



"If your building had to interview, would it get the job?"

- Steve Kokes, Coates Kokes, Green Broker presenter

Nearly 100 brokers, finance professionals, developers and other building industry professionals were challenged with this question on May 22, 2008 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland at the inaugural Green Broker. A collaborative effort of the Cascadia Region Green Building Council and the Commercial Brokers Association, the conference serves as the portal to the green building universe for the brokerage and finance communities.

In light of their unique responsibilities as the "middlemen" of building market transactions, brokers and finance professionals have a lot of power to move the market for green building towards mainstream. Green Broker serves to empower these professionals to take on this role, to clearly recognize the value of green buildings and to help push the market to support the construction and maintenance of "hirable" buildings.

Attendees and presenters alike were impressed by the forward-thinking, yet also germane sessions and topics that Green Broker 2008 provided - from green building 101 to crafting green leases, and from the marketing to the valuation of green buildings. An impressive array of presenters coming from all building sectors - real estate, land use law, green building consulting, development, etc. - shared a wealth of expertise and lessons learned from the trenches, demonstrating that the green building movement is a constantly evolving force that requires integrated involvement from all related professionals.

Both keynote speakers gave poignant presentations that spoke directly to the role of brokers in pushing the market for green building. Bill Browning of Terrapin Bright Green opened the conference nudging at the urgent need for the brokerage and related communities get on board with sustainability and used case studies of LEED certified buildings to demonstrate the buildings' and inhabitants' improved productivity and efficiency. Martin Melaver offered an inspiring message over lunch, telling the story of how sustainability became a pillar of his company and shining light on the real estate community's role as the "errand boys and girls" of the building industry - it's up to them to properly relay the message of green buildings and make sure the market listens.

Furthermore, the conference served as the platform for the launch of a new certification program, also bearing the name Green Broker. This program, which will entail 10 three-hour classes covering topics most relevant to the commercial real estate industry and culminating with an exam, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008.

Green Broker 2008 certainly laid a solid groundwork for the 2009 conference, which will be held in Seattle, WA.

Here's what some of the conference participants had to say:

I was reminded of why green buildings have become so important to me. It is about people and place, but overlaying that is the critical link between how we design and construct the built environment and the impact that those choices have on the long-term health of our planet.

- Conference attendee

[Green Broker was] about making brokers aware of the changing real estate profession and how green will affect them and their choices.

- Conference attendee

One of the more cutting edge conferences I've attended - probably very few people realize just how cutting edge it was. This conference could easily set the standard for sustainable brokerage work. I am very grateful for being included.

- Conference presenter



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