



Case Study: Using GPS Tours in Real Estate to Enhance the Buyers' Perception of Community

GPS technology now gives agents, brokers, and developers - even individual sellers - the power to influence purchasing decisions by delivering informative messages about properties for sale while prospective buyers drive through the community.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) has made it easy for real estate professionals to pinpoint a property's latitude and longitude, which has been very useful for identifying undeveloped parcels, but new applications of GPS technology are having a greater impact in real estate sales and marketing.

New GPS-enabled, multi-media devices do more than typical navigation systems built-in to cars. These devices store information about a particular place and then replay the information when the device comes in proximity to that location, like a tour guide. But unlike their step-on, human counterpart, these dash-top devices are small enough to be suction-cupped to vehicle windshields.

Local Knowledge:

"GPS tours deliver on-the-spot information while you explore. Hear descriptions of neighborhoods, schools, churches, and other points of interest played over your compatible navigation unit."



In 2006, Garmin® International introduced the nüvi®, a car navigation device that doubles as a media player. In addition to showing your location on moving street maps and prompting you with turn-by-turn directions, the nüvi® can deliver media-rich tour guide content, playing audio narrative and showing visual images. For example, you are driving down Main Street USA and suddenly your GPS announces, "You are approaching Meadow Brook Place with patio homes from \$250K. Amenities include Olympic swimming pool and tennis courts. Children living in Meadow Brook attend Pleasantdale Elementary, Rocky Creek Middle School, and Jefferson High. You are 20 minutes from the airport, 10 minutes from the train station, and a short 5 minute walk from the coffee shop."

GPS tour guides are also available for more common handheld devices, like GPS-enabled cell phones and PDAs, which means that this technology could soon be in the hands of 100's of millions of people – a fact that has caught the attention of the travel and tour industry. Today, there are GPS-enabled, self-guided sight-seeing tours for just about every city. These tours literally drive tourists to local attractions. Now ask yourself who stands to profit from all these people being guided to selective points of interest.



What is your point of interest?

If you are a real estate professional, your points of interests are properties for sale. Developers must promote their communities while they are still under construction. Agents want to promote themselves by showcasing their listings. And individual sellers simply want to attract buyers. Everyone has a message to deliver. And everyone wants their message delivered when, and where, it has the most impact. GPS tours deliver the message when prospective buyers are in the area - even when the sales office is closed.

It's not a new idea. For years, "Talking Houses" have been providing detailed property descriptions to people driving by. Houses "talk" either by means of a low power radio transmitter located in the house, or by a special telephone extension at a central office dedicated to playing pre-recorded messages. Interested parties driving by can either tune their car's radio receiver to specified channel or call the extension on their cell phone.

But unlike other technologies, GPS tour technology is self-contained. There are no problems with radio reception or cellular coverage. The homeowner is not troubled with maintaining and providing

access to equipment. One device serves numerous locations. And GPS tours can be customized for the individual client, including narrative in their native language.

"It's the next best thing to driving around with a real estate agent."

Driven To Appreciate

The power of a GPS tour is that people do not just happen to drive by, they are driven. And they are driven to take the preferred approach, which can drastically influence a visitor's perception of the surrounding community. By glamorizing the good points and steering away from the bad, guided tours impact how prospective buyers feel about a place. GPS-guided tours can be designed to highlight community features, by focusing attention on amenities like parks and shopping, while diverting attention from community blight by routing around poorly maintained properties and areas prone to vandalism.

"The bottom line is: When people feel good about a place, they are more likely to buy-in to it."

- Douglas Adomatis
Owner MyCommunityMaps.com



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