

Common-sense lending

Graeme Moss, a mortgage manager/agent with Fair Mortgage Solutions Inc in Hamilton, Ontario, details how his company became the first to close a deal with newcomer sub-prime lender moneyconnect

Although we had not heard of moneyconnect, we already knew Laurie El Masarani very well when she called to see if we had any business for the newly formed sub-prime lender.

Coincidentally, Robert Hooper, one of our agents, had a deal in Toronto where the client had a lower credit score but good solid income and needed 95% financing. The client was told by a top brokerage company in Toronto that the deal just couldn't be done – after he had already been pre-approved for the mortgage – but we were still dedicated to weighing out the options.

After careful examination of the deal, we discovered that all of the trends were positive, we had faith in the client and everything made sense. The client had been discharged from bankruptcy less than two years prior, but had since been able to re-establish his credit. He also had a solid income stream and a 5% down payment to put towards the mortgage.

With perfect payments being made since the bankruptcy, this was a very viable deal. In fact, if someone goes through bankruptcy once, they are often at a lower risk of default than the average population.

The morning that moneyconnect called, we were really down in the dumps over this deal because we wondered how we'd match our customer with a lender.

Within half an hour of that initial conversation with Laurie – moneyconnect's area manager – we received a verbal approval and the lender's commitment followed about a half-hour later.

Our agent raced to Toronto to get the client signing. He was ecstatic. Laurie's credibility and knowledge led the way and made it easy for us to accept the moneyconnect deal, since we were unfamiliar with the new lending firm.

The only remaining hitch in this deal was the closing date – it was December 14, 2006 and moneyconnect did not officially start funding until January 1, 2007. The company could have easily decided against taking our deal on but, instead, it chose to embark on the more difficult route of making it work for the client.

This was a staggering effort in customer service and we were pleasantly shocked that a lender would go out of its way for us.

The key to this deal was a combination of solid income and common-sense lending. Moneyconnect did the right thing and all parties were extremely grateful. It was definitely a deal for the record books! **CMP**

Making an impact

Graeme Moss has been a mortgage agent for seven years, becoming active in the sub-prime arena from the beginning of his career. He is extremely passionate about sub-prime because of the many rewards it offers when he finally gets the difficult deals funded and his clients become grateful customers for life.

"What brought me into sub-prime was the ability to meet 100% of people's needs. I found working in sub-prime very rewarding and it made more of an impact on people," he says.

Currently, 50% of Fair Mortgage Solutions' volumes are generated through sub-prime deals.

Moss says that the secrets to the company's sub-prime success are easy. Essentially, every agent ensures that people are treated with respect regardless of their financial situation. It is the company's goal to provide each client with solutions and a roadmap for their future.

"The biggest challenge we face with sub-prime is keeping on top of all the criteria and changes that are made," Moss says.

In order to overcome this challenge, the company relies heavily on lender business development



Graeme Moss

managers to help out and guide them through the process when they need assistance packaging deals.

"Suggestions for anyone getting into sub-prime are to know the product inside out and take the approach of the Parish Priest with the client. Give the client hope and provide solutions," Moss suggests.

"The average workday is not too bad. I think you have to have balance otherwise you work yourself to death and your family breaks up," he says.

In order to achieve this balanced lifestyle, Moss works from 8:15am to 4:00pm and then again from 6:30 to 8:00pm to break up his day. On average, he puts in 40-45 hours of work per week.

"Some nights I may or may not have to work. If a client needs to, I also schedule appointments first thing Saturday morning," he says. "It's balanced and it's fun!"