

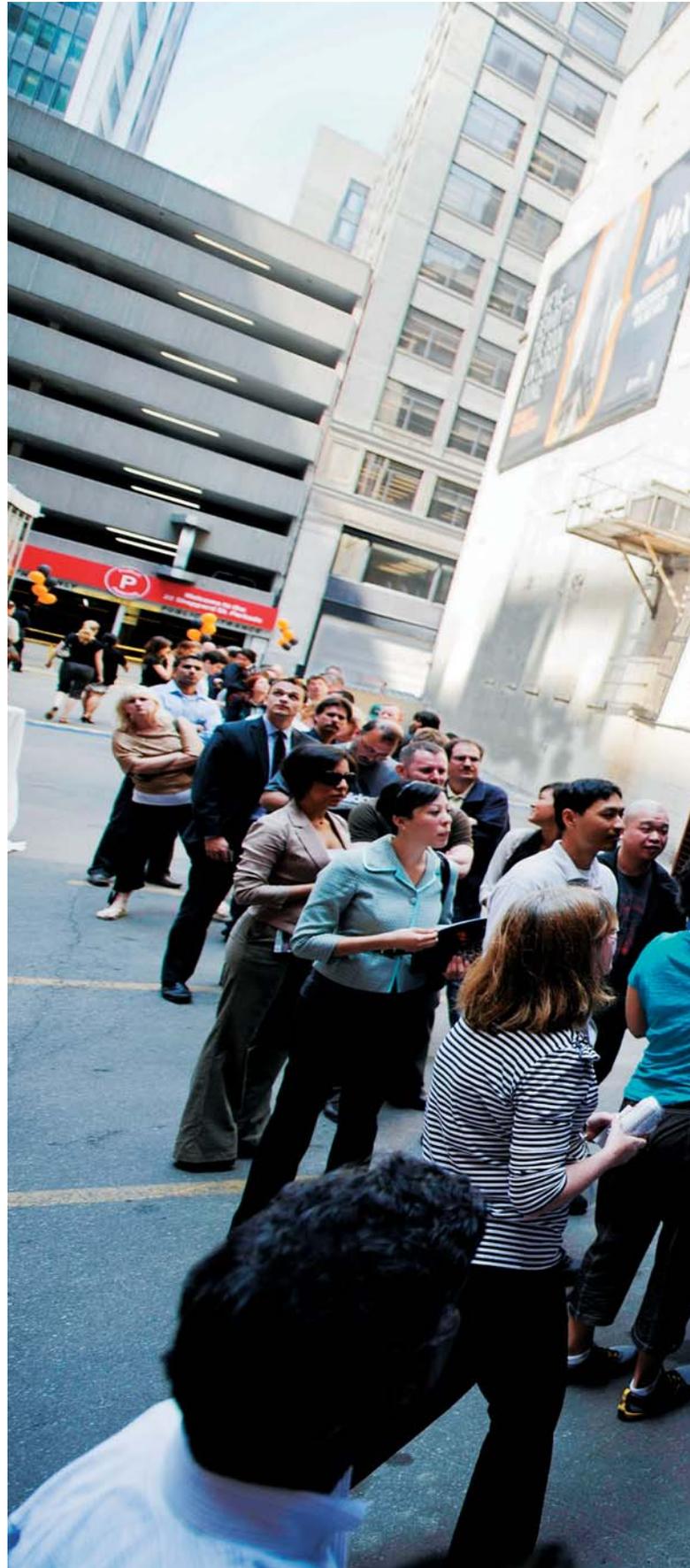
# GET YOUR SMOKED MEAT! OH, AND CHECK OUT THESE CONDOS

*By Sarah Kelsey*

There's a lot of competition to attract buyers to Toronto's many condominium developments — some researchers suggest roughly 35,000 new units will hit the market over the course of this year. This is putting extra pressure on developers to attract the right purchasers to their buildings. To that end, many are going beyond traditional marketing initiatives to catch the eye of buyers.

“Finding ways of communicating differently with people, and in a way that's more memorable, matters. Cutting through that noise and finding a way to stand out is so important,” says Brian Brown, vice-president of Lifetime Developments.

His organization recently took their marketing strategy to the next level by leveraging the food truck trend to attract buyers to their financial district develop-



Some 50 people lined up for a free Caplansky's sandwich, but a visit through INDX Condos' sales centre was required.



A tour of the Humber River Trail showed Perspective Condo buyers in Etobicoke the tower's thriving amenity.



ment, INDX. The premise of the event was simple: Stroll through INDX's sales centre, flip through one of the tower's brochures, then line up for a free deli sandwich, pickle and drink from Caplansky's Delicatessen. Some 550 people took advantage of the offer, and in the process, Lifetime Developments secured several strong sales leads from their target market: young professionals who work in the financial core and who want to live close by.

"Even people who weren't buying were very interested in the project," Mr. Brown says. "In many cases, you don't know where things will go. A person who came for a lunch may not be a purchaser, but they may go back and talk to someone who is." The company plans to hold similar events throughout the summer. "We'll keep doing things like this to keep people excited about the project," Mr. Brown explains. "We'll invite some of the purchasers, too."

Closer to the lake, Phantom Developments, the company behind Jade Waterfront Condominiums, is planning a publicity event of its own involving *Breakfast Television* personality Frank "Frankie Flowers" Ferragine.

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Says Henry Strasser, principle of Phantom Developments, "The average size of our balconies is 200 square feet, so we decided to retain [Mr. Ferragine], who is well known in the industry for outdoor, gardening and landscaping tips, to create ideas for homeowners on what they can do with their balconies," he explains.

"We wanted to create the perception for homeowners that they can do a lot with their outdoor living space — just like their

indoor square footage."

The event, set for early July, generated a ton of early buzz among purchasers and was expected to draw dozens to the Jade sales centre.

"The condo market is very competitive and it's very selective," Mr. Strasser says. You can buy a condo being built on every corner. And people are picky about what they want." Simply put, developers need to have an edge over their competition. But marketing initiatives like these aren't just about upping traffic in sales centres. They're also about showing condo hunters why a certain development is special.

Pianosi Development recently launched an initiative to educate potential purchasers and current homeowners about the nature-rich land that surrounds their Perspective Condo tower in Etobicoke.

"[The Humber River Trail] is a big feature of the area," Ian Pianosi says. "But we found a lot of people weren't really aware of it, even though they were from the neighbourhood." Many of the people buying into the development are empty-nesters, Mr. Pianosi says, and are looking for high-end, stylish living that's close to the city, but also near countryside.



# Creative marketing ideas

Graphic artists to gals in bikinis toting surfboards are some of the offbeat ways condo developers are attracting buyers

Bikinis and surfboards on the Queensway? They weren't there to lure mud-encrusted vehicles in for a car wash, but to draw attention to a veritable summer playground hidden away just off that main thoroughfare.

These sun-lovin' models were emblematic of the lifestyle developer Camrost-Felcorp has created at California Condos, part of the Mystic Pointe complex near Park Lawn in Etobicoke. Its 75,000 square feet of recreational and lifestyle facilities include indoor pool, hot tub, Pilates studio, an upper-level gym complete with multi-purpose court and circuit training facility. There's a sun deck and spa treatment room. And 16 acres of waterfront parklands.

The Bayside Sports & Entertainment Centre, a shared facility with iLofts next door, features an outdoor pool, landscaped rooftop garden, barbecue patio and running track.

And there's more available: saunas, squash courts, games room, theatre, private dining room. Plus, the location is right by the network of city parks and trails.

How to encapsulate all of that active-living imagery to drivers with little time to read billboards on the roadside? Strategically position a few eye-catching models clad in swimwear and sporting surfboards to draw attention to the site.

With the building now under construction, it means buyers can move in this summer to take advantage of the facilities right away. Camrost recently opened two new two-bedroom model suites (975 sq. ft. and 860 sq. ft.), and to make a purchase that much easier, it is offering a rent-to-buy program, starting at \$799 per month (covering principal, interest, maintenance fees and taxes for the first year).

From sporty to city-savvy, west-end condo 1090Z's developer, RAW, recently had graphic illustrators create "a cartoon campground" showcasing the creative process behind the city's transforming landscape. Floor-to-ceiling graphics in an empty warehouse space at 109 Ossington show superheroes leaping tall buildings, brainstorming and wrestling with ideas about density, design and streetscape.

Glow-in-the-dark cotton candy was handed out along that hip stretch of Ossington, while oversize marshmallows were roasted over fire-pits and foods in primary colours were dished out.

"There is a certain amount of intensity required to stay connected to a constantly shifting city," says RAW's Roland Rom Colthoff. This was "an opportunity for us to share our story and playfully engage with the people and ideas that are shaping Toronto's future."

"[Our buyers] want to have access to this kind of natural amenity," Mr. Pianosi says. What you have to offer that's different [from others] helps you stand out. And what we have to offer is we're close to the city, but we have a lot of green space."

To showcase the Humber River Trail as a selling point, developers held Nature's Backyard, a one-hour exploration of the area's landscape, wildlife and biodiversity. Led by Toronto field naturalists, purchasers were encouraged to bring a guest or an interested condo buyer on the tour with them. The event was so successful Mr. Pianosi says his company will lead a bike trail tour this summer.

Of course, while these marketing initiatives generate buzz for individual condo developments, builders say they also remind people Toronto is booming.

"The market is very strong and there's a lot of potential. The economy is strong. The banking system is strong. Immigration — both national and international — is extremely strong," Mr. Brown notes. "And Toronto is very attractive. It's going to get even more exciting as these developments come to fruition and as people start moving into these new neighbourhoods," he says. **PH**

