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L.A. LAND

PETER VILES ON THE RAPIDLY CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE LOS ANGELES REAL ESTATE MARKET AND BEYOND

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Inside The Blog: So Everybody Loves Kal; Why is That News?



If you haven't been following the saga of Atlanta mortgage originator Kal Wayman, this item is not for you. For those playing catch-up, [we criticized Kal's over-the-top, sex-drenched TV ad as inappropriate to the serious business of mortgages, and then dozens of Kal's friends and clients rushed to his defense in the "comments" section of this blog.](#)

Which raised a number of questions -- Why did we publish so many promotional comments about Kal? Didn't all those supportive comments add up to free advertising? And how do we know Kal himself wasn't sitting there at a keyboard, sending one love letter after another to himself?

That's what one regular reader asked tonight: "Have you checked the IP addresses of all the Kal fanboys to be sure it isn't Kal himself spamming the blog?"

I'll deal with that issue first, and then the others. First of all, comments are moderated, in the sense that I try to keep profanity and personal attacks off the blog. So I had seen all the comments. Sheepishly, I went back and checked IP addresses of all 48 comments, and found only two that were suspicious -- different names, same IP address. So it appears Kal really does have that many friends.

But did he, or one of his friends, orchestrate the outpouring of support? Probably. So why publish all of those comments? First of all, on a blog -- unlike in the printed newspaper -- space is not expensive. It's close to free. And remember, LA Land started this -- we criticized Kal's sexy TV commercial -- so it was only fair to let his friends defend him.

And where, exactly, is the news in all this? Why is a newspaper blog devoting this amount

of space to this? Fair question. I thought the TV spot itself was newsworthy -- who knew a mortgage company could market itself as irreverent, hip, young and sexy? Further, I thought the responses were informative -- it seems a lot of people really like Kal's way of doing business. They think it's fun. They like Kal. Fair enough.

How would the print side of a newspaper have covered all this? In my experience, it's the kind of story that often doesn't get written. For one thing, it's a story about a TV ad, and the print edition of a newspaper can't show you a TV commercial. But in a larger sense, it's too fluffy -- a colorful young businessman is making a lot of money, running funny commercials and throwing parties all over town? I've had editors who would say, 'So what? Where's the news?' (How many stories did you see about Ferrari-collecting Orange County mortgage mogul Daniel Sadek before the subprime collapse?)

To that I would disagree -- I think the idea that there is a 20-something kid in Atlanta selling mortgages to other 20-somethings, building a financial services brand based on youth, sex and fun, is an interesting and unexpected story.

With that, I think we're done with Kal for a while.

Photo Credit: askJonathanOnline.com (Yes, Another Friend of Kal's)

May 31, 2007 in [Real Estate Personalities](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Comments

WAY TO GO KAL!

We got your back brother.

Posted by: [sKiz](#) | [June 01, 2007 at 05:54 AM](#)

Finally....you guys have the right Idea about Kal...He is Fun, Imaginative and an Honest Loyal Business man.....Not to mention the fact that he has put fun back into mortgage lending....Kudos my friend for taking care of our younger generation when it comes to mortgage lending and keep up the great work!!

Andrea McDowell

Posted by: [Andrea McDowell](#) | [June 01, 2007 at 05:59 AM](#)

Well, I missed the story the story on a new wunderkind. My friends in Atlanta some of whom own rental properties are not so bullish on the Atlanta market but if the kid has

found wealthy 20 somethings to finance million dollar properties, good for him. I'll admit the babes are more fun than an ad on a bus bench and he has spiced things up but the bottom line is that in most service businesses customers will tend to want to deal with a peer. People are comfortable with others their own age. This is why I deal in reverse mortgages. No jet setting but we consume more than our share of pie and coffee.

Posted by: John Brodey | June 01, 2007 at 07:31 AM

I am from LA and moved to ATL a couple of years ago. Kal is one of the most unique people I have ever met. Yet, you can't help but love the guy - he definitely has the market cornered with the young hipsters of ATL - and has no shame to his game when promoting his business and he is constantly doing plugs for services such as legal, real estate, etc. for his fellow hipster professionals - keeping it all in the family - ya' know? You can't hate the player for having the game figured out! Rock on Kal!

Posted by: Denice | June 01, 2007 at 07:56 AM

The sizzle has been sold. There are claims that the steak is good eatin' - but seems to have become a much less important issue.

Posted by: www.BetterVillage.com | June 01, 2007 at 08:17 AM

I think there is a story here.... This is just another good example of how mainstream media simply does not understand what the younger demographic(s) - which everyone so covets - are looking for and responding to. Now that is newsworthy not matter who you are.

I would venture to guess that if you were to ask a group of people under the age of 35, who have watched this commercial, what they thought that most would see it for what it is truly meant to be "All in good fun." Furthermore, I bet those same people would also tell you that they would not discount Kal's ability to handle the single largest investment they will probably ever make based solely on a commercial that was intentionally designed to be - for lack of a better word - silly. Plain and simple, most mainstream media outlets just "don't get it" as "it" pertains to this demographic until it is painfully obvious to the world at large.

In addition I would site last weekend's coverage of MMA (Lidell vs. Jackson) as another recent example of them being late to the game. I can not think of anywhere other than in LA and Vegas that any mainstream media outlet in the country was paying any real attention to this sport before then and now they have to. Again they just didn't get "it."

The story here is simple: Big media and big business continue to miss opportunities they are better positioned to capitalize on because they just don't get "it" until it's too late and because of that Myspace, Facebook, iTunes, YouTube, UFC and Spike TV are laughing all the way to the bank. Oh yeah and on their way to the bank they're probably thinking about buying a house.... So I bet Kal's laughing too.....

Best Regards,

Chris Mello

Posted by: [Chris Mello](#) | [June 01, 2007 at 09:11 AM](#)

Nice.... finally a piece that is objective. I find it ironic that this article broke in LA and not the southern bible belt. Kudos Kal for having a sense of humor (and some marketing genius).

Posted by: [Gregg P](#) | [June 01, 2007 at 09:37 AM](#)

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