

## Building Scene

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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# Will TV ads spark sales of property?

By Gerald Frawley  
staff writer

Selling by television is nothing new — television has long since transformed from the greatest potential for learning and communication it was originally thought to be to the world's greatest marketing tool.

In America, television is "sell-vision."

Television has been used to sell everything from fast food to political candidates (OK, maybe that's not much of a contradiction) — but selling commercial, industrial and office buildings — now that's a new twist.

Keith Simmons, the producer of "Business Opportunities of the Nineties," a new show in pre-production, thinks selling commercial real estate is an idea whose time has come. "In the 21st century, you'll see a show like this in every major market."

Beginning the week of Jan. 14, Business Opportunities will begin airing on WKBD-Channel 50 Monday through Friday at 6 a.m.

Simmons said in addition to highlighting commercial real estate, the show will also promote vacant land, businesses for sale, and messages from communities trying to reach developers and builders.

"In essence, it's a video classified section," Simmons said.

WHILE NOT A REPLACEMENT for walking a site, it will help the buyer take an informed step, he said. "The program should be part of a total media mix."

When a person has something to sell, Simmons said the best way to sell it is by getting it in front of potential buyers as many times and in as many ways as possible. "Whatever else you're doing, (television) should be part of it," Simmons said.

John Serra, the host of Builder's Open House (seen Sundays on WDIV Channel Four), will host Business Opportunities.

Serra, a licensed commercial broker, said there is a communication gap between people who have property to sell and those who want to buy it. That gap, he said, is the video media.

In today's "now society," where everyone is competing to stay ahead, "the business man has more money than time," he said. A television show will permit investors to preview property over a broad geographic area in a short time.

Serra said television is ideal for selling commercial property. With it, he said, a seller can show a building's exterior and interior, its location, its special features — such as proximity to roads and other neighboring properties — price, and a contact person.

BUT MIKE VANLOKEREN, a partner with the commercial broker firm Hanzl Keptle and VanLokeren in Troy, said while television may work for residential real estate, he doubts television advertising will be helpful in selling commercial real estate.

VanLokeren said most people who are investors in commercial real estate "have better things to do than sit around watching (television)." Most investors, he said, will get in touch with an experienced broker through a banker, accountant or financial adviser.

Selling residential property is very different from selling commercial real estate, he said. "If there are 50 different homes, they're all different. If there are 50 different buildings, they're all essentially the same."

A house fulfills several functions, he added. There are the practical as-



pects — shelter — but they also fulfill ego, provide a place to raise a family, VanLokeren said.

Someone looking for commercial property wants square footage and an inexpensive lease. "It fulfills no ego," he said.

PAUL KAUFF, a broker with Crabb & Co. in Livonia, said using television to sell commercial real estate, to his knowledge, has never been

tested. "I don't even know if (using television to sell residential real estate) works."

But that doesn't mean it won't work, Kauff said, adding that he thinks the idea has possibilities.

The best marketing tool in the commercial real estate business, Kauff said, is the billboard or signs put on a parcel of property. "Most people already have an idea of

where they want to (locate)," he said. After deciding what area they like, most investors will drive through the area looking for prospects and then get the name of the sign.

But in a slow economy, a television show might increase the chances a property will be seen, Kauff said. "Anything that will help — especially now — is worth a shot."

Harold Lawson, president of the M.E. Arden Co. in Farmington Hills, said the only way to find out if television will be helpful in selling commercial property is by trying it.

"Why hasn't someone tried it? That's a good question," Lawson said. Most brokers rely on personal contacts developed by years of experience and they've had success that way.

# Craving for carport causes consternation

The condominium complex I live in has covered carport area for its residents to use. The problem is that there is not a sufficient amount of spaces for the number of residents in the complex. I have learned from other residents that a number of years ago, quite some time before I became a resident, the association had asked all residents whether they wanted a carport space. Those who said yes were assigned a space. Those who said no were not. This policy has stuck through the years despite the fact that there has been numerous resident changes since the time this policy was adopted. I have been watching certain spaces for a while now, which always seem to be unoccupied so I know there are a select few that are not being used. I would like one of these covered carport spaces but I do not know how to go about addressing the issue in the

condominium. They aren't too receptive to residents who try to bring about change. Do you have any suggestions?

Review your condominium documents to determine whether the carports have been assigned as limited common elements or otherwise. Also determine whether alternatively the association has a right to assign carport spaces or otherwise license them. Depending upon your review, preferably with the benefit of competent counsel, bring the matter to the attention of the association under the guise that the assignment of carports is discriminatory and irrational. Write the board a letter and demand that it deal with this problem in a proper fashion. If it ignores your request, you may have a basis under the condominium documents to pursue the association for redress.

Our subdivision consists of 100

condo queries

**Robert M. Meisner**

lots. Each lot is subject to various building and use restrictions that limit the use to single family residential purposes and prohibit the construction of fences higher than four feet. The Michigan Department of Transportation expropriated various lots for construction of a highway that now violates subdivision building and use restrictions on those lots condemned. Are we entitled to any compensation for violation of the deed restrictions and the resultant damages due to the proximity of our homes to the new highway?

Yes. There is, in effect, deemed a partial taking of your property for which you may be entitled to compensation similar to an out-and-out condemnation. You should be able to establish the diminution in value of your property as a result of the construction of the highway and the disturbance of your restrictions. If you cannot resolve the matter reasonably with the Department of Transportation, you should consult with an attorney who will obtain an appraisal indicating the amount of the diminution in value of your property.

You may also be entitled to recoup your legal fees.

I am buying a condominium unit. The Realtor insists that the seller have at least five days from the date of closing to vacate the premises. I do not have an attorney, but somehow I am uncomfortable with that proposition. What is your suggestion?

When I represent a purchaser of any property, I insist that the occupancy or possession of the premises be at closing. If that is not possible or feasible, I require a substantial penalty well in excess of the amount of the mortgage payments to be held in escrow by an escrow agent and collected out of the proceeds to insure that the purchaser is adequately funded in the event that he seller does not vacate the premises on the date promised. In other words, the

seller may be penalized in the amount of \$150-\$300 per day for each day he stays in the premises beyond the date when he is to vacate. That puts a great incentive on the seller to vacate on time so that it will not be necessary for the purchaser to begin eviction proceedings to obtain possession of the unit. I would seriously question the propriety of any contrary provision.

Robert M. Meisner is a Birmingham attorney specializing in condominiums, real estate and corporate law. You are invited to submit topics about condominiums that you would like to see discussed in this column by writing Robert M. Meisner at 30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 457, Birmingham 48010. This column provides general information and should not be construed as legal opinion.

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**12-5 Daily 981-6550 (Closed Thursdays)**

**SALES BY CENTURY 21, HARTFORD SOUTH, INC.**

**Use care in selecting video room installers**

Home theater and custom audio-video installations are on their way to becoming the status symbols of the 90s.

These audio-video systems, which hold a strong allure for consumers, can provide concert hall sound and theater realism to discs and movies.

But, according to the editors of Video Magazine, electronics installations of this nature involve more than just connecting wires and plugging in components.

In 1989, the custom electronics installation industry did over \$400 million in sales and services, according to industry sources. This money was spent by consumers who paid experts for their knowledge of electrical systems, audio-video components, carpentry, home design and how all these should go together.

Finding a reputable installer can be difficult and the effects of a poorly installed custom setup can

wreak havoc on an entertainment system. Improperly placed or shielded wires can cause interference and bad reception. Speakers mounted in the wrong position yield distorted sound.

The association that can direct consumers to accredited installers in their areas is the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association (CEDIA), a nationwide non-profit trade organization whose members are companies that specialize in installing electronic entertainment, automation, security and communication systems in the home.

To find a member company in your area, write to CEDIA, 10400 Roberts Road, Pales Hills, IL 60465. The telephone number is 1-800-CEDIA30.

To become a CEDIA member, a company:

- Needs to have been in business under the same name for at least two years.