

Keeping up with evolving expectations

The past few months have contained enough economic tumult to keep businesses of every stripe occupied with addressing how to cope with falling prices, cratering demand, and devaluation of assets. But any downturn, however severe, cannot go on indefinitely. And as green shoots begin to appear heralding the promise of renewed economic growth, prudent planners are once again turning their attention to the future. Even amidst disruption like that inflicted by recent economic turmoil, wise leadership has always kept market changes in mind and taken note of competitor's changing stances.

The National Association of Green Agents and Brokers has been at the forefront of educating and preparing real estate professionals to service a more self-educated and ecologically aware buying public. This non-profit organization has entered into agreements with market leading organizations such as Royal LePage, Sutton Group and Prudential Real Estate to provide special pricing to their agents and brokers nationwide. These industry leaders have taken notice of the change in consumer attitudes, along with rising awareness of environmental issues, and are proactively taking steps to educate their professionals to stay at the leading edge of the real estate business. Forming a relationship with NAGAB enables these companies to have enhanced access to the Greenrealestate™ practices that will ensure competitiveness into the future, as well as position them in an optimal context to become change agents by using their extensive market reach to educate their buyers and sellers on how they can reduce their ecological footprint.

NAGAB's efforts don't only impact residential real estate. NAGAB is currently in the final testing of its Accredited Greenagent™ Commercial Real Estate Course, which will certify real estate professionals, in classrooms and online, beginning fall 2009. The advent of this program will branch NAGAB programs into specialized areas which will empower an even broader range of professionals with skills and information particular to their real estate focus. NAGAB's Commercial Real Estate Course also marks the beginning of a relationship between NAGAB and the Canadian Green Building Council (LEED), as one of the reviewers for NAGAB's Commercial course. Familiarity with Green Building standards is fast becoming a prerequisite for the Commercial real estate professional.

Beyond the educational initiatives which make up the core of NAGAB's services, NAGAB also provides tools and support for its members which go beyond the classroom. NAGAB provides a Green realestate™ Member's Handbook which details the benefits of certification and further resources available. NAGAB also provides co-branded templates for flyers, business cards, feature sheets, and exclusive opportunities for cross-branded websites for specific properties that a Realtor or Agent might be listing. As well, NAGAB can provide back-end assistance, with turn-key website templates that simplify the process of listing properties online. All of these services comprise a straightforward way for Greenagents™ and Brokers to identify and brand themselves as ecologically conscious in their advertising and business communications. All of these resources and services are also complemented by the NAGAB website, the all-in-one information hub which provides information about how to obtain and use these resources.

As more companies and real estate boards recognize the benefits of greening their real estate practices, the value of NAGAB certification grows. It is still an accreditation which sets a real estate practitioner apart from the pack, but as the number of Greenagents™ and Brokers multiplies it increasingly identifies them with a select group of Agents and Brokers who consider education, competitiveness, and environmental awareness their top priorities. In an ever-changing market, paying attention to the competition is always wise, and the smart money is on Greenrealestate™. For more information, visit www.nagab.org.