sales experience will be. It is important to understand that while most sales professionals go through sales training, the timeshare industry is on another level. Few consumers are aware of just how effective these highly trained sales people can be. It is not uncommon for these pitch people to go through hours of ongoing training every week. All of this, in order to lock consumers into binding contracts. Their tactics are well choreographed. Everything that happens while you are on the tour is planned right down to the music that is playing in the back ground.

Clients often tell us that they are ashamed for having fallen for the tactics used by these sales teams. This is nothing to be ashamed of. Many otherwise intelligent people are not immune to the strategies employed by these companies. As one of our Senior Analysts (with helpmeexit.com) once said “*Some of the smartest people I have ever met are our clients.*” Let's face it, those sales people are very persuasive. The combination of their deceptive skills, coupled with the vacation mindset we get in, creates an environment ripe for bad decisions.

Interestingly enough, a new phenomenon has surfaced. Ex-timeshare sales people often report that they they had no idea that they were misleading their clients. They attended their companies training program and repeated what they were told. We have met some remorseful timeshare sales people that had no idea that they were lying to people. This makes them very effective sales people because they believe what they are saying. Sadly though, most sales people are very aware of their misrepresentations.

3. PRESSURE AND YOUR GIFT

It all starts with a gift. You were likely on vacation and were offered a “valuable gift in exchange for 60 to 90 minutes of your time.” Gifts offered can be free rounds of golf, free vacations, show tickets and other vacation activities. Some companies have foregone these gifts are offering all out cash in the form of prepaid credit cards ranging from \$200 to \$400.

Regardless of what gift is offered, the developer, by law, must give it to you whether you buy or not. This means if you leave, they haven't only lost a sale but they have incurred an expense without earning a commission. This gift, however is only one of many expenses incurred by the timeshare company in order to get you to attend. They have to pay the marketing people that got you to attend plus the rent at the booths from airports and other high traffic areas. Marketing agents have Managers directors and human resources. These expenses add up to a staggering amount. Former timeshare executives report that the cost to put a couple in front of a sales person is sometimes between \$600 - \$1500. Considering that many timeshare companies generally close less than 1 out of 10 clients they see, the true marketing costs can be between \$6000-\$15,000 for a single timeshare sale.

Now that you have your gift you attend the sales presentation. Although you may have expected some pressure upon attending, you probably had no idea of the focused presentation that you were about to endure. The scripted, practiced and rehearsed training that timeshare sales people go through is meant to be draining on the prospective client. Sales people are under a tremendous amount of pressure. They make next to nothing in compensation unless they get you to buy and buy today. So they often transfer that pressure on to the consumer.

The pressure to make a sale is immense. When they have a bad day they lose tens of thousands of dollars in marketing expenses. The next day (after losing money) the sales leadership teams are often threatened with losing their jobs. Sales Managers and Sales VP's feel the heat and in-turn put pressure on the sales people to make a sale. The whole environment is designed to get the sales person to “do whatever it takes.” Sales Management personnel are regularly quoted as instructing sales people to “Do what you have to do and say what you have to say.”

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The stakes are high. Is it really any surprise that timeshare reputations are what they are? This is not only true for privately help timeshare companies. Unfortunately, some highly respected domestic hotel chains and resorts have become infamous for their methods and many have earned prolific complaints, online reviews and media coverage. Some of them, the most trusted hotel names in America.

4. A LIMITED TIME TO BACK OUT

Many of our clients have explained that they left the timeshare presentation feeling tired and confused. Most of them indicated that they tried to decline the offer multiple times, but that each objection was met with resistance and counter responses from the timeshare sales professionals.

While advertised as a short 60 or 90-minute presentation about a vacation resort opportunity, most timeshare presentations are extended if the sales team is not successful in reaching their quota of contracts.

After four or even five hours, you'll just about sign anything to get out of that room, right?



And that is exactly how a percentage of timeshare owners remember their contract experience. If you purchased a timeshare and regret it, remember that most states allow for a certain period of time to back out of any contract. That period can be as little as a few days where any consumer can negate the contract, making it null and void. However, after that period expires, the contract is valid, and the options to cancel the timeshare contract are few. Many timeshare owners report that calling even hours after

“Even though your legal rescission period has lapsed, there is still a chance to get out of your timeshare.”

their recession period ended yielded no results. While some companies are gracious when you cancel your contract within your legal rescission period, others can be downright rude. As one client told us, “We tried to call and cancel our timeshare. The person on the phone asked us if we knew what UFO stood for? We were confused and later figured it out.”

It is not our intention to paint all timeshare companies in the same light. It is important to understand that the actions of the few may not necessarily reflect the entire industry. Having said that, a quick review of owner message boards will usually reveal the attitude and culture that is pervasive with each company.

Based on feedback that we get from timeshare owners, many of these companies are getting desperate. And the treatment of their owners leaves much to be desired.

There is possibly some good news: Even though your legal rescission period has lapsed, there is still a chance to get out of your timeshare. This all depends on several factors. For example, from which developer did you purchase? What product did you purchase? Did you experience any fraud during your ownership? (see section 13, Was I lied to?). There are many factors that must be evaluated in order to know for sure. As you continue through this resource guide, you may begin to realize that you could qualify for a 100% exit.

5. ARE THEY STILL SELLING THESE THINGS?

In 2012, the “*Economic impact of the timeshare industry on the U.S. Economy*” report was rereleased by Ernst and Young. The industry was responsible for \$23.9 billion dollars of economic output, 493,000 jobs and \$7.7 billion dollars of tax revenue. We have often referred to the timeshare business practice versus consumer as an unfair fight, with only one winner. These are among the most persuasive sales teams in the world. They know what they are doing or, they are generally not retained by the industry.

Since most people are aware that timeshares are essentially worthless, the sales people have gone to new, creative and probably illegal extremes. They are pitching their worthless Real Estate as a profit making venture. Some will tell you that it is an investment that you can rent out and make money with. Some flat out say that their timeshare is different and the demand is so high that you will make money by holding for a few years and selling.

They will tell you that if you sign up for their special credit card, it will offset your maintenance fees thereby allowing you to vacation for free.

Yes, they are still selling timeshare and selling it well, perhaps though, not legally or ethically.

6. MEXICO TIMESHARES

In 2010's however, the Mexican Ministry of Economy established regulations that would better govern the conduct of timeshare companies in the country, call the “*Norma Oficial Mexicana.*” Outlined in the new standards were laws to protect tourists and consumers from predatory timeshare sales practices, forming the “*Mexican Resort Development Association.*” A positive step forward for a country which experienced a high volume of complaints from tourists.

We are hopeful that this will be good first step. Mexican timeshare companies have had a bad reputation and are some of the hardest contracts to exit from. Something needs to be done because the contracts are usually as binding as anything written in the U.S.

“Since most people are aware that timeshares are essentially worthless, the sales people have gone to new, creative and probably illegal extremes.”

Regardless of where you purchased your timeshare, the odds are that they are headquartered somewhere in the United States. This is good and bad for the consumer. You may want to get advice from a professional Senior Analysts to discover if your ownership qualifies for a 100% exit.

7. THE REAL WEALTH - HOW THEY REALLY MAKE MONEY

When timeshare began it was pretty easy to understand the business model. They made money by selling the consumer a timeshare. SIMPLE. Today, however, it is much more complicated. Remember the gifts that we talked about? When you buy a timeshare you are not just paying for that one gift that you received. You are paying for the gifts of all the other people that attended the sales pitch and did NOT buy. You also paid for all of those people that work for the developer that trick you into attending the sales pitch. Many of them working at airports, malls, and attractions. These teams incur thousands of dollars in additional expense. Add commissions, administrative, Management and Human Resources expenses and you build up an extremely high sales and marketing cost. Former timeshare executives reveal to us that the amount of money made by selling the timeshare is minimal at best. The aforementioned expenses eat up the vast majority of the amount of money you gave them.

8. SO HOW DO THEY MAKE MOST OF THEIR MONEY?

DREADED MAINTANANCE FEES

If you requested this package, the chances are that you are disturbed by the amount that you pay in maintenance fees. While timeshare is the ultimate impulse purchase, the maintenance fees stay forever. When you do the math, you will find that many developers are raising maintenance fees at an alarming rate. The typical timeshare pitch goes something like this: *“Buy a small piece of Real Estate and vacation for wholesale the rest of your life. You and your family are only responsible for the wholesale operating cost. You know, just enough to turn the lights on and have maid come clean up.”* Sounds reasonable, after all you can't vacation for free. When the sales people describe maintenance fees as a minimal charge, they are being disingenuous. Are maintenance fees really minimal? Just enough to meet the wholesale costs of turning on the lights and having the maid come clean up? Is that really the case?

Seriously, how much should maintenance really cost?

We're not arguing that regular maintenance needs to be done on a property. We get it. However, when we step into our common sense corner, we start to ask better questions about our timeshare. Does anyone really believe that it costs \$1000 or more for the maid to clean the unit and buy some electricity? Oh sure, there are more expenses but should it really cost that much? Of course not. Clearly, maintenance fees are being used for much more than just upkeep on the property. Some properties report that actual wholesale operating costs for a week at a resort is around \$275.00 for the week. So if the developer is charging each owner \$1100.00 for maintenance, that leaves \$825.00 (for what?). Simple math in this example may go something like this:

$\$825 \text{ (profit)} \times 52 \text{ weeks available for sale in the unit} = \$42,900$. Now multiply this by the amount of rooms at the hotel (for example say 240 units) $\$42,900 \times 240 = \$10,296,000$.

THAT IS OVER \$10,000,000! And don't get us started about the nasty extra assessment fees. They're worse because they seem to be catch-all costs thrown at you, the owner, and you have no choice but to pay them.

In your initial meeting, you were probably told about maintenance fees, right? The average across the country is \$980 per year. As the years go by you eventually discover that the fees go up every year, often much faster than the normal inflation rate. The latest numbers we have say the increase averages around 4% - 8% a year. So in hard numbers, (using the lowest projection) your original \$980 fee could be \$1,451 by year ten—a total increase of 48%! There are some timeshare owners that have maintenance fees as high as \$12,000 per year.



Maintenance fees must be paid every year whether you use the property or not. They are non-negotiable. Read your contract carefully to see what is actually disclosed about your maintenance fees.

And here's a sad, yet interesting fact: *Sometimes* the maintenance fees are subsidized by the developer during the sales process. But when the initial push for sales is over, the fees are left for the Homeowners Association (HOA) which in turn rises dramatically and without warning.

The profit made off of these maintenance fees is the main profit center for many timeshare developers. While at a presentation, clients are experiencing that the timeshare sales person will start lowering the price at any sign of resistance. Ask yourself, why would a company offer something for \$70,000 and then drop the price in half? These days timeshare sales people will follow you back to your room or even the parking lot with yet another price drop. On your way out you may get an offer for as little as \$3000. Why? Because they do not care how much they make off of you initially, Once they have you contractually obligated to their program they have you legally bound to them for annual maintenance fees. And boy, do they have you!

“Does anyone really believe that it costs \$1,000 or more for the maid to clean the unit and buy some electricity?”

I WILL SHOW THEM - What Happens If I Stop Paying For My Timeshare?

These fees make up a real debt that you owe. Since this is a major profit center for the timeshare developers, they will not be happy to let you out of your legal obligation to them. Timeshare companies will do everything in their power to collect. They'll make phone calls and send letters, then they'll assign it over to a collections company. They will do almost anything to get those fees out of you!

When you still refuse to pay they will do everything in their legal power to get their money. This includes but is not limited to taking legal action, getting judgements, liens and wage garnishment.

Like it or not, maintenance fees are a personal responsibility. Oh, by the way, while you are not paying those fees, they will take the week from you and rent it out. Do they share that money with you? No! They have, in effect, double dipped. Charging you the annual maintenance fee and then charging someone else to rent your time.

Can you imagine if you didn't pay the HOA on your home and they kicked you out and rented your home out to the public? That is what they have effectually done.



9. IS THERE ANY WAY OUT?

CAN I SELL IT?

You may already be aware that the secondary market is full of timeshares. People letting them go for a dollar only to find that nobody will even take it for free. Can you name any other product in the United States that is purchased for tens of thousands of dollars while (at the same exact time) is for sale, basically free, online? But do people even buy them for a dollar? Of course not. Nobody wants to buy a bill. Some try donating it to charity only to find that charities do not want the burden either. There are some timeshares that can be sold but they are very rare. If you would like to find out if your timeshare is one of them, feel free to call us (or email at info@helpmeexit.com) and we will have a Senior Analysts look up your timeshare.

The average person selling their timeshare is not always aware that their timeshare is worthless. They fall prey to people soliciting them to sell it. So very few timeshares can be sold and these “resale” companies know it. Customers come in our office after paying up-front fees to a resale company. These companies are essentially charging you a listing fee. Some of them elude (or all out state) that they have a buyer for your timeshare. They will claim that you can get thousand of dollars for your timeshare. When being pitched by these resellers, it is good to ask yourself, why would a resale company call you if they had a buyer? Wouldn't it make more sense to buy one of the thousands for sale for a dollar and then resell it? Of course it would. They are simply charging up-front fees knowing that the odds of selling are dismal at best.

“Can you name any other product in the United States that is purchased for tens of thousands of dollars while (at the same exact time) is for sale, basically free, online?”

By now, you have probably begun to realize that the only way to get rid of your timeshare maintenance fees and the other special assessment fees is to [get rid of your timeshare altogether](#). As long as you own the property, there is really no way to end the yearly onslaught on your bank account.

10. CAN YOU BE HELD LIABLE WHEN YOU RESELL YOUR TIMESHARE?

Occasionally you may find someone who is not in the ‘know.’ Maybe someone at work or an acquaintance. You tell them about your timeshare and they agree to purchase it. What are your liabilities? Let's face it, timeshare (in most cases) is still Real Estate. The same laws that protect the consumer against a developer still apply to us when we sell our timeshare. The only difference is the developer usually has a well prepared legal team to fight the accusations of Real Estate fraud. Our office has seen an increase in consumers coming in wanting to hire our attorneys to go after the individual who sold them their timeshare.

The complaints are the same as previously discussed. This creates an especially ugly scenario as timeshares sold individually (although very rare) are done so without a licensed Real Estate agent. This usually means a lack of full disclosure and other claims of fraud. This is not a course that we would recommend for anyone.

11. THE BEST AND SOMETIMES ONLY WAY

Ask yourself this, if your timeshare company has you contractually obligated to give them tens of thousands of dollars over the coming years, why would they ever let you out? Generally speaking, they won't.

In order to take back your timeshare and sell it, they have to get ten or more people to come in and listen to their pitch all in hopes that one of them buys. Remember those marketing costs that we discussed earlier? By taking back a timeshare (fraudulently sold) they will have to pay thousands of dollars in order to get another buyer. Simply put, they have a big incentive to say no to taking back your timeshare.

What about advocacy groups? In the past, well intentioned advocacy groups would provide a letter writing service that asked the timeshare developer to let you out of your contract. This tactic used to work. These days, developers have become wise to this and with rare exception let people out of their obligation.

The best and sometimes only way is to hire a specialist attorney. Your circumstances may not require an attorney. In order to find out you may choose to consult with a Senior Analysts at 619-997-1857 or email us at info@helpmeexit.com

“The best and sometimes only way is to hire a specialist attorney.”

When using an attorney, you will want to make sure that he or she is a specialist. Going to a generic attorney is like going to a foot doctor for an eye problem. You simply wouldn't do it. There are, in-fact five keys to choosing a professional timeshare relief service. In section 12 you will discover them.

12. HOW DO I KNOW WHO TO TRUST 5 KEYS TO CHOOSING A PROFESSIONAL TIMESHARE RELIEF SERVICE

Today there are several companies that offer to help you out of your timeshare. The following 5 criteria will serve you well in choosing the right service for you.

1. **Choose a local company.** Today there are many out of state companies that fly sales people into town. They rarely stay longer than a week and are gone before you know it. In some cases these are legitimate companies. The challenge, however, is when you are calling for updates. You can sometimes become out of sight and out of mind. REMEMBER, THIS IS A PROCESS. You will have to be in regular communication with your relief team as it can sometimes take a few months to complete the process. Do not let anyone tell you differently. It will take time. For this reason IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO DEAL WITH A COMPANY THAT IS LOCAL. After all, you know where to find them and you want to be able to walk into their office at any time. THIS IS THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA.
2. **Choose a company that can offer you legal representation.** There is a huge difference in having your own legal representation as opposed to using a company that has attorneys. Know and understand the difference that it means to you.
3. **Be careful of companies that advertise on TV or radio.** Many of these ads have aggravated the timeshare companies. They have poked the bear to a point that the timeshare developers are fighting back. We have heard reports from some ex-timeshare executives that they are drawing a line in the sand and will not allow these clients out. They are willing to litigate and run the expenses up in order to discourage these companies from slandering them over the airwaves.
4. **Only use a company that offers an iron clad money back guarantee IN WRITING.** Everyone offers some type of guarantee. Read them carefully. You want more than your money back, you want to be assured that the timeshare is gone from your life forever.
5. **Get whatever awards are available.** In some cases you may be eligible for awards. Some of the best services in the industry have secured benefits from alternative travel options to some, most, or all of your money back. While these benefits can never be guaranteed, they are possible. Deal with a company that at least gives you a chance.



We highly recommend that all five of these criteria are met before entering into an agreement to terminate your timeshare contract. A qualified Senior Analysts can let you know if getting out is even an option. Of course the best option come when fraud has occurred. Did you experience fraud during the purchase (or upgrade) of your timeshare? The next section can help answer that question for you.

13. WAS I LIED TO? TOP 22 LIES TOLD IN ORDER TO SELL A TIMESHARE

Fraud and misrepresentation can sometimes help us to get you out of your timeshare. Here are the most common lies told in order to persuade you to purchase your timeshare.

1. A timeshare is a good investment
2. Your timeshare will increase in value.
3. You can easily sell your timeshare if you don't want it anymore.
4. You can rent your timeshare out to cover your maintenance fees.
5. Buying a timeshare is cheaper than paying for future vacations.
6. The resort will rent out your timeshare for you and pay you a profit.
7. Your maintenance fees won't increase, or they won't go up very much.
8. You can get our credit card that will offset your maintenance fees.
9. The sales presentation will only last 60 to 90 minutes.
10. The resort will buy back your timeshare if you no longer want it.
11. You can trade-in your old timeshare or travel club.
12. You can easily make a reservation and stay wherever you want.
13. You can easily travel the world through an exchange network.
14. You need to attend an "owner update meeting" that turns out to be another sales pitch.
15. Your timeshare is a tax write-off.
16. You will be able to refinance your purchase later at a lower rate.
17. The model you were shown is exactly like what you are purchasing.
18. We do not rent these units to non-owners or members of the public.
19. Your family members can use your timeshare for free.
20. Today is the only day you can get that price.
21. You are purchasing special inventory that came back through bankruptcy.
22. If you have a financial hardship we will let you out.

If you were told any of these things, and they proved to be untrue, you may wish to contact us and share your story. In doing so, we can see if your situation qualifies you for a 100% exit of your timeshare.



14. HOW TO GET OUT LEGALLY, SAFELY AND PERMANENTLY

Nobody can absolutely know if they can get you out of a your timeshare until they have done a complete review of your situation. A qualified Senior Analysts will be able to provide you with this information. The important thing is to know ahead of time if you can achieve freedom from your timeshare legally, safely and permanently. In some cases you only get one shot at this so it is important to do it right.

At www.helpmeexit.com all Senior Analysts are certified. No upfront fees are taken until a fully written and endorsed certificate of guarantee is issued to the consumer. Learn more about the difference with us that creates the raving fan client base that we enjoy. THERE IS NEVER ANY PRESSURE and you can come into our office to a friendly and professional environment. Should you prefer to schedule a phone consult, that can be arranged easily and effortlessly.

GET YOUR NO COST CONSULTATION NOW!

CALL NOW AT 1-619-997-1857

Or email us at

info@helpmeexit.com

