



# THE NEW WAY TO FIND NEW HOMES

It amazes me how quickly new marketing techniques jump out at new home builders these days. Trends are constantly changing, and the latest “in” is social media.

To those unfamiliar with the nature of this new marketing phenomenon, social media marketing uses various online tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and a number of online blogs, chatrooms and interactive websites, just to name a few.

Some argue that they’re slicing bread before selling it, while others believe it’s nothing more than fancy packaging. Regardless of opinion, it’s been popping up in a number of industries over the last few years and, finally, seems to have solidified itself as an essential tool in real estate marketing.

I had the pleasure of attending a forum recently, where I witnessed an intriguing debate involving highly respected marketing specialists on the effectiveness of social media marketing. The final consensus was — one can’t survive without the other.

Today’s new home buyers are no longer impressed with catchy slogans and sexy ads. They might look at them and smile, but with so many well-advertised projects in the GTA, it takes more than a pretty picture to get them into the sales office.

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Builders looking to sell a home are now linking their newspaper and magazine ads to their Twitter and Facebook accounts, driving purchasers to interactive websites equipped with regularly updated blogs and virtual tours. Information about the various projects and options is presented on all fronts, to a point where buyers can comfortably settle on a handful of Sales Offices to visit and know exactly what they want to see, or ask about.

The not-so-recent wave of search engine optimization is yet another

technological breakthrough that is sweeping through the building industry. Initially slow to take off (with the exception of a few notable builders), optimizing a website to allow new home buyers to quickly locate it using Google search is finally starting to settle into the top of builders’ marketing strategies. This is great news for buyers who are looking to find an array of new project openings without having to research new home search portals ahead of time. Just type in what you’re looking for and... presto.

I recently learned that there were 165,000 searches for Toronto condos in Google for the month of April. That’s just one keyword on just one (although very popular) search engine. To make matters even more interesting, I was told that 55,000 of those searches were not local, which just goes to show you how easy it is for investors overseas to research new homes in the GTA. With the popularity of online virtual tours, you can actually buy a home without having to visit a model and be content in knowing that you are getting exactly what you’re looking for.

No matter how you look at it, the end result benefits the buyer. The availability of detailed information has never been so great, and its ease of access is remarkable, even for our era.

Much like homebuilding, the sales and marketing process is ever-evolving to make the new home purchase as easy, and as hassle-free, as possible for the new home buyer. ■

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