

More Power To The Consumer

For those with real estate interests, the current downturn has underscored the importance of having as much information at your fingertips as possible. Now one site is educating in a way unlike any we've seen before.

Realty Video USA has launched VScreen.com, a new video content solution that's revolutionizing the way real estate information is distributed.

"Currently there is a huge need out there for consumer information," says Stephen Schweickart, co-founder of Realty Video USA. "We are addressing this need by taking all of the content that's currently circulating in text form and turning it into video."

The VScreen model allows brokers to host a privately branded multi-channel video player on their own Web site (pick from



more than 70 different platforms). Realty Video USA's content—15 to 20 new videos each month, with topics ranging from remodeling to finance—can be used to supplement a firm's custom videos. "We try to make the fundamental concepts of real estate topics interesting and applicable to everyone," he says.

Schweickart says consumers now prefer video to text by a margin of 6-1. "The trend that's happening toward video is staggering," he says, citing a study by Cisco Systems stating that 32 percent of all Internet activity in 2008 was video-related. "Video connects in a much more emotional and cohesive way than any other form of content consumption."

The goal is for VScreen.com to become the WebMD of real estate, but in an all-video format (the YouTube of the industry, if you will). The content is designed to appeal to a broad audience. Schweickart says to think of it as one of those shows on HGTV—except that on his site, instead of watching the Jones family decorate their living room, you'll learn about the concepts that are important in remodeling any living room, not just for living rooms that look like the Jones'.

—Mark Moffa



Stephen Schweickart

LUXURY BRIEFING

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

EXPECT FEWER REALTORS

A recent Inman News poll showed that Inman readers are almost certain the number of Realtors in America will drop by 20 percent or more by 2010. Results suggest that part-time agents are among the most at-risk, while virtual real estate companies, fee-for-service and premium full-service companies may be most likely to thrive. Nine in 10 respondents expect the number of Realtors to decline to 1 million or less by the end of 2010, which would be a 19-percent drop from the 1.24 million the National Association of Realtors estimated were active as of October.

\$80 MILLION ESTATE COULD SET HAWAII RECORD

The Kaiser Estate, a 5.5-acre property in Portlock, O'ahu, owned by multi-media mastermind Fred Chan and his wife, Annie, would set a new Hawaii record if it sells for its asking price of \$80 million. Resting gently against the slopes of Koko Head, it boasts a private boat dock; a 12,000-square-foot, three-story boathouse; a harbor; and a 15,000-square-foot main house with a diving pool. In the early 1950s, businessman Henry J. Kaiser owned it before millionaire siblings the Goldman brothers bought it and transformed the landmark estate into a sanctuary that charmed the likes of movie stars, royalty, statesmen and presidents.

PROGRAM PRESERVES PROPERTIES, HUMAN RIGHTS

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation recently announced a partnership to cooperatively market Gifts of Heritage, a charitable program that accepts donations of architecturally or historically significant homes and then sells them to preservation-minded buyers. Proceeds from any sales will benefit both organizations equally. The Gift of Heritage program allows donors who have an interest in supporting advancement of the LGBT community and historic preservation an opportunity to support both national institutions, and insures that historically or architecturally significant properties are preserved for future generations in private ownership.

—Mark Moffa