

“Retro-Flashback” Themed Posters & Postcards

“The colorful themed posters that VHDA created for their exhibit booth at the 2010 VAR Real Show (our annual conference and tradeshow) generated a lot of conversation from the attendees. It reminded many of them of the fun they had living during that period. The posters helped build a level of trust between VHDA and our members by projecting a down-to-earth type of culture – a culture they would feel comfortable promoting to their first-time homebuyer customers for their mortgage needs.”

— Amanda Rainsford
VP Marketing & Communications, Virginia Association of Realtors®

1. Brief Description of Program

Each year, the state’s largest gathering of real estate professionals is the Virginia Association of Realtors (VAR) Annual Conference and Tradeshow. VHDA participates by setting up a display booth and providing materials Realtors can use to help their first-time homebuyer clients.

For the 2010 conference, the VAR notified exhibitors that the event would have a retro-inspired theme, with a different decade assigned to each aisle on the tradeshow floor. Exhibitors were encouraged to reflect the spirit of their aisle’s decade in their booths. Since VHDA’s booth was to span the 1960s and 1970s aisles, we decided to replace our usual exhibit with more psychedelic fare. Our challenge, creatively speaking, was to leverage the conference’s retro theme to create a display that would attract Realtors to our booth to learn about our FHA-Plus Mortgage (a loan product offering 100 percent financing for qualified first-time homebuyers).

To serve as our booth’s backdrop, we designed a series of four oversized posters (actual size of each was 3 ft. x 4 ft.), which were displayed side-by-side on easels. Each poster used the bright colors, graphic styles and vernacular that were popular in the late 60s and early 70s, including:

- A “mod” woman holding a sign that says “100% Financing? Far Out!”
- A Jimi Hendrix-inspired guitar player with funky type swirling about him that said, “100% Financing — It’s Copasetic”
- A decorated hippie bus proclaiming, “100% Financing — What A Trip!”
- A multi-colored butterfly with the headline, “100% Financing — Groovy!”

All four had the subhead, “Ask About 100% Financing with an FHA-Plus Mortgage from VHDA.”

In addition to these large posters, we also created an accordion-fold brochure with the four posters reproduced in miniature as ready-to-mail postcards, along with some basic information about our FHA-Plus loan. We gave a postcard brochure packet to each Realtor who stopped by our conference booth. The postcards were perforated so Realtors could easily tear them out and use them as mailers to their clients.

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2. Why It Was Undertaken

The 2010 VAR Annual Conference was an ideal venue for VHDA to establish new relationships, and strengthen existing ones, with Realtors from all over the state. Realtors are often the first point of contact with first-time homebuyers, so they are in a unique position to tell these new clients about VHDA products designed to help them. VHDA wanted to fully use the opportunity this conference provided to meet the following objectives:

- Attract a large number of Realtors to our booth at the conference.
- Start conversations with Realtors to create excitement about our FHA-Plus Mortgage.
- Encourage Realtors to tell their first-time homebuyer clients about FHA-Plus.

3. What It Has Accomplished

Our retro-themed posters were effective in attracting more than 500 Realtors (the majority of conference attendees) to our booth. Their large size, bright colors and whimsical attitude caught the attention of all who passed by. They served as a backdrop for lively conversations and the flashing of many peace signs. Visitors to our booth enjoyed the opportunity to wax nostalgic as they quickly snapped up all of the postcard packets we had printed. Based on the positive feedback we received from Realtors who visited our booth, we were successful in meeting our stated objectives for the conference, while embracing the VAR’s fun-loving, retro theme.

4. Why It Is Meritorious and Meets NCSHA Judging Criteria

Innovative: One look at the posters and postcard brochure packets confirm these are not your typical financial institution marketing materials. We took full advantage of the conference’s retro theme, kept our message short and simple, and communicated in a colorful, memorable way.

Replicable: Any HFA can replicate a project like this, but having the right art to set the tone is important. In VHDA’s case, we had in-house illustrators, but an HFA without staff artists can still achieve similar results. One option is to search for royalty-free art through an online image library, using keywords such as “retro,” “60s,” “70s,” or others as needed. Another option is to hire an outside artist to create a custom illustration. This type of project would be considered a portfolio-building piece by most, which may help in negotiating a good price. But if custom art is not an option, the online libraries offer many different illustration styles at reasonable prices.

Reach target audiences: Our target audience was Realtors from all over Virginia. The VAR Annual Conference and Tradeshow is the single best event to reach this audience, as it’s the largest gathering of its kind in the state. Our retro-themed posters and postcards helped capture our audience’s attention on a busy tradeshow floor, beckoning them into our booth. We also used some of our retro art in a pre-conference announcement on the VAR blog (VARbuzz.com), which is read by Realtors all over the state. VHDA’s post on this blog was an invitation for Realtors to look for our booth when they attended the conference, and the art in our post gave them a colorful preview of what our booth would look like.

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Achieve measurable results: The response to our retro posters and postcards was overwhelming. We completely gave away all of the 1,000 postcard packets we had printed for visitors to our booth, and received many compliments from Realtors attending the conference as well as from conference organizers. VHDA staff working at the event reported that the posters were “a big hit” and attracted more than 500 Realtors into our booth, creating opportunities for them to start conversations and discuss our program in more detail. They were also pleased that most of the Realtors in attendance took one or more of the postcard packets — to use as mailings to clients who could benefit from our FHA-Plus Mortgage to buy their first home.

Provide benefits that outweigh costs: Since the artwork was done in-house, the only costs to produce these materials were the printing costs. The four posters cost less than \$66 each to print in full color and mount on 3 ft. by 4 ft. foamboard, and the postcard brochure packets, in full color, folded and perforated, cost \$1,529 for a quantity of 1,000 packets. It was a small investment that generated great results, making our booth a popular destination at the conference. Our staff members were very pleased with the return on investment, citing the many opportunities that were created for them to make connections with this important audience, and the anticipation that many Realtors would be using our postcards to spread the word about FHA-Plus to their first-time homebuyer clients.

Demonstrate effective use of resources: VHDA made full use of our in-house staff of creative and marketing professionals. The posters and postcard packets were conceived, designed, illustrated, written and made press-ready without the need for outside resources. Our in-house production coordinator was also able to negotiate a very good price for printing, using a professional offset vendor to print the postcard brochure packets, and a professional large-format vendor to print and mount the posters.

Achieve strategic objectives: VHDA’s mission is helping Virginians achieve quality, affordable housing. One of the most important ways we do that is by providing financing to first-time homebuyers, who often hear about our programs from their Realtors. By attending the VAR Conference with display graphics and handouts designed to attract and engage, we were able to get our message out to many Realtors who previously didn’t know about our FHA-Plus Mortgage. We know from our interactions with those who stopped by our booth, that we now have more informed Realtors statewide, sharing information about VHDA’s affordable financing.

Conclusion

VHDA’s “Retro-Flashback” themed posters and postcards were a true crowd pleaser at the VAR conference; in fact, we gave away all of the 1,000 postcard packets we brought to our booth. In addition, the posters helped us stand out from the crowd, drew Realtors into our booth, and created a welcoming environment where visitors felt relaxed. As a result, VHDA staff had many opportunities to share information about our affordable financing, including FHA-Plus loans. VHDA’s colorful postcard packets can now be used by Realtors to spread the word about FHA-Plus to first-time homebuyers all over the state.



Ask About 100% Financing with an FHA-Plus Mortgage from VHDA.

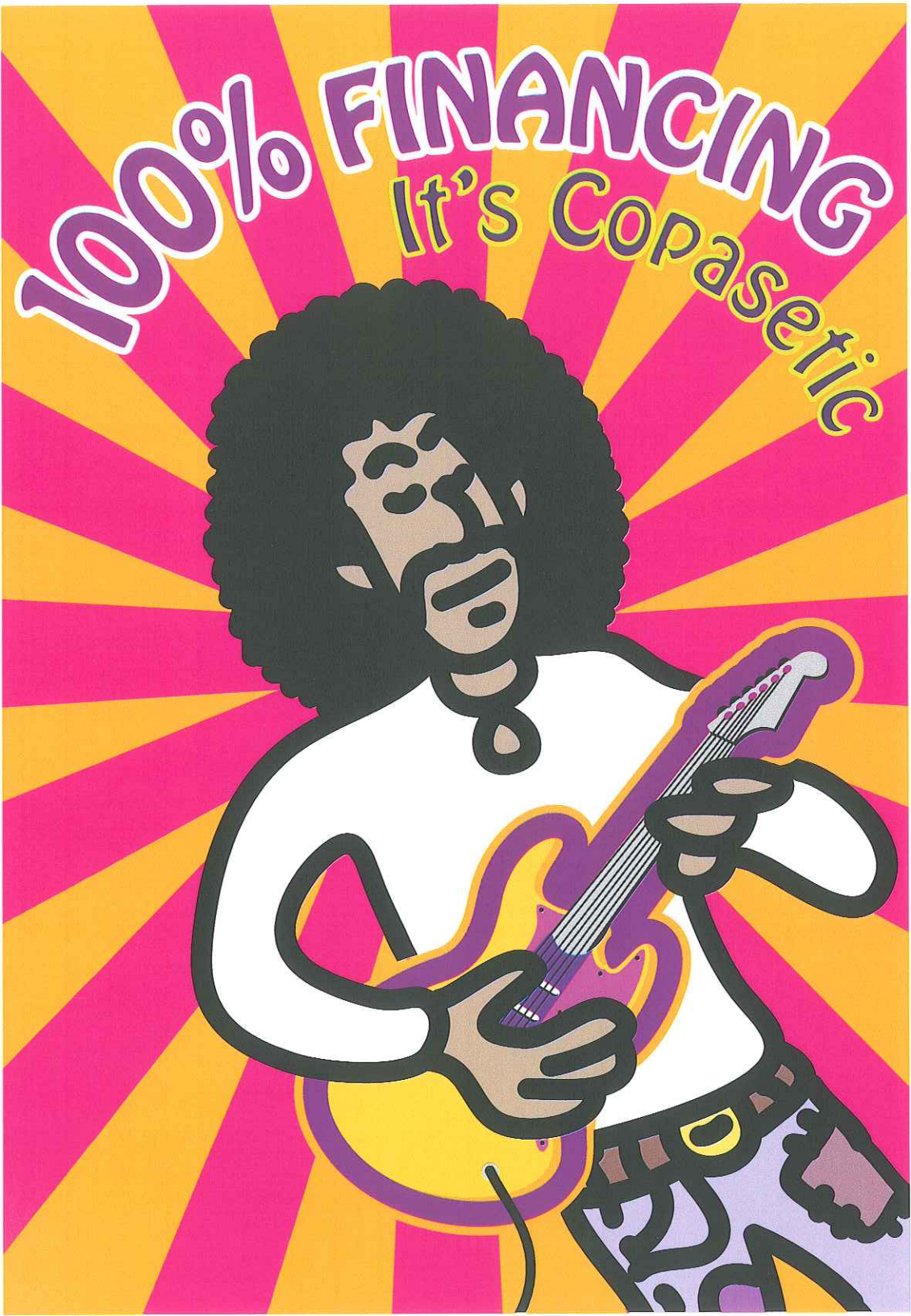


The information contained herein (including but not limited to any description of VHDA and its lending programs and products, eligibility criteria, interest rates, fees and all other loan terms) is subject to change without notice.



100% FINANCING

It's Copasetic



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100% FINANCING...



What A Trip!



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100%
FINANCING

GROOVY!



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Feelin' Groovy? Stop by VHDA's booth at the VAR Annual Convention

By JANICE BURGESS on SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

Stop by **VHDA's** booth at the VAR Annual Convention in Virginia Beach this Friday and Saturday, October 1 - 2. We'll be in booths 201 and 300, right between the themed "1960s" and "1970s" aisles -- just look for our big psychedelic posters and you won't be able to miss us! We'll have free postcard reproductions of our groovy poster art while supplies last, and plenty of info about VHDA products, including [100 percent financing](#) with our FHA-Plus mortgage (ask us for details or visit [vhda.com](#)). See you this weekend!



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6 Things Home Buyers Want You to Know (But Won't Tell You)

By BEN MARTIN, BLOGMASTER EMERITUS on SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

Are you frustrated by mixed signals from home buyers? Now you can finally know what they want you to know--and close more business because of it. Here's what buyers won't tell you (but you can easily find out with the help of an experienced company that understands real estate):

1. I stopped returning your calls a year ago...but I started looking...

SEARCH VARBUZZ

To search, type



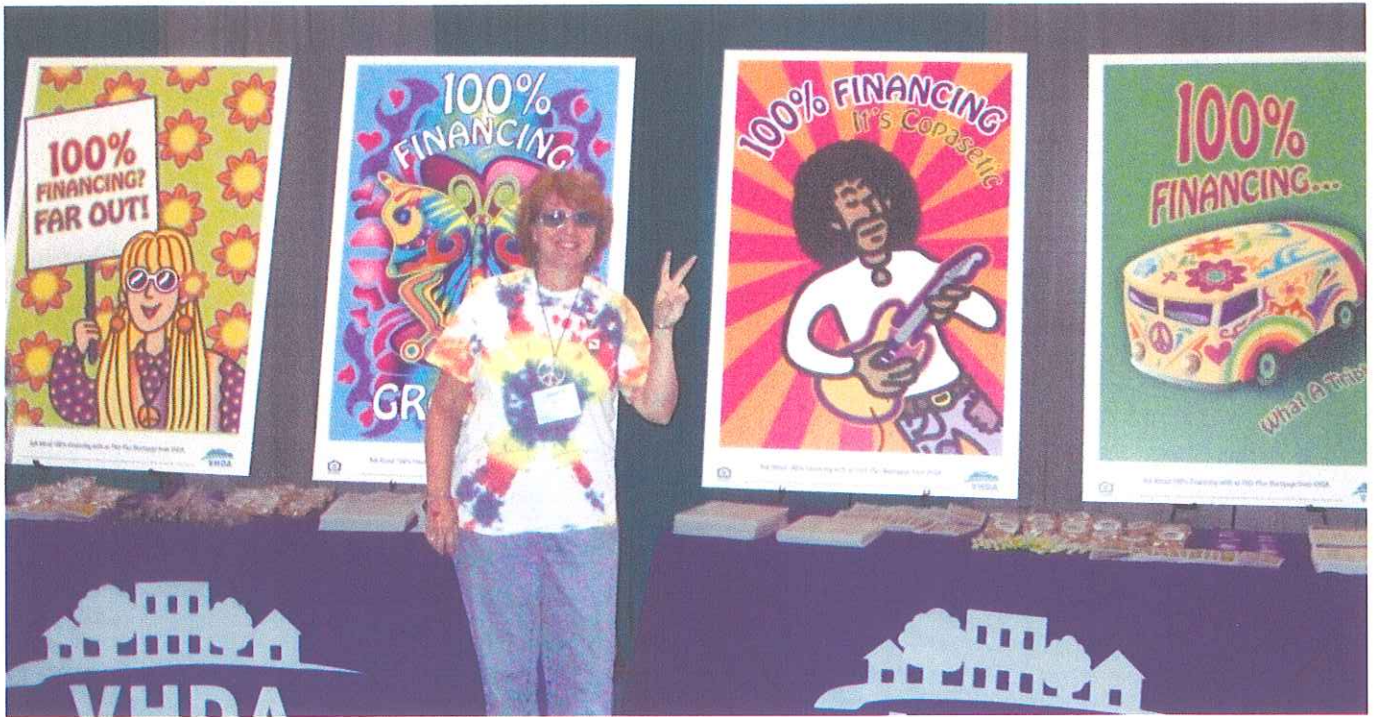
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Others Solicit

SCREEN GRAB OF PRE-EVENT POST ON VAR REALTOR BLOG



VHDA's BOOTH At 2010 VAR ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1960s - 1970s AISLE OF RETRO THEMED EVENT