

Connected From Anywhere

Wireless system links team at all times.

PASADENA, Md. - As a Marine enlisted man turned Naval Officer, David Therrien was a cryptologist, responsible for designing mobile communications systems. Before retiring from the Navy in 1992, he built systems that the U.S. military used during the Gulf War. "Those systems got their trial by fire during that war," says Therrien. "They performed exceptionally well, they did their job, our guys came home and I retired."

Now Therrien, a Sales Associate with RE/MAX Classic in the Baltimore-area community of Pasadena, is putting his military experience to use in his real estate career. As leader of an eight-person team, Therrien (ABR) has constructed a wireless system that allows all team members to be in communication – from their vehicles, their RE/MAX office or their home computers – with the Internet and with the team's server, which is loaded with RE/MAX Agent 2000 and other software programs.

And that, of course, means they can communicate at any time with clients and potential customers. They can access the server – located in Therrien's home office – or the MLS from their home or their vehicle. Or for that matter from a restaurant or while sitting in a title company office and closing a transaction.



THERRIEN
Tech skills

Therrien accesses the Internet wirelessly at 40K-60K (approximate dialup speed). He set the system up a year ago using the Verizon Wireless Express system. The whole system is closely tied in to the team's Web presence, which produces 15 to 20 leads daily.

Fully loaded

His van has fax capability, a scanner, printer, VCR and video screen, digital camera, video camera and cell phone. "We don't have to go back to the office anymore," Therrien says. "We've essentially extended our office so that it's anywhere we are. Homebuyers are becoming more regional than local in their home searches, so we've extended our office, through our wireless connection, throughout central Maryland."

What does it mean in practical terms? These are some of Therrien's experiences involving the wireless system:

- He was showing a client a home in Carroll County – two counties away from his base in Anne Arundel County. The client didn't like the home, so they all stopped at a restaurant for supper, and at the table, Therrien fired up his laptop, scanned the MLS and found more properties to look at.
- "A year ago, we would have had to download the listings on our laptop prior to leaving the office or drive back to the office to get more information, and then back out to the properties," Therrien says. A customer from Arizona whose son is attending the U.S. Naval Academy wanted to buy a home in Annapolis. He had previously contacted Therrien, who had been e-mailing him appropriate listings.

The customer called one morning and said he was in Annapolis and wanted to look at properties in the afternoon. Therrien picked him up at his hotel and they sat in his van looking at MLS listings and maps. After looking at several homes, they found a property the client liked, and Therrien printed out a contract from his laptop (using ProForms Software). The client signed the contract, e-mailed it to his wife in Arizona, she signed it and returned it, and Therrien forwarded the offer to the listing agent. It was all done within a day.

- When Therrien is at a home inspection, or during down times in a closing, he can forward listing to his buyers, deal with his e-mail or check the MLS.

Instant video

The system has video capability as well. "I could have a client in California and be showing him real-time video of a home over the Internet while I'm talking to him on a cell phone," Therrien says.

Located in a strong seller's market, Therrien gives his buyers a leg up with instant notification. "Our regional MLS (MRIS, or Metropolitan Regional Information System), which covers several states, has developed its tools to the extent that we have access to Web pages that we can log our clients into, and the system will send them e-mails when properties matching their criteria come onto the market," Therrien says. "When you combine that with our content heavy web sites, it gives us a region wide presence."



ROAD READY: David Therrien's van has a scanner, printer, VCR and video screen, digital camera, video camera and cell phone.

Additionally, Therrien has the ability to take listings, convert them to PDF format and e-mail them immediately to his buyers.

On the listing, side Therrien can take care of the entire process immediately after a contract is signed. He can fill out information on the property and input it directly into the MLS. "Right from the dinner table," he says. "I just go down the list. I complete a listing package, create the brochure, take the room measurements, put the lockbox on the door, put up a yard sign and I'm done with the initial set-up before I walk out the front door. All I have to do is turn in the paperwork to the office."

"I'll be at the settlement table and while they're going over the final details, I'm sitting there and inputting the information to change the listing from under contract to sold," he says. "So when I leave the settlement table, I'm on to the next sale." The wireless mobile office system is only part of the game plan.

Therrien and his team of agents and assistants developed the wireless mobile office capability to handle traffic increased by their Internet presence, which generates 15 to 20 new leads a day.

"Today's homebuyers doesn't mind driving 30 to 45 minutes each way to work," Therrien says. "As a buyer's agent, we can't be just local in our capabilities. Today's home buyer requires an agent with a regional knowledge base and capability."

The team's network of core Web sites and wireless mobile offices are the backbone of their Internet operation and were incorporated into their agent business plans last summer. The Web site network – "The Answer Team - Real Estate Network," found at www.MarylandHomes.biz – incorporates their regional MLS IDX capabilities and a large amount of local and regional information consumers need when buying a home in Maryland.

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