

“My goal is to sell a house but not waste a lot of time!”



The common Real Estate mantra is “Location, location and location”. Well that is Sooo 20th Century dude, What’s on for the next one? How about “traffic, traffic and more traffic”.

What’s a real estate agent to do in these days of soft markets and recessions? Some will mine their roladexes feverishly, others will network like midnight cowboys and still others will invest in innovation. But what is innovative about selling houses? The present equation is simple: list a house, advertise the house, hold an open-house, show a house and then entertain offers. Well anything that increases traffic, either to the listed house or to a specific agent will lead to more equations. More equations means more sales, more sales leads to satisfaction.

With every single real estate agent trying harder just what can be done to break the mould and generate “Traffic”? Dave Chomitz thinks he might have one of the answers - Innovation and Technology.

Working in the local Real Estate Industry since 1999 Dave Chomitz has always looked at the professional activities with a different slant. Even after articling in Cobourg and gaining his license he moved around a great deal - four Companies in the first two years. Setting up as an independent broker instead of joining an established real estate company reinforced his independent streak. Taking it one step further he used his Cobourg office as a jumping off point for regular scouting trips into Toronto. “I’d get off the 401 at Harwood Rd. In Ajax and hit all the real estate offices I could find. Walk in and hand over my card and ask them if they had any people who would like to relocate to Cobourg, contact me. I gave away, hats, keychains, you name it - I gave it away, to anybody who would talk to me.” The hustle paid off but he had a problem - traffic but little buying inventory. He had proved his point, traffic could be created.

With approximately 120 registered Agents in the Lakeshore area to be really successful a local agent has to do something differently from the others. Dave Chomitz had a successful career in Construction (cabinet making and renovation) prior to real estate, so he had a bigger outlook on the world to draw on when he sat down and worked out his real estate career path. He focused about ten years ago on the Internet. With the wane of the “Information Highway” early hopes, he investigated the growing and early stage of “search engines”. Before the emergence of Google dominance, according to Wikipedia, there were sixteen known search engines before Google coming on stream in 1998. That’s the time that Dave Chomitz decided that in order to have an internet presence he needed to be ranked number one in internet searches. “Because the internet experts of the day didn’t understand sales / copywriting I had to do it myself” Dave told Business Times recently.

But trying to practise marketing on the internet when there was no proven model meant that Dave had to find a method that worked. So teaching himself all he could about "Metatags", "Keywords" and "linkages" he built into the structure of his web pages all the meta-tags, keywords and linking all his pages to other pages he managed to find the mix that enabled him to get his pages in the top rankings of most of the search engines of the time. In the process of the internet work he had started with a webpage called "MovingToCobourg.com". Using this site as a model he developed a network of 180 sites for other communities, all designed to develop leads. "My ambition, at the time was to design websites that could be leased to agents in other in other markets who might want a local site." Dave related. "The concept never took off and I was left with a network of sites that consistently ranked higher than all of the other real estate sites in Canada." During the fourth year of working he had his own leased bandwidth and a hosting network. All of his websites were optimized to the max using all the search engine techniques and he had learned his lessons well. His pages were being read and hits were going up and leads were coming in.

Realising that the idea of leased websites was not as profitable as imagined he looked in another direction. Pushing this redirection was the trend of his sites after a while - tracking the hits on his sites he noticed they were going up however leads and contacts were going down. He decided to go back a bit and developed a network of local Cobourg sites each designed to display different categories of real estate. Using his optimization techniques he worked on the network of CobourgCondos.com, CobourgBungalows.com etc., fifteen sites in all. All were designed with one goal in mind - drive traffic to Dave Chomitz and as he says "You list with me and your property is never more than two clicks away from the Google front page!"

These niche sites worked and that practise tied in with his conclusion about the increasing hits going with reduced leads - people using the internet had changed. They were looking for something that was not on the internet. Seeing no need to talk to an agent because the information was before them they didn't. This understanding led Dave to redesign his sites make them more focused and provide the need for detailed, and necessary, information obtained only by contacting Dave. Niche sites and content that intrigued a potential customer, content that included a video of the property and the surrounding area, led to more leads. The bonus to this was that due to the specific content of his sites "The customer comes to me educated about the area and only wants see the properties they have isolated. The internet has eliminated background tours, this saves time for me and the customer,"

Since December 28th 2008 Dave Chomitz established a video web presence. "Customers can watch the videos and discover the Cobourg community, learn what the local conditions are, have questions answered and learn the local trends. Hopefully, because I video-blog once a week a relationship can be built" Dave ponders. It has worked the introduction of video immediately drove the leads upward.

The perfect combination of optimized web pages and niche marketing has led to the successful launch of a web site dedicated to Stone Houses. After a couple of conversations that came about after listing a local Stone Home Dave came to realise that both prospective and present owners of Stone Homes look at these dwellings differently from those people who want an

abode. Rather like collectors of antique cars the folks who love Stone Homes are prepared to go the extra mile to live in and own them. For example, prospective owners are looking for the right house, one that lives up to their expectations, and are prepared to seek them out and then live in them no matter where they are located. Conversely sellers of Stone Homes are willing to let their homes sit on the market for longer than normal periods of time. They know the home will sell; just a question of when. Following this line of thinking Dave has setup a website called AStoneHome.com. Truly a niche web site. To date he has listed homes on this website that are miles away from the Cobourg area and has been showing homes two hundred miles away.

So if one wants to look at the future of real estate marketing and the way innovation can work for you Dave Chomitz is a guy that should be consulted. Over ten years of experimentation, optimization and innovation has brought the real estate profession into this century and beyond. Dave as an internet pioneer is not resting on his laurels, remember he did that once and lost about three years in the internet advance some years ago. This time he is investing about one hour a day into the next phase of the internet - web 2.0. This trend is the move into "social media" - Twitter and Facebook. "2009 was a real experience, because the way the internet changed, and I was aware of those changes." Consequently the work being put into developing social-media networks, about an hour a day. "Web 2.0, because of its reliance on people, as opposed to technicalities will change the way people shop and meet"

In a final comment to "Business Times" Dave Chomitz leaves us with these thoughts, "I make money off my websites, and have always made money. Experts advise how web sites should evolve , I went the other way." Obviously an innovator.

Dave Chomitz can be found at his desk at the Royal LePage offices in the Northumberland Mall or at his office at home. But he can be tracked immediately on his Twitter account. Check out his TV site at "ChomzTV.com"