

Issue Date: December 28, 2007, Posted On: 12/28/2007

Agents, Buyers Go Digital With Real Estate Information spread via podcasts

By Karen Eubank

By Karen Eubank
Special Contributor

It seems pod people are here to stay. They are seen everywhere “plugged in” to iPods, other digital music players, cell phones, and more.

But the cyclist at White Rock Lake might not be listening to Amy Winehouse on his iPod. The woman in line at Starbucks might not be checking voice mail on her cell phone headset.

They, along with millions of other plugged-in people, may be looking for a house.

Podcasting has become the latest tool for savvy real estate agents.

A podcast is an audio program that can be downloaded from an agent’s website to a client’s media device, cell phone, or computer and accessed when convenient. It allows agents to distribute information quickly and noninvasively to a younger generation of homebuyers.

“Anyone with an iPod understands the power of getting information while traveling, exercising, or standing in line,” said Henda Salmeron, a vice president of Ellen Terry Realtors. “It’s cutting edge.”

“As younger buyers enter the marketplace, they often expect communication more quickly [through] instant messaging, blogs, and podcast,” said Stephanie Singer, senior public affairs associate on consumer trends with the National Association of Realtors.

Podcasting makes the process of buying and selling homes easier, agents said, especially when clients are busy bankers, doctors, and lawyers in their 30s.

“Audio is more adaptable,” said Ross Mason, CEO of the digital production company Motion Media Solutions. “People have down time in a car. They’ll listen to a podcast instead of the radio or go from a call on their iPhone to a podcast and then back to a call. Podcasts are another communication medium.”

And agents can use podcasting for more than just home listings.

“I’m interested in using it for real-estate related information like market updates and creating instructional pieces for sellers and buyers about different real estate topics,” Salmeron said.



Seminars to guide buyers through the more mundane aspects of home purchase, like mortgage rates and closing costs, can also be podcast.

Podcasts can also be used to provide details about new real estate projects and the value of staging your home, or to introduce someone who just relocated to an new area to local attractions, school districts, and other features.

Agents are creating podcasts featuring different aspects of a city or neighborhood and personalizing these for clients.

“I see a real benefit for relocation buyers as they can learn about many different neighborhoods via a podcast without having to research by themselves,” Salmeron said.

“It’s not expensive to implement and an agent can establish themselves as the local resource,” said Mason, whose company assists real estate agents in producing graphics, informational text, and jingles in podcasts.

“When you realize that a lot of kids in the Park Cities are getting homework instruction via podcast you understand the next generation will expect delivery of information in this manner,” he said.

But podcasting is still in its infancy; only 1 percent of agents use it, according to the 2007 member profile of the National Association of Realtors.

Todd Terry, a vice president of Ellen Terry Realtors, said staying abreast of industry trends is a necessity.

“Everyone is going to the Internet for their information,” said Terry, who plans to start podcasting in a few months. “[Podcasting] is an opportunity for me to create a niche in the marketplace, whether it is interviewing a foundation company or imparting knowledge a consumer should have prior to purchasing a home.”

But podcasts won’t sell a house; they only inform buyers of homes for sale.

“Houses have vibes,” said Scott Carlson, owner of Scott Carlson Real Estate. “You have to be inside a house to get the feel. Regardless of how a buyer gets information, it always come down to price and location.”