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"It's not a game": Jay Luchs discusses being an LA real estate player

Luxury shopping broker works out of his car en route to Beverly Hills, Malibu or WeHo

A Day in the Life of Jay Luchs, Top LA Luxury Retail Agent



By Andrew Asch

DEC 17, 2023, 7:00 AM

Some of the sights on many of Los Angeles' top retail streets are Jay Luchs' ubiquitous for lease and leased signs.

Luchs, 51, can often be found in these high streets, conducting meetings from his Range Rover, or scouting the retail next hot spot. He's on the move so much, he doesn't own a computer, he says.

One of the Newmark chairman's next moves will be the spring debut of Cross Creek Ranch Malibu, the first retail center to open in the exclusive beachside city in more than a decade.

The center will include tenant California Incline, a 500-square-foot space devoted to a basics fashion line that Luchs and a business partner, Kelsey Chapman, launched in 2023.

The store is one of the few diversions Luchs allows himself, as he spends most of his time in front of his phones, wheeling and dealing and scouting new business.

The allure of the deal remains a prime motivation after his more than 20 years in the business, Luchs said, when telling *The Real Deal* about one of his typical days.

So then, what does a typical day look like for Luchs?

6:45 a.m.

Luchs checks emails from New York and Europe for about 20 minutes, then he works out for 40 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on commitments.

A hearty early meal is out.

"I'm usually too rushed to eat breakfast. I may eat a banana or an apple and then I'm out the door," he said.

8:30 a.m.

The fun begins, he says.

"If I have a conference call, I'll take it in my house. But my car is really my office. It's a very good place to do business," he said.

The car provides mobility so he can show properties to clients, but travel time is not wasted time.

"I'm alone. I'm not bothered. I can think. I'm usually in the car heading to a meeting — if it's a Zoom, I'll pull over. When the Zoom ends, I'm back to checking emails," he said, noting he's pared down his reliance on the number of electronic devices he has. "I don't have a computer. I have two phones. One is for emails, the other is for calls. It works for me."

10 a.m.

Luchs says it's prime time for property tours, which can run a couple of hours to the entire work day — taking clients through Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, and elsewhere in Los Angeles.

He also scouts the streets.

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"I go for a few things. I wonder if I missed a new tenant who has done a deal on a street? I spend a lot of time thinking about what gives a street [its] life and energy. I think about how I can contribute to changing a street that will be interesting to others. It's not just about making any deal," he said.

Noon

He tries not to schedule a lunch to make time for calls and emails. When he does stop, it's often last minute for a quick bite.

"I eat food that's not always so healthy. I have a love for the Brentwood Country Mart, where I go to Reddi Chick and have its barbecue chicken and fries," he said. "If I'm in Malibu, I go to Lily's on Point Dume. I get a burrito with spicy mustard sauce. It's addicting. I also have no issues with In-N-Out and Apple Pan for burgers.

"I would like to think my workouts balance out what I eat, although I know they don't. I sure do love eating what I want to eat."

1 p.m.

More calls and emails — the pace doesn't slow down, he says, adding that part of the gig is developing a rhino-thickskin and being diplomatic.

"Things happen so fast. It is juggling people and managing different personalities. You have to handle different personalities, some people are nice and some aren't. If you handle the mixture of personalities and somehow stay calm, you'll get through your day."

3 p.m.

He maintains lists of multiple deals on an old-fashioned yellow legal notepad. Later, he transfers them to an Excel spreadsheet with the help of someone from his team.

"While I spend a good portion of my deal generating new business, much of what I do all day long is keeping deals alive. There will be a lot of back-and-forth between landlords and tenants. There will be a lot of negotiations that will last for a few weeks to months and perhaps years," Luchs said. "I like to go through a checklist of deals over and over each day. I have incoming call logs from my cell phone messages. I also receive logs from calls coming from my lease signs."

As meetings wind down, Luchs goes through his emails and answers them until 7 or 8 p.m.

8 p.m.

For dinner, he often eats with clients or friends at some of his favorite restaurants, including Craig's, Dan Tana's or the Tower Bar at the Sunset Tower Hotel.

"If I don't have a dinner planned. I'll eat at my house and relax," he said.

9 p.m.

He'll often unwind in the evening with Netflix. His list of stand-out entertainment features "Breaking Bad," "Better Call Saul" and he just finished the documentary "Beckham."

"I'm in the middle of watching 'Sly' about Sylvester Stallone now and loving it. I like comedy and I'll rewatch a lot of my favorite movies," he said.

He's fielded calls to do reality shows. In 2013, he appeared on "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" to find a location for the family's former fashion boutique Dash. However he said he'd never star in a show.

"The shows are entertaining. They glamorize a business that's not as fun as the shows make it look. The day-to-day job is grueling. There are parts of it that are fun, but it's not a game," he said.

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