

'Condo king' launches reality TV show

Brad Lamb is Toronto's best-known condominium salesperson because of his many media interviews and unique billboards. Now he's about to become the star of his own television show.

By Susan Doran

Whether you like them or not – and people are divided on that – if you're in downtown Toronto, there's no way you can miss condo specialist and newly minted reality television personality Brad Lamb's ads, plastered on billboards and on 60 of the city's mega garbage bins.

The ads, which have been running for several years and make self-proclaimed condo king Lamb the largest mega-bin advertiser in Toronto, feature Lamb's head stuck onto a sheep's body.

Accompanying slogans have included, "This Lamb sells condos," and more recently, "We stand out in a crowd."

"It's amazing how many people see that stuff," says Lamb, 45. "The ads have been very effective in getting our name out there."

That's putting it mildly. In fact, name branding in this unique (and formidably expensive) way has helped make Lamb Toronto's most famous condo broker.

Now, he's about to launch his own reality television series – HGTV's *Big City Broker*. It premieres February 7 as part of HGTV's Real Estate Wednesdays programming block. The show is being billed as a "behind-the-scenes look into the fast-paced, cut-throat industry of urban real estate."

It follows Lamb, broker of Brad J. Lamb Realty, "a larger-than-life Realtor and property developer and his team of driven, hard-as-nails sales agents" as they "negotiate deals, source new properties and go head-to-head with city councilors, lawyers, architects, planners and rival Realtors," says promotional material for the show.

HGTV (an Alliance Atlantis network) also says, "The path to succeeding in urban real estate

isn't always pleasant or friendly, but it does make for compelling television drama."

Lamb, who's been interviewed countless times and is no stranger to television, was nevertheless surprised at how much work it was making the show. He wasn't intimidated at being followed around by cameras, although his staff was at first, he says.

He did wonder whether the show would be sympathetic to him, but says it turned out better than he expected. And, there is that all-important consideration; it does, as he puts it, "extend my brand."

It's also "like university-101-real-estate" on development, marketing and selling for viewers, he says. But are there moments shown that he'd rather were not?

"I'm involved in my business and can get excited, and I let them show that. Whether people are appreciative or not . . ." he trails off.

A dedicated "boutique city broker" who doesn't "pretend to sell" in the suburbs, Lamb says he only tackles "cool" urban development projects here and abroad that elevate a neighbourhood's character through superb architecture and design.

HGTV says his experience (he's been in real estate 19 years) and his "dynamic personality" make him ideal for the show. He

admits to being the type of person who thrives on stress.

Clearly, he also doesn't mind poking fun at himself. Before his current attention-grabbing outdoor ads, there was one where, as he puts it, he was posed "kind of sexy, only it wasn't."

That ad proclaimed, "He's no Brad Pitt, but he sells a lot of



condos."

And it's no wonder, what with those ads, along with his experience, drive, and bankroll.

"We have the money to spend, which is why we're dominant," he says. Whatever extends your brand . . . ■ REM

Brad Lamb's tips for Realtors

- How to get rich: If you have the means to purchase a property, do so. Realtors have an advantage here, as they have access to everything first, he says.
- Become an expert in your market or niche.
- Until you're established, real estate must be a lifestyle, not a job. Dedicate 100 per cent. Work weekends. Once established, you can dictate the terms.
- Insert a clause into condo purchase contracts that allows buyers to visit the site a second time to ensure they are satisfied with the space and can bring a friend along for a second opinion.
- Make sure renters show their content and liability insurance.
- Insist that builders of 'pre-sale' condos attach the floor plans to the contract. This helps ensure that buyers get what they're paying for.



Photos: Alliance Atlantis