

New toolkit to help lawyers re-establish lender connections



Lawyers need to be proactive and visible in the lending community if they want to capture a slice of the lending and refinance business. That's the key message of a new TitlePLUS toolkit designed to help lawyers develop a relationship with their local mortgage lender.

The quick and informative online guide titled *Get Legal Work From Local Lenders*, begins by posing a simple question –

When was the last time you dropped by your local lender's office and talked about the legal services you can offer? The advice: Get out there and get yourself known rather than rely on an e-mail or phone call.

The toolkit walks lawyers through eight simple steps they should undertake to effectively promote themselves to local mortgage lenders. It also provides links

to sample contact lists, introductory letters and other resources that would help lawyers better promote legal services and establish valuable contact and business leads.

The *Get Legal Work From Local Lenders* toolkit can be found on the TitlePLUS website or by going to <http://www.titleplus.ca/Lawyers/News/Default.asp>. More information is also available from Mark Farrish, TitlePLUS Director of Sales and Marketing, at 416-598-8566.

One important point the guide makes is that the TitlePLUS program is different. It is the country's only all Canadian and Bar-Related® title insurer, and works to keep local real estate lawyers across Canada involved in real estate transactions. Unlike some other title insurers and/or their affiliates, the TitlePLUS program does not operate or send work to document processing centres; instead, it encourages consumers to work with lawyers so that they can receive independent legal advice.

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TitlePLUS “work with a lawyer” message gets heard

No matter what type of real estate transaction you plan to complete, you'll benefit from working with a lawyer. This central message in a TitlePLUS consumer public awareness campaign was read and seen more than 40 million times in 2008.

Launched in 2006, the campaign comprises two key elements:

- proactive media relations campaigns centered around specific media pitches detailing how working with a lawyer assists the consumer in the transaction; and
- a series of articles (matte stories) on specific aspects of home buying, refinancing and working with a lawyer that are made available free of charge through a national distribution service to publications and websites across Canada.

In 2008, three media pitches – one on rental units, one on recreational properties, and a third on how buying and selling property has changed in the last decade – generated coverage in more than 40 newspapers, websites and broadcast outlets that reached an estimated 3.5 million consumers across Canada. The series of matte stories were seen or read about 38 million times (i.e. generated 38 million impressions) in 128 publications and online media outlets.

A principal focus of the campaign has been to drive traffic to the *Real Simple Real Estate Guide* on the TitlePLUS website, which provides information on title insurance and the importance of a real estate lawyer, as well as checklists, calculators to help consumers work through the financial aspects of the transaction, and other online tools and resources.

New TitlePLUS Facebook page

The TitlePLUS program has dipped its toes into the new media space, launching a *Home Buyers in Ontario* group on Facebook, the popular social networking site.

The group was created to provide home buyers in Ontario with tools and resources to help them make informed decisions when buying a home. Buyers are able to interact with real estate agents and lawyers, build contacts and discuss the home buying process with other buyers.

"Facebook's platform really allows us to bring all the parties together and facilitate dialogue between them," says Mahwash Khan, Training & Communication Counsel, TitlePLUS.

This is the first TitlePLUS foray into the social media realm – and is a sign of things to come. According to Khan, the response has been good. The TitlePLUS Facebook page now has just under 100 members. For lawyers and consumers alike, the new site offers many opportunities for information sharing. Home buyers are engaging with real estate agents, and lawyers are able to share best practices with each other.

Although encouraging dialogue is the site's primary objective, it also provides links to a number of informative resources such as: the *Real Simple Real Estate Guide* (a TitlePLUS website that includes tools such as mortgage calculators and numerous resources useful to home buyers); the *Locate a Lawyer* feature to help consumers connect with TitlePLUS lawyers in their area; informational videos about title insurance; and helpful articles penned by real estate practitioner, Bob Aaron.



The *Home Buyers in Ontario* Facebook group is one more step in the TitlePLUS program's plan to find new and creative ways to reach out to and engage its many stakeholders.

This new forum also allows the TitlePLUS program to advance its mandate as the only all-Canadian title insurer working to keep local real estate lawyers involved in the real estate transaction.

Check out the *Home Buyers in Ontario* group on Facebook at: <http://tinyurl.com/cnrof7>.

Together we have all the tools

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