

HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE WHILE DRIVING

By Steve Bergsman



Commercial real estate professionals spend a lot of time in their automobiles, which shouldn't be considered wasted moments. Good planning combined with the latest technology, means a great deal of work can still be done – all while driving safely at the same time.

Commercial real estate professionals spend a great deal of time in their automobiles, which many don't consider a dead space. With planning and new technologies a lot can be accomplished while behind the wheel of a car, and those who have figured it out are extremely passionate about drive-time productivity.

Gary Joel Schacker, SIOR, a principal with United Realty Inc., based in Jericho, N.Y., explains to the *Professional Report* that he uses voice-command technology to assist him.

"I'm on the road a lot, on a schedule, going from place to place," says Schacker. "When you are doing that, you don't really have an opportunity to go through your text, e-mails and other digital information. So, what I try to do is find ways to work under those circumstances, more than just making phone calls."

Tapped into the Apple network, Schacker makes use of Siri, or at least tries to.

"For some reason, Siri doesn't get the New York accent," he comments. "I have a 30 percent to 40 percent chance of getting my Siri request fulfilled, but I can get some production out of it. You can ask Siri to read your e-mails and texts, but it's a little dicey." Although buying or leasing a new automobile every year is

expensive, with new digital technology in the higher-end cars, it almost pays to upgrade. The key feature is a Bluetooth and voice command system that can read personal data from your phone and, most importantly for some, operate navigational apps. A new car can also have an internet connection for wifi.

Schacker rolls around in a 2015 automobile with a voice-command navigational system, but he also uses a mount on the windshield for his phone. You don't want to do too much with your phone, he cautions, but it can be useful to be in driving-view. "I don't text while I'm driving, I don't send e-mails, but I still try to find ways to do my work," he says.

Part of that road efficiency means utilizing specific apps. Schacker and many other SIOR professionals use Waze, a community-based traffic and navigation app. "Even though I have a voice controlled navigation app in my car, I often mount my phone and have the Waze app going, also with voice command," says Schacker.

Other useful technologies include the Loopnet mobile app and, since he has to drive into New York City often, an app called BestParking, which identifies all the parking in a specific area, the pricing and coupons that might be available.

To which, Schacker adds, when you are cruising down the in-

terstate at 70 miles an hour, it's hard to be productive and safe at the same time. That's when he listens to audiobooks.

Norm Khoury, SIOR, CCIM, a senior vice president for Colliers International in Cincinnati, Ohio, works the I-75 corridor from Northern Kentucky, through Cincinnati to Dayton, and he also listens to books on tape when he wants some down time when driving. On the other hand, when he wants to keep busy, he has alternatives. If it's a particularly crazy week and he has a lot of driving, he might hire a driver or have a junior broker take the wheel.

Most of the time, however, he is in his automobile by himself, which is why he travels in a late model car with advanced Bluetooth communications. "With the built-in phone book I can call up anyone by name voice command. That saves me a lot of time," he says. "I can call my office, team members and others without looking for a phone numbers, without taking my eyes off the road." He adds, "good technology in your car covers a lot."

As for apps, Khoury, too, is a big fan of Waze and the in-auto GPS system. The Loopnet app is also useful.

Mostly, he says, "you need to have a plan; you need to know where you are going before you get behind the wheel. Many times you are on the way to an appointment, it could be 20 miles away, you plug it into your GPS and it takes you to the wrong place or the streets are one way. I look at a map and know where I'm going before I get into a car unless I've been there several times and know the route well. I don't want to get lost or experience a road closure, which happens on the interstate many times."

Khoury plans out his week in advance, even making appointments with himself.

"Recently, I had to take a conference call around lunch time so I went to a parking lot," he recalls. "I had the documents with me. I just pulled out

my iPad and did a national conference call. It was between appointments. I had the documents on my iPad, I just pulled them up. An hour and 40 minute conference call. I had three showings before that call and a meeting afterward."

About phone calls, Khoury has his office phone forwarded to his mobile phone. "My Bluetooth system is advanced, he says, "Most of the important numbers are pre-planned. I know where the rest-stops are, the parking lots, good restaurants some place where I can do a call."

One final recommendation from Khoury: "I don't always drive the same route. I encourage everyone to go a different way because you never know what you will see. It's a really good way to learn the market. There's always a new development or expansion on an existing building."

Another SIOR broker who espouses thorough planning if one is going to be spending hours in an automobile is **Mike Spears, SIOR, CCIM**, president of TNRG in Houston, Texas.

"To be productive it's important to plan as to what you are going to be doing in the car," he says. "If you driving, you can't do paper work, but if you plan ahead, you can make phone calls. I make a list of everything I need to accomplish that day. If I have 10 phone calls to make then I will identify beforehand the times I should call while I'm driving."

Listing is important to Spears. "I make a list of people that are prospects as well as all my calls that I have to do during the day," he explains. "I write them down even though I have my phone. You don't want to have to scroll through the phone – that's not safe. Use the voice recognition on your car. When I'm at the office I don't need to be making certain calls at the moment unless they are vital. If I know I'm going to be traveling an hour, going out or coming back, I know I can get those calls done. So, I can focus on more important things that have to be done at the office."

The most important app for Spears is just the GPS in his automobile. If he has many stops during the day, he'll e-mail his car all of the venues. He uses Waze as well.

"I may know how to get to all of those sites, but the navigational systems will tell you the traffic situation," he says. "I can look at it and see if

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Head Games

By **Greg Gunn, SIOR**, senior vice president at Coldwell Banker Commercial, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Practice Mindfulness.

Mindfulness means living in the moment instead of ruminating about the past or dwelling on problems. How you would practice it while driving would be to live in the moment. Notice the sky, the cars, the scenery—whenever your mind wanders you bring it back to what you are doing. It sounds very simple and I practice it every day. I usually do it in the evening, but sometimes I do it when driving to work. It's a great stress-reducer once you discipline your mind to do it.

Schedule Conference Calls.

There are times when we will be on road trips and we have an extended period of time without interruption. In advance, we can schedule a conference call with one or more parties and perhaps turn on our speaker or put on a headset and participate. A helpful hint: get over in the right lane.

Organize.

Write down notes in advance of your drive. Set up appointments to review projects with your assistant partner or team members while driving. I might take a route that is less traveled. When I want to do an extended call, I take a route that is not heavily traveled.

Take a different route:

When you are driving somewhere, take a different route and see real estate you are not familiar with or an area which you have not driven through in a long time. We are creatures of habit and we tend to drive the same route mindlessly. Make your time more productive.

Meditate:

Two types of meditation, direct and indirect. Direct meditation is when you pick a topic and let your subconscious mind work on it. For example, how can I do better than my competition, or how can I make my team members more productive. Indirect meditation is when you let your mind wander and see where it takes you. It may take you to thinking about how you can work out a compromise you haven't been able to reach in the past, or it could take you to work on a problem in a different way than you ever have before.

the route that I normally take is crowded and there is an option for alternative routes.”

When he gets to where he's going, Spears says one of the most useful apps he employs is TheAnalyst Pro, which actually bills itself as the “premier commercial real estate app” and does calculations, measurements, shows analysis reports, and offers maps. Spears adds, the older free version may no longer be available and you might have to pay up to use it.

Steve Kapp, SIOR, executive managing director for Newmark Cornish & Carey in Newark, Calif., figures he drives 20,000 to 25,000 miles a years in the San Francisco Bay area, and when he is in his car he is doing one of three things, education, relaxation, or production.

“I have the iPhone 6 and a very good built-in Bluetooth in my car so I can make calls and use the voice recognition to text and for e-mails. If you're going to be sending an e-mail on your phone, for example, you can hit the speaker button, talk it out, and it will type out your e-mail or text,” he says. “I make quite a few calls when I'm in the car. I have a list and I keep a pad of paper next to me.”

Most of the best voice recognition systems are only in newer cars. As Kapp cautions, “if you have a car that is more than two years old, you don't have the best Bluetooth.”

Kapp also uses such apps as Waze, Linked-in, MySIOR, *Wall Street Journal*, Flight Tracker, and one from Chicago Title that will accept a photograph of a building and through recognition technology pull up all the records of that particular structure.

Secondly, there's the relaxation aspect, so Kapp listens to podcasts and audio books.

Finally, he engages in strategic thinking. Or as Kapp notes, “by turning off all the audio in the car, I let my mind strategically think on things.”

One should consider time in the car as production time, Kapp asserts. It's not wasted time and that change in mind-set will help any broker deal with the many hours spent behind the wheel.■