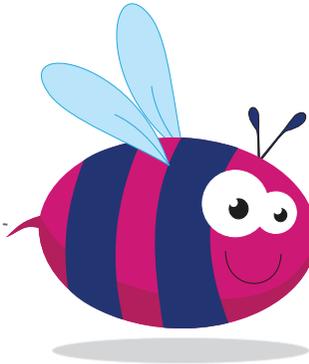


# BH BUZZ



The inside scoop at Better Homes

Spot all the candy canes to win 2 Gold Class<sup>★</sup> movie tickets, turn to page 17 for more info!



**Adopt-a-Kitty!** Turn to page 15 if you can help us find a home for Kohl!



## Hello from our CEO

Hi Better Homes!

2011 was a good year overall with both positives and negatives - let's start with the negative: there are less tenant leads; prices and rental

rates are also still low; and, there is less stock available in the market. However, we've had more than twice the number of sales compared to those in 2010; and our growing number of sales leads is proof that customer confidence in the UAE Property Market is on the rise. Best of all, we no longer get a look of shock and pity when we tell people that we're in the real estate business. 😊 This growing market confidence has helped us achieve a number of goals throughout the year; some of which are:

- opened 3 kiosk outlets at The Meadows, Arabian Ranches & DIFC;

- sold twice as many properties as in 2010;
- rented 1000s of apartments and villas;
- are managing over 500 new units;
- created and managed close to 100,000 leads;
- and, welcomed over 137 new staff to the BH Team.

Thanks to our support divisions that work behind the scenes, we've made numerous improvements to the efficiency of the BH machine by restructuring, tweaking and optimizing the many processes that enable Better Homes to thrive as a business.

The world outside of BH continues to be unstable and unpredictable: Europe's financial crisis and the reverberations from the Arab Spring still resonate across the Middle East, so it's not all plain sailing. With this instability in mind, more than ever, we need be a unified team formed of only the very best if we are to retain our hold as the market leaders, poised to grow larger and stronger in 2012 and the years that follow.

Every person in this team is as important as the next because the work we produce involves a contribution from a combination of all our divisions.

In 2012 we intend to continue expanding, albeit in a measured way: we will launch the long awaited JLT office, open two new kiosk outlets, and launch a number of interesting initiatives that we've been working on this year - all in an effort to continue our reach for excellence in the experience we give our customers.

Thank you to all of you who have contributed to the quality of service and success of Better Homes 2011 - I wish you a safe and happy New Year, and a successful start to 2012.

*Ryan Mahoney*

# Awards & Competitions

## Quarterly Award Winners

### Quarter 1

*Top Consultant - Residential Sales*



Hannah Bakshani

*Top Consultant - Commercial Sales*



Violet Nasouti

*Top Consultant - Commercial Leasing*



Tessa Lowe

*Top Consultant - Residential Leasing*



Nitin Dania

*Top Consultant - Abu Dhabi Team*



Mohammed Ellam

*Top Branch Manager*



Annetta Shaw

PIP



JBR Branch

### Quarter 2

*Top Consultant - Residential Sales*



Eduarda Silveira

*Top Consultant - Residential Leasing*



Tarek Gouda

*Top Consultant - Commercial Sales*



Eduarda Silveira

*Top Consultant - Commercial Leasing*



Andrew Elliot

*Top Property Manager*



Zubin Firozi

*Top Branch Manager*



Manuela Reis

PIP and Top Branch



Marina Branch

### Quarter 3

*Top Consultant - Residential Sales*



Tom Bunker

*Top Consultant - Better Commercial*



Anuradha Janjua

*Top Branch*



JBR

*Top Property Manager*



Parag Parekh

*Top Branch Manager*



Annetta Shaw

PIP



Marina Branch



Ryan

## News from Residential Sales & Leasing

**Ryan Mahoney** – who also manages the Residential Division, shares his division's update with us:

These divisions had quite different experiences this year.

**LEASING** saw a reduction in stock and the stabilization of prices, which led to less and less tenant enquiries as fewer people wanted to move house, so the bonanza of 2009 and 2010 where everyone moved to far lower rents, is clearly over. There have been fewer leasing transactions across Dubai resulting in another tough year for the leasing market. The market status will remain challenging until rental rates start to rise once again, it may take all of 2012 before we see any significant change to the state of the rates. The way forward for leasing is a three-step strategy:

1. *We need to drive even harder to get more listings as it is essential we have more listings than any other agency in the market.*
2. *We need to run regular promotions of any distinctive properties listed on our books in order to generate the maximum number of possible leads out of each listing.*
3. *We must strive to generate more income out of every lease transaction by charging landlords whenever we go beyond our scope of services with additional work.*

Unlike the slow number of leasing leads, the **SALES** market has seen its number of buyer leads grow month-on-month with both October and November showing a higher number of leads for both buyers and sellers compared with any other month this year. Customers in the market appear to be comfortable with the level of sale prices and, increasingly confident in the UAE's property market as a whole, which is promising for not only sales, but leasing, property management and the country as a whole. This positive note is indeed a different end to that of 2010; and, if this trend continues, then the Residential Sales Division can look forward to a decent 2012.

So, Residential Consultants, do your best to ensure you deliver the best possible experience to your customers - for every single one of your leads!

## News from HR & Operations

**Partho Bhattacharya**, Director - Human Resources & Operations:



Partho

Hi Better Homes, updates from HR are as follows:

- 30 new staff were recruited for a variety of BH Divisions, for this quarter alone.
- We recently revised the Consultant Tier Structure so we'll be sharing the updates with you in the New Year

- Our staff appraisal was conducted in Quarter 2 of this year & salaries were revised for all 'salaried' staff, reflected in the July 2011 payroll.

Please would ALL BH staff submit their **IBAN** (new bank account no.) by the 10th January 2012 – at the latest!

send the number to [brendon.g@bhomes.com](mailto:brendon.g@bhomes.com)

What is IBAN? Click this box!



# News from Office Management

Muneer Kutty, Assistant Manager of Office Management:



Muneer

## What news from Quarter 4?

We had a very hectic Q4 after a terrible fire line leak here at the Nashwan Office, back in September. The entire office was flooded in a matter of minutes so we scrambled to try and contain the water in order to prevent damage to the Masterkey and Customer Care servers. It was an enormous and almost impossible task to get the office operational by the next work day which was essential for both the servers. Without the help of my team and the IT Team working through the night, we wouldn't have made it. We had the damages successfully claimed through our Landlord's insurers - and today, the office looks even better.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their outstanding dedication, professionalism and support.

## CLEAN UP CREW



### BH OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Allfie Perez, Supervisor, Office Management  
Libya George, Supervisor, Production & Procurements



### MASTERKEY

Mir Hussain



### SERVER RECOVERY

Khalid Saeed, Manager, BH ICT Infrastructure



### FINAL SETUP

Khalid Saeed, Manager BH ICT Infrastructure  
Alistair D'Souza, Senior System Administrator  
Mark Palilo, IT Support Assistant

## Any new upcoming projects you'd like to tell us about?

Though we spoke about starting the new JLT Branch fit-out in the last edition of The Buzz, the project was further delayed due to some complications in the approval process. We are happy to announce that we have successfully obtained all the Municipal fit-out approvals and the construction fit out has begun..

In addition, we're in the planning stages of a major renovation of our City Tower Branch and are aiming to have the office ready as soon as we can.



# News from Better Commercial



## Porush Jhunjunwala - Head of Better Commercial:



Porush

### How did you do on your targets for Q2?

We transacted a million square feet in commercial by the end of Q3 which is phenomenal. We have seen an increase of 30% on our top line compared to the same period last year.

We received an overwhelming response at Cityscape this year. Our objective was to establish Better Commercial as the largest, full-service commercial property division in the region which I believe was successful. We also made a number of strong contacts at the Exhibition.

### Any new upcoming projects you'd like to tell us about?

We have few upcoming projects in Barsha (Dubai) and in Sharjah.

### Any new staff you'd like to welcome?

Pawan Tolani joined us as an Asset Associate to assist Better Commercial with asset sales.



Pawan

# News from Marketing

## James Gauduchon, Head of Corporate Marketing:



James

2011 has been a busy year with quite a few internal and external changes and projects: from upgrading our Team to re-launching our website, introducing and promoting retail kiosk outlets in Dubai, revamping tools and marketing devices and shifting our marketing budgets into channels that generate more leads. We're now in a position to support all business units with more effective marketing to drive our brand forward.

We're driving weekend promotions in Residential Sales and Leasing divisions which is something that Better Homes will be focusing on more in 2012. The idea is that almost every weekend, we advertise a special offer that puts us at a competitive advantage from other agencies in the market. The promotions range from discounted leasing offers in popular areas, to unbeatable property offerings within the residential sales market. We've monitored the performance of recent promotions and found that they're the most effective marketing strategy for us in terms of achieving objectives - more leads for our consultants.

We've implemented a platform for home-related companies to advertise within the Better Homes network, separate from the Preferred Partners process. We went 'live' with this in July and are working on building up a network of advertisers that can promote their services to our customers via bhomes.com and via an email marketing platform. We're partnering with companies that form a relevant fit to our target audience - such as HSBC offering mortgage services to Better Homes' customers, or home insurance providers, and so on. The objective is to add value to customers and position Better Homes with global brands to enhance our overall credibility.

We're looking at further extending our network of kiosk outlets in 2012 and have our eyes on some popular locations that will assist in providing more extensive on-the-ground services and a stronger presence in important areas to help us generate more leads and build market share.



# News from Property Management & Short-Term Rentals

**Kosta Giannopoulos, Head of PMGT & STR:**



Hi BH Buzz !

I've heard that 'if you don't have the speed wobbles you are not moving fast enough' and we certainly moved fast through November 😊 We've listed a number of buildings and have more in the pipeline. That, in addition to many of our Team being on leave, has put us under pressure to achieve our targets; with the exception of a few hiccups along the way we've handled it well and our goals have been achieved.

## PMGT STAFF

- I'm pleased to report that **Isabel Guerra** has been promoted to **Business Development Executive**;

- And that **Reshma Shaikh** has moved into the role of **Property Supervisor** and is exceeding our expectations - and, has already gained the trust of her landlords.

- We've hired a new administrator, 2 property supervisors - **Gary Pinto** and **Faiza Naureen** - with two more to come. We also expect to hire a Business Development Manager and Legal Supervisor soon.

- **Ibrahim Shaikh**, has been promoted to our Team and we're very happy to see him moving up through the ranks as a result of his hard work!



I'd like to formally thank ALL of the BH PMGT & STR Team for their continual effort to improve and acknowledge their professionalism while they deal with and navigate through the endless daily challenges that arise in this business.

## PMGT MARKETING

We've implemented a new marketing plan which has already resulted in consistent material such as flyers and brochures.

## PMGT LEASING

The change in policy means that 'the taboo' has been lifted from property supervisors leasing managed units. In addition, we have leveled the field by making it standard policy to pay the same amount to leasing consultants



that they would get if they lease any unit that they did not list, which enables us to tweak the incentives when we require more or less assistance. For example, we recently offered 75% commission (the other 25% going to the residential business unit) to consultants that lease in Building F2.

## SHORT-TERM RENTALS

**Parag Parekh**, and his Team have achieved great things these past few months, exceeding previous sales records 3 months in a row - and are running at an almost 100% occupancy rate which means that the landlords are getting an extremely good return on their properties. The support of our 'new' recruit, the great **Sabah Gazi** has been very valuable. We've also had a push to upgrade all short-term units to address the wear and tear over the last few years.



## PMGT & STR PROFIT

We had our most profitable month of the year in October.

## OTHER...

A recent anonymous staff survey we carried out showed some interesting results:

- 100% of the respondents are extremely or very proud of the Better Homes brand;
- 95% of respondents believe their work is extremely or very meaningful;
- 85% of respondents believe the service we offer is extremely or very valuable to landlords;
- 80% of respondents are extremely or moderately satisfied with their work;
- 84% of respondents like their employer a great deal or moderate amount;
- 70% of respondents believe their work helps them grow professionally;
- 65% of respondents do not believe that poor performance is tolerated.

Bring on 2012!



Jalpa

## News from Ejari

Jalpa Ashar, Ejari and Compliance Officer-PMGT:

### What is Ejari?

Ejari is the online system used to register tenancy contracts with RERA. As per law 26 of 2007 all tenancy contracts must be registered with RERA (both residential and commercial).

### Who needs to know about it?

We have a newly-appointed Web Team dedicated to the support of Better Everyone who is related to the leasing division - landlords, tenants, property supervisors, managers and leasing consultants. Leasing consultants should explain the importance of registration to their landlords and tenants because without it tenants cannot sponsor maids or family members and the rent committee will not hear any case relating to the unit.

### What is your role in Better Homes with regard to Ejari?

As the Ejari and Compliance Officer, I represent Better Homes at RERA and the Dubai Land Department; I co-ordinate the registration of all tenancy contracts from our Property Management Division here at Head Office. We have now extended this service to landlords of non-managed units from the Leasing Department as well, where in, we can conduct the registration process on behalf of the landlord, at an additional service cost.

### What is the latest news on Ejari that would affect our staff?

The Government is now making Ejari Registration compulsory by linking it to various other government authorities such as Immigration, DEWA, and so on. We've had cases where tenants were unable to sponsor a maid, issue a family visa or even connect their DEWA without an Ejari registered contract.

Most recently, Nakheel has made it a must to register all tenancy contracts within The Palm Jumeirah, for tenants to gain beach access (although they did have to go back on that decision due to the backlash from owners and tenants, but that is a whole other issue).

### Is there anything you would like our staff to do to help make your job flow smoother?

FOR THE PMGT TEAM - please ensure you are providing me with the completed Ejari Form, on time each week, before the cut-off every Thursday @ 05.00pm.

FOR THE LEASING TEAM - the most important requirement for Ejari Registration is for the property to have a Title Deed; so before you collect payments for the Ejari service, please ensure the property has a Title Deed. If they don't, we also offer this as a service but need to know in advance.

### Additionally I would also like to pass on the following message to the Leasing Division:

- I'm happy to receive leads from the leasing department, so that I can communicate directly with the landlords and explain the importance of the Ejari registration - and the outcome of non-registration.
- Our service is beneficial to our overseas landlords who do not have the time to travel to Dubai to attend an Ejari training course at RERA.
- For landlords who have multiple units, we can offer a discounted rate.

If anyone wants more info on RERA's Ejari, you can reach her here [jalpa.ashar@bhomes.com](mailto:jalpa.ashar@bhomes.com) / 04 3819396.

## Independent Finance

Sam Wani, General Manager:



Sam

### What key events of August to December would you like to share with BH?

Since the Summer, when we re-started Independent Finance, our objectives for Q2-Q3 of 2011 were to rebuild our team and to re-establish our relationship with Better Homes consultants. We made much headway in meeting both objectives are now well placed to build on this in 2012.

### Have you had any staff changes?

We have 3 new consultants and an Operations Manager; we expect to add more staff in the first half of 2012.

### Do you have any requests from the BH Team?

We have succeeded in getting two mortgage products which are exclusive to Independent Finance. One is 85% loan-to-value at an interest rate of 5.25% and the other is a 75% LTV product at a rate 4.75% fixed for four years. These products cater to clients with limited down-payments as well as those who want a low-risk low-rate mortgage. Please communicate these to your clients. As our pipeline with the lenders grows we will come out with more customer-friendly mortgage products exclusively available through IFL.

If anyone wants more info on mortgages, you can reach Sam and the Independent Finance Team here [samwani@independentuae.com](mailto:samwani@independentuae.com) or 04 3819314 / 050 702 2116

# What's New In...

## Customer Care - Floyd Pinto



Floyd

### How has this last quarter been for you?

The start of Q4 was quite busy in terms of call volume but we have started to see a drop which generally occurs during the end of the year. Our latest project task of feedback calls has been doing pretty well and we've been able to generate substantial feedback from clients. We have also been part of the process of monitoring maximum lead capacity per consultant and ensuring those that cross 150 are not getting any call center leads. I think along with the consultants it has been a great initiative with a lot of them keeping a tab on this.

### What about the remainder of this quarter?

December is beginning to mellow down in terms of call volumes, but the outbound calls have increased which has maintained our momentum on the feedback process.

The month's celebration spirit has definitely started as we have 5 of our staff members have December birthdays:

- Roan Flores, Head Office Receptionist
- Bulanchery Perpetual, Customer Care Executive
- Michael Viaña, Customer Care Executive
- Arpita Dasgupta, Team Leader
- and myself



### What are your plans for next year?

For the first quarter of 2012 we'll be looking at not-contacted and redirections. Currently this is at about 6% so we'll be looking to gradually get this figure down to below 1%.



## Preferred Partners - this issue, our Head of Marketing, James Gauduchon, wears a second hat and shares news on the division::



James

Preferred Partners has been consistently offering value added products and services to Better Homes' customers for almost three years now. Prior to Preferred Partners, 'Better Plus' offered a similar service, but both Preferred Partners and Better Plus initiatives haven't quite extended into the mass market where products and services can be exposed to customers that fall outside of the Better Homes network - benefits to date have only been offered to customers already working with Better Homes.

The objectives of Preferred Partners have changed over time, alongside fluctuations within the real estate market, and now, we see a demand for a link from Better Homes to quality and well-priced products and services of larger brands. We predominantly work with smaller, independent product and service providers and retailers but in order to provide compelling offers, discounts and highlight great products and services, we need to start working with major retailers - this is something we're looking into for 2012. However, we'll still be working with our best performing partners such as GCEN and a handful of furniture companies, so keep those referrals coming in - it is an easy way to earn extra money!

## Data Management - Smitha Sanil

### How did you do on your targets for Q3?

We've been flexible with any and all PIP requests that have come through and made sure we met their deadlines.

### What were your targets for Q4?

In the leasing module we do PIPs only for units whose yearly rent is AED125,000 and above. The earlier cut-off was AED 150,000, but now we have further reduced it to AED 125,000 - which enables us to accommodate a higher number of units with better quality images. We want to receive PIP requests for ALL BH-listed units and to maintain the quality of listings on MK.

### Any new upcoming projects you'd like to tell us about?

We're coming up with a signage competition for tenants/sellers who allow us to install the For Sale signboards on their properties which we believe will give us a platform to increase our number of signboards out in the market.



Smitha

# News from Franchising



## Hello from Oman

Glen Meek, General Manager



Glen

### How has business been this last quarter?

Q3 was our best quarter yet as a result of our exclusive agreement on a 254 apartment block of off-plan launch called Rimal; we achieved an amazing 80% sell out within 8 weeks - also, the best off-plan launch result in Muscat since 2007; in addition, we received a mountain of PR features and interviews which really put us on the map here in Muscat.

### How did you do on your targets for Q3?

We blew them away, which was a great result for the whole company and helped us pull back what we had lost in the earlier quarters.

### What are your targets for Q4?

With Rimal now a distant success we are back to reality with only the local market showing interest in sales. We are, however, hoping to have a strong period on the rental side as there appear to be a higher number of clients looking this year. By January 2012 we should take delivery of our new wrapped cars, which will further improve Better Homes' brand visibility in the eyes of Muscat residents; we've also recently arranged for 10 very large building signs to be erected on a number of large, prominent buildings around town - the first one went up 2 weeks ago and is generating active interest with regard to leads.

On the 13th to 15th December we're also exhibiting at the Home Show in Muscat so 'watch this space' in the next Buzz. It is always a good sign when your business needs to recruit additional staff, and this is exactly what we've planned for December. Any takers from the Dubai Team? Sorry Ryan! 🙄

Good luck to us all in Q4! 😊



## Hello from India

Ajay Tiwari, Business Head



Ajay

Hi Better Homes Dubai!

BH India has started a new division for home loans and are now DSA for most of the leading financial institutions such as Axis Bank, HDFC, DHFL, Standard Chartered and Deutsche Bank; so, our clients will now have access to property and home loan searches all under one

roof. In addition, we will have team of 7 consultants with home loan expertise working with us in this area.

In Quarter 2 of this year, we focused more on PSM projects, starting with 6 projects from the Mumbai suburbs and Navi Mumbai which we promoted at the MCHI Exhibition - the largest and the most sought-after event for property buyers.

We had an overwhelming response from the Exhibition which generated a number of lucrative deals.

Corporate Marketing for our retail business will be the focus for our next quarter. We're aiming for exclusive rates, group offers and home loan services from the developers, in order to further improve our customer service.

We welcome Mr Dip Bhatt who will be running this new division; he brings over 11 years of experience in real estate financial products and life insurance sales and have no doubt he will be an asset to the BH India Team. Mr Bhatt has also worked with a number of reputable financial institutions and insurance companies in Mumbai, where he won accolades for his performance.



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com

©2011 Scott Adams, Inc., Dist. by Universal Uclick

# Thank You Letters



Natalya

October 2011  
Greetings  
Natalya has been showing us houses for rent over the past 2 weeks and I wanted to share that she's been so dedicated and has worked with immense passion. She knew what we wanted and was able to show us exactly what fit our requirements - she deserves to be commended for her professionalism.

Thank you,  
Lara Hussein, Chief of Child Protection-  
UNICEF Gulf Area Office

*Congrats to Natalya Sapronova, Residential Sales & Leasing  
Consultant, BH AUD*



Nicole

October 2011  
Dear Chris,  
A few words about Nicole Burt - an excellent agent. Her honesty inspires instant trust, something extremely important in business. She is positive, even amidst obstacles, and provides simple, logical solutions making no problem too big to solve. In addition, Nicole is efficient and practical - with a sense of humour to keep it all in balance. Her professionalism means no deal is too small for her; she treated me as if I was buying a ten million dirham home. I'm grateful to have had her as my agent.

Sincerely

Ana Bengolea, Execuet Aviation Group

*Well done to Nicole Burt, Senior Sales & Leasing Consultant, GC Branch*



Veerta

November 2011  
Dear Paul,  
I'm a recent customer of what I think is one of the best real estate companies here in Dubai - Better Homes. I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to let you know your team member, Veerta Laul, has done a remarkable job for us (me, my wife and my mother). We haven't dealt many real estate agents but of the ones we have, we can definitely say that Veerta's skills are far and above anyone we've dealt with. She has exceeded our expectations, delivered what she promised, and more importantly, on time, and with great smile and kind words. It's rare to find people so dedicated in their job that they exemplify the qualities as a way of life - she continues to do this even after completing the transaction which was unexpected. We appreciate the superb quality of service she's given us and hope she continues with it for all our future transactions which I'll definitely look forward to. I couldn't have asked for a better real estate agent. We wish your company continued success. I'm sure you'll do well with Veerta as one of your employees.

Sincerely,  
Dervin Correa

*Well done to Veerta Laul, Residential Leasing Consultant, Barsha Office*



Sooraj

December 2011  
Dear Sooraj,  
Thanks so much for being such a great landlord, wonderful property agent and management company; and it has been a real pleasure to have rented from both of you these past three years. We were very happy with everything associated with our rental and we would enthusiastically recommend Better Homes... to everyone. The building was well-maintained and in a great location; the minor problems we had were addressed the same day they were reported, and in some cases were fixed before we had even called. Again, thank you for being a delightful ... property management [company, and] for all that you have done for us; we hope you know that we truly appreciate it.

Regards,  
Bashir Aghbash

*Congrats to Sooraj Nair, Property Supervisor, Business Point-PMGT*

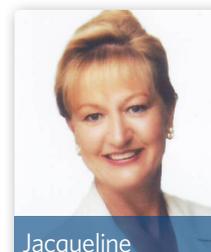


Kosta

December 2011  
Dear Kosta,  
When we moved to Dubai we spoke to several agents but then we found Better Homes! From the beginning, they were professional, courteous, supportive and most of all friendly. They worked tirelessly to help us to find an ideal short-term rental while we took time to find our ideal long-term home. The process of working with Better Homes couldn't have been easier and we were delighted with the way they dealt with us in moving in and out of the short-term rental property and also in the assistance they gave us when looking for our long-term rental villa. Their sales, support and administrative staff were shining examples of efficiency in all aspects of our engagement. They definitely don't adhere to the stereotypical image of real estate agents. I would highly recommend Better Homes to anyone!

Richard Marsden

*Well done to Better Homes STR Team*



Jacqueline

October 2011  
Thank you Jackie for your efforts and excellent customer service (I mean that); I will convey my appreciation to your boss when I get the chance.

Regards,  
Nadeem Malik

*Congrats to Jacqueline Hunter-Holt,  
Residential Leasing Consultant, GC Branch*

# Double Feature: A Day in the Life

Meet **Mark Palillo**, IT Support - Assistant, who shares his typical day with us:



Mark

**What time does your day begin and how?**

I'm up at around 6am, then I go straight to the shower, dress up, eat breakfast and after that we get in the car to go to work.

**How do you get to work & how long does it take you?**

I go with my sister when going to work and it takes half an hour to reach the office.

**What's normally your first job of the day at the office?**

As I usually arrive early in the office I read online news and latest gadget trends. My work day starts at 8.00am, if there are minor user problems in the morning before my boss arrives; I initiate to help my workmates. Sometimes I also visit the storeroom to check if everything is in place and organize.

**What part of your day do you enjoy the most/dislike the most?**

Each day for me is a learning experience so most of the time if my boss asked me to attend to my colleagues' computer problem and was able to fix the problem it's a rewarding feeling. I also enjoyed going to different offices wherein I am able to meet and interact with different team.

**Do you work to a regular daily schedule each day or is each day different?**

Each day is different as there are times that we are busy but there are also times that we are relaxed.

**What time does your workday end?**

My workday ends usually at 5.00pm but before leaving the office I chat and joke around with my workmates.

**What do you do for fun at the end of a day (jogging... movie...video games...family...)?**

During weekdays when I reach home eat dinner and enjoy it with family or if I had a heavy lunch I skip dinner to lose weight, after dinner I spend time with my family and wife. If it's not too late, my wife and I watch our favorite TV series (Big Bang Theory and Dexter) online until we feel sleepy. On weekends, my wife and I with my sister-in-law enjoy spending time at the mall and cinema. I also enjoy playing PS3 and PS3 move with my family and relatives for bonding moments.

Meet **Maricris Perreras**, Receptionist at BH Abu Dhabi, who shares her typical day with us:



Maricris

**What time does your day begin and how?**

6:30am when I have my first cup of coffee then go straight to bus station and head to work.

**What work-task do you start with?**

I reach the office at 8:15am when I check the office premises to be sure everything's in order. At 8:30 I open the switch board, then my MKey Account, and clear all my emails.

**What part of your day do you enjoy the most/dislike the most?**

I enjoy the whole day with all of the staff in the office; though we're each busy in our own worlds, we always find time to greet, chat and exchange how our days have been.

**Do you work to a regular daily schedule each day or is each day different?**

Every day is different for me; sometimes all the consultants need contracts or keys right at the same time, which gets a little crazy; and usually when I have the highest volume of incoming calls. When the switchboard is quiet, I call clients to follow up on renewals



**What time does your workday end?**

5:30pm everyday.

**What do you do for fun at the end of a day?**

After office I straightly head for home, cook dinner for my roommates and I (if it's my schedule). On weekends, I always call my daughter for 1 hour and bond with my friends in the mall or park after.



# My Other Life

The Buzz asked **Ryan D'Sa**, Data Management Administrator, to tell us about his life 'outside of Better Homes':



## Are you married to your work or do you have a life outside of the office?

I have a great level of commitment to my work but I need extracurricular activities to achieve balance. Acting has been my passion for many years and I am grateful that I can devote my free time to it.

## How did you get involved in acting?

I decided to get back into acting once I graduated from college. I signed up for the professional drama course in Dubai

Community Theatre and Arts Centre which culminated in my first on stage performance as an adult actor in the Desert Monologues (June 2009) at Kilachand Theatre, Mall of the Emirates.

## How do you fit it into your schedule?

The acting course took place over 9 weeks on weekends and the occasional short film is executed over a grueling and animated weekend as well. Theatre rehearsals are also scheduled mostly on weekends when the entire cast and crew is free as most of the people involved are working professionals with a fervor for the art.

## Do you also like to write, direct, produce or prefer to act?

Acting has always been my first love. Writing would be the next. I took on the Dubomedly 'Page to Stage' scriptwriting course last year to enhance my writing skills and even performed a dramatic reading of my selected works in Nov 2010 as part of the Dubomedly Internal Performing Arts Festival. I try my best to pen down ideas as soon as I visualize a scene and/or lines of dialogue.

## How do you see this as a part of your future?

I would love to direct one day. With this in mind, I'm currently working on developing the 'Eye of the Director' or in other words, the ability to perform one scenario in a dozen different ways.

## What project are you working on now?

The last project I participated in was the 48 Hour Film Festival. Our team was one of the 40 groups to participate in the event, to write, shoot and submit a film within 48 hours given the provided elements by the contest organizers. I also have regular readings for a Hindi situational comedy currently in the pipeline; and, lastly, I'm an understudy for a farcical comedy by Michael Frayn that we hope to get out there sometime next year.

If anyone wants more info on theatre and/or acting in Dubai, you can reach Ryan here [ryan.dsa@bhomes.com](mailto:ryan.dsa@bhomes.com) / 050 881 6395

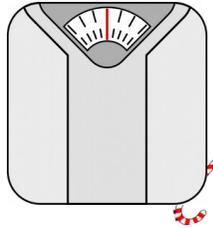


# Health & Fitness

## Weight tips

**1. Choose water:** replace fizzy drinks and packaged juices with water as they contain high amounts of sugar which process quickly to fat in the body.

**2. Take the stairs:** where possible 60 seconds walking up &/ or down the stairs instead of taking the lift will burn calories and engage your muscles.



**3. Don't watch & munch:** eating while watching TV makes us tune out from our satiety cues, so we can double our calorie intake - particularly in the evening when our metabolism is at its lowest.

## Health tips



**1. Eat more seeds:** all seeds are rich in minerals & other nutrients; pumpkin, sesame & sunflower seeds are also high in protein, making them a useful addition to salads & cereal.

**2. Buy brown:** brown rice, pasta and bread are all healthier than their white cousins; white rice, pasta and bread have been stripped of their fibre & nutrients and slow down metabolism which can lead to faster weight gain.

**3. Choose dark chocolate:** it's high in cocoa solids which contain anti-oxidants which are beneficial to our health, particularly in anti-ageing and our cardiovascular systems.



## Stress tip

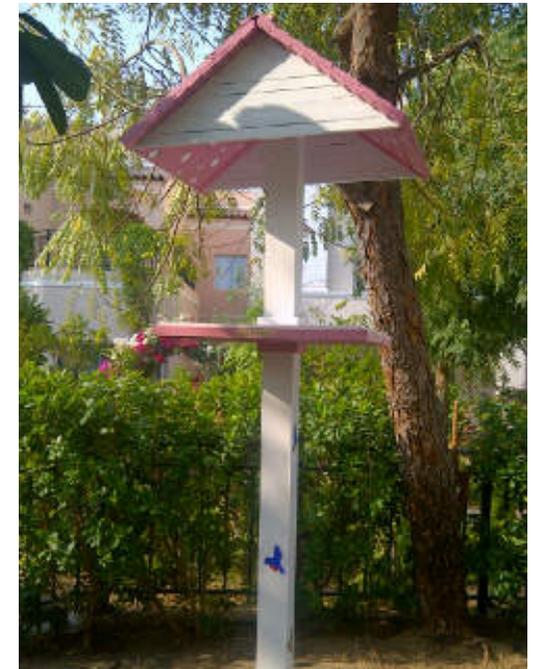


Finding a hobby you enjoy outside of the office is a great way to reduce office-related stress. In this issue of The Buzz, we hear from **Tom Bunker, Investment Sales Consultant** at our Head Office who shares what works for him:

People deal with stress in many ways; some through sport, quality time with their families, while others beat their heads against the wall. I prefer to work with my hands so a while ago when I heard my Aunt complain about not being able to find a suitable bird feeder for her garden I put pencil to paper and came up with a design for a multi-bird feeder and the project took on a life of its own. So, 3 weeks and half a rain forest later, I had created my 1st prototype, learning as I built, and with the exception of a few flaws, my first bird feeder was huge success.

Here's my latest version, bird feeder #3, that I made for a friend of mine as a Christmas gift. As such, her feeder is customized to her princess-personality - complete with polka dots. Hopefully, it will be as well received by her birds and her birds' friends. I find myself looking forward to working on these after work; and, surprisingly, the process of creating these is a huge stress release as I get to lose myself in this wood-working-world for a few hours when I don't have to think about anything else.

If anyone would like more info on Tom's bird feeders, you can reach him here [thomas.bunker@bhomes.com](mailto:thomas.bunker@bhomes.com) / 050 3797538



# Paparazzi!



Alistair D'Souza, Senior System Administrator, shared pictures from a trip to Thailand and the Brazilian Amazon, where he took his wife for their 1st wedding anniversary



Sujith Kumar K.V, BH Driver, marries his beautiful bride, Shammi

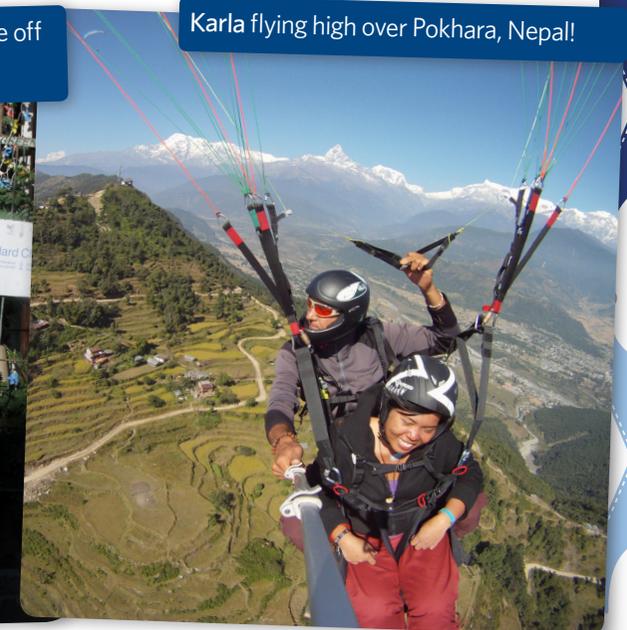


# Paparazzi!



Our Chairman, Linda Mahoney, and her nephew, Tom Bunker, participate in the CBI Golf Tournament organized by Duplay's, held at the Creek Golf Course

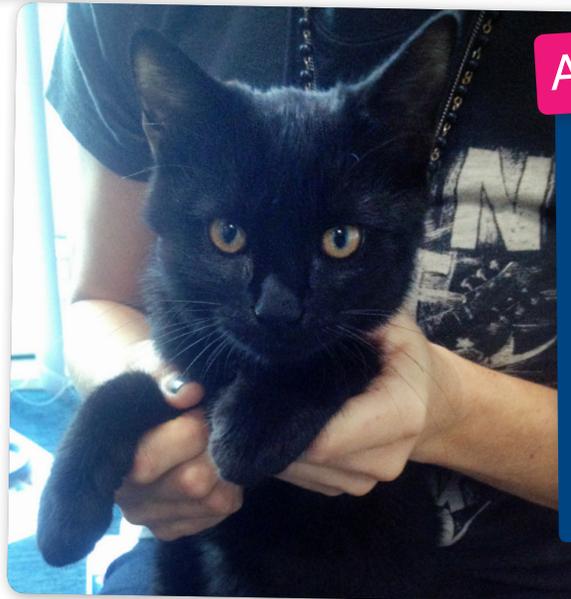
Kanchana & Karla from Marketing took time off during Eid to explore Nepal



Karla flying high over Pokhara, Nepal!



The JLT office celebrates Christmas!



## Adopt-a-Kitty!

We're looking for a home for 'Kohl', who's a pure-bred 'Oriental' 3 month-old, male we found here at The Village Mall yesterday.

Call Kilby on 050 5533182

[we're only accepting long-term commitments]

# Paparazzi!



The DM & CRM Teams shared this photo of their Xmas Party 'merry-making' at Safa Park

## CONGRATULATIONS

to Brendon Gonslaves, Senior Executive- Compensation & Benefits, HR who celebrates his 1st wedding anniversary with his beautiful bride on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2012.



The Barsha Branch Ladies and their Fearless Leader, Paul Musson!



Kiran Varma, Administrator, DIFC Outlet shared this photo of a Bhomes Friends & Family Day at Zabeel Park

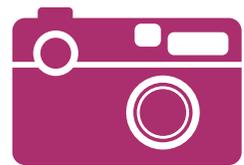
The Beautiful Dubai Marina Branch Ladies!



Want your voice in the media on the UAE or Regional Property Market?



Then, get in touch with:  
**Claudine Crasto**, Marketing Coordinator  
Media Department - BH Marketing  
[media@bhomes.com](mailto:media@bhomes.com) or 04 3819399



## PHOTOSHOOTS

Consultants! look forward to higher market visibility through your interactive profile page due to be launched on [bhomes.com](http://bhomes.com) in January 2012!

So if you haven't had your profile photo taken yet, then look out for the next BH PHOTO DAY!

It's time for another BH Photo Day on 19<sup>th</sup> December

... starting at 8.30am here at Head Office. We have a handful of names that came through as independent requests so the list is filled with people who haven't seen us and would like to have their photos taken. If you know anyone who fits this criteria, please contact:

Marketing Coordinator,  
bhomes.com  
04 381 9399

Photos taken for use on our website, and for other marketing purposes. If you've organized your own photo and business card, you're welcome to use them for your own marketing print.

When photos have been taken, we'll be set for your final photo and business card (and business card).



0971 600 52 2212

[bbuzz@bhomes.com](mailto:bbuzz@bhomes.com)

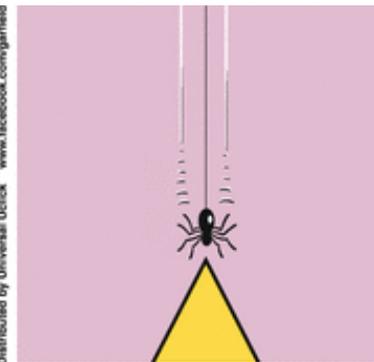
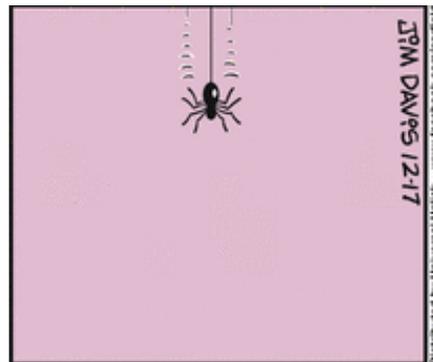


## How many candy canes are hidden in this Buzz?



Email your answer to [bbuzz@bhomes.com](mailto:bbuzz@bhomes.com) for the chance win 2 Gold Class movie tickets by the 3<sup>rd</sup> January

(first email with the correct answer wins!)





# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, Better Homes!



Carol, Beth, Kanchana and Karla creating their masterpiece at Head Office

## Origin of the Christmas Tree

First documented uses of a decorated Christmas tree were in 15th Century Estonia. In addition to the trees, communities set up the Christmas triangle, a triangular construction of wood, with shelves to hold Christmas figurines, decorated with fir sprigs, candles, and a star. Around the same time in Germany, churches often featured a fir tree symbolizing the Bible's Paradise Tree, decorated with apples to represent The Garden of Eden (these apples were later symbolized with shiny red balls); and wafers to symbolize 'The Host' that later became various shaped cookies, sweets, apples, nuts, dates and paper flowers that later became ornaments; and finally with candles that symbolized Christ. By 16th Century Germany, the Christmas pyramid and paradise tree had merged, becoming the modern day Christmas tree which only spread to the Americas in the 18th Century.

