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TECHNICALLY SPEAKING. All work is done in-house so we have direct control over the entire process. We also offer our clients options including processed or non-processed formats, and VHS tapes or CD ROMS. **QUALITY.** LeBlanc & Associates has established credentials as the premiere sales agent evaluation company in the industry. We have one expertise...new home sales. Fast food restaurants, banks and car dealerships are not our game. We have the best agent capture rate around. Our people are personally trained to focus on the agent. We realize you know what your models look like! **Have you have tried the rest and found ill prepared field personnel? Have you seen more walls than agents? Do ceiling shots make you dizzy?**

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You can receive *The Home Front* by e-mail as a PDF file. You will enjoy the same graphics and layout as the printed version and you can more easily share your copy with other staff and sales agents! Please contact me at Mary@mleblanc.com if you would prefer *The Home Front* by e-mail and don't forget to include your name, company, city and state! You can also visit my website (www.mleblanc.com) to obtain previous editions of *The Home Front*.

The Home Front

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ISSUE 35 • SUMMER 2006

The Front Porch

Great professionals understand the importance of delivery in their craft. The great singers always make it seem so easy. The verses flow effortlessly and they know how to pace and deliver their lyrics. If you think of some of the great standard singers such as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald, etc., you know what I am talking about. The same holds true with great comedians. I don't know about you, but if I told the same joke as say, George Carlin, I would consider myself lucky to get a polite smile. The difference? *Delivery*. No matter what the field, when you watch or listen to the greats, their delivery leaves you with a 'wow' factor.

Delivery and Pacing. Does that mean our agents have to sing in the sales office? Only if they have great voices. Otherwise, all agents must learn how to deliver their message effectively, efficiently and effortlessly. I could line up 3-4 different videos of sales agents, all giving the same information, etc. Technically they might even score the same. Yet one or two of those agents stand out. Why? Their delivery. So while each agent is saying basically the same thing, one is effective and the others are not quite so successful. The difference in agents' delivery is amazing at times. When I listen to audio tapes or view their videos I am impressed at the superstar's ability to seamlessly flow from Greeting to Discovery to Product to Closing. It is such a joy. The super star knows how to pace their questions and information. They know when to use some humor. They know how to create a relaxed selling environment. They know when to listen. They know when to zip it.

Some agents jump from one topic to another as if they memorized a set of 'talking points' and they are trying to make sure they get it all covered. It just doesn't flow right.



Mary LeBlanc, President
LEBLANC & ASSOCIATES

Hopefully time and practice will cure this problem. Other agents just don't come up for air. I cringe at times when I hear their grand inquiries. Twenty questions? I wish there were so few. Usually these agents are too busy talking and do not understand the importance of listening. It is amazing what you learn by not talking over and beyond your prospective buyer. You know the old adage about two ears, one mouth. With this group of agents, the mouth is over-engaged and the ears are plugged. Can't listen to the music that way.

Whenever possible agents must deliver an uncompromised version of their sales presentation. That means full Critical Path basics (Greeting & Rapport, Discovery & Assessment, Community Presentation, Product Presentation, and Closing). Other times, the agent can not realistically spend 40 minutes to an hour with a prospective buyer. They then must kick into an abbreviated sales presentation. However, when that happens, they still must have an effective delivery so the prospective buyer has a reason to return. In either situation, the end result still should leave the buyer with the 'wow' factor. It's all in the delivery. ♥

Motivation

By Randy Tasch, Lead Educator for the Institute for Professional Sales Careers

Why is it so hard to find good people? Why does New Home Sales have such a high turnover rate with its sales people? Why is it when we advertise or place an ad on the internet we don't get the right people? Better yet, why are we so surprised when 90% of our new hires never work out?

Good people are **found**, not changed. They can change themselves, but **you** can't change them. If you want to hire good people, you have to go out and find them. Most of the best sales people are already working, they're not waiting for you to call them. If you want motivated people, you have to seek them out (not necessarily motivate them) and just **train** them.

I read an article the other day. It said, "We do not teach our people to be nice." That is a novel concept. The next line said, "We hire nice people." There it is in a nutshell . . . Hire right, and train to be the best!

Why is motivation such a mystery? Why are some people motivated and some are not? Why does one salesperson see their first prospect at nine in the morning while the other sees their first prospect at eleven in the morning? Why would one start at nine and the other start at eleven? This has always been "mind boggling" to me!

I give classes to a hundreds people at a time. One walks out and says, "I'm going to

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Top Ten Questions . . . by Mary LeBlanc

Recently I was asked to provide the top ten questions I felt sales agents should incorporate into their sales presentation. I have to admit I never have run that type of drill before. I immediately thought of David Letterman's Top 10 list, but I don't have the talent to match his wit. Below is what I came up with. You may or may not agree. So my challenge to you is, what would *you* include in *your* top ten list?

Please e-mail me (Mary@mleblanc.com) your list and I will include the results in the next edition of *The Home Front*.

GREETING & RAPPORT

Welcome to (_____). How may I help you today?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

What is important to you in a home?

DISCOVERY

How many people will be residing in the home? (With follow-up for children, etc.)

Will there be anyone else involved in the purchase decision?

PRODUCT

Do you mind if I get you started in our models?

What are your preferences for a home site location?

QUALIFY

Our homes are priced from (\$ to \$). Is that what you had in mind?

Will you be selling your home?

CLOSING

Are you in a position to make a purchase decision today?

Would you like to reserve your home until you can return (this weekend)? ♥

Kudos Korner

Here are more agents who have demonstrated superstar status during this last quarter of evaluations conducted by LeBlanc & Associates. Kudos to all!

BRANDY TALIAFERRO

Meritage Homes

Brandy's professionalism is wrapped in a blanket of enthusiasm. Brandy easily gives her buyer the feeling that she wants to help them in their new home search. Her qualifying and assessment process is done in a relaxed, conversational manner.

MAHNAZ HEMMATI

Meritage Homes

Mahnaz offers her buyers a thorough sales presentation with enthusiasm that is contagious. She speaks proudly of her builder and creates a sense of excitement about her community. Mahnaz never hesitated to ask for a purchase commitment after she more than earned the right to ask for the sale.

WENDY MARGRAVE

K. Hovnanian

Wendy is a seasoned professional in the active adult community. She demonstrated exceptional selling skills that not only included all the essentials of a near perfect sales presentation, but she also demonstrated a community that perfectly fit her buyer's lifestyle.

CRAIG BUCY

K. Hovnanian

Craig is another seasoned professional in the active adult community. His ability to establish rapport and show empathy for personal situations is to be commended. Craig demonstrated a structured sales presentation and knows how to control the sales process from start to finish.

JILL DANIELE

IntraCorp

Jill was a beneficiary of both our audio and video evaluation series. Both times she demonstrated superior selling skills. Not only does Jill demonstrate knowledge of her product, but she enthusiastically sells the benefits of living the urban lifestyle of her high rise condominium community.

ROBYN DELONG

D. R. Horton

Robyn is a superstar. Her enthusiasm and concern for her buyer are seldom seen today. She provides a structured and informative sales presentation and easily builds rapport. Robyn's use of benefit selling language adds to her ability to pursue the close.

WILL TOWER

Florsheim Homes

Will presents himself in a manner that places any type of buyer at ease. He creates rapport through his humor as well as his caring attitude. He demonstrates excellent product knowledge and builder pride. Will is to be commended for showing a level of professionalism seldom found in today's market.

From our Video Profile Series, each of the following agents demonstrated superior selling skills:

NORMAN LOYD

Artisan Communities

BRENT COLBY

K. Hovnanian Four Seasons

MICHELLE TANG

K. Hovnanian Four Seasons

Congratulations to all!

It's What You Don't Say That Counts!

By Ric Hernandez, Capital Pacific Homes

Salespeople are famous for being good talkers. In fact, the most important sales tool we have is the art of telling a story. However, what we say in a non-verbal way can sometimes be louder than what we are saying out loud. Some of us spend all kinds of time getting ready for the day. We do our hair and put on fine clothes, etc. But have you considered how your body language is perceived by your customer? The best way to understand how you communicate through body language is to videotape your next presentation. What will you see will be eye-opening.

- Are you making eye contact and sincerely listening to the prospect?
- Is your sales center neat and organized?
- Do you cross your legs or arms during a presentation?
- Are you turning your back on a prospect as you move from one area to the next?

Be conscious of how you present your information. If someone asks about the tax rate and your eyebrows shoot up, you may be telling them that there is a problem, even while you are verbally painting a positive picture. If you are working with a couple, don't forget to steer your conversation to both people. This will send a message that you respect both of them. Focusing on what you are saying through body language will help build rapport and will get people to trust what you are saying with words. Don't forget to smile. It's worth a thousand words!

Ric Hernandez joined Capital Pacific Homes in 2004 as Vice President of Sales & Marketing for the Southern California Division. Prior to joining CPH, Mr. Hernandez was on his own as an Executive Coach and Sales Trainer to the homebuilding industry. Ric's professional accomplishments have included overseeing the sales operations for Brookfield Home's Southland Division. Prior to joining Brookfield Homes in 1996, Ric was the sales manager for Centex Homes Southern California Division. Before that, he was an onsite sales agent from 1988 to 1993, working for Osborne Development, The San Juan Group, Creative Sales Systems, and Richmond American Homes where he started his career in the homebuilding industry as a mailroom courier. Ric Hernandez can be reached at Ric.Hernandez@cph-inc.com 951.279.2447 xt 104

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The Home Front

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Motivation . . . from page one

change my life." Another walks out with a yawn and says, "I've heard all this stuff before." Why are some students doodling and another one taking notes? Why is that?

A wealthy man says to a thousand people, "I read this book and it started me on the road to wealth." Guess how many of the thousand go out and get the book? Answer: very few. Doesn't that blow your mind? Why wouldn't everyone go get the book? I have often recommended reading *Raving Fans*, *Who Moved my Cheese*, and *Gung Ho* and still some people won't read them. "Why?" We give them plenty of "testimonials" that the reading is useful . . . and they still won't . . . ?

I've had to say to one person, "You'd better slow down. You can't work that many hours, sell that many houses, go, go, go. You're going to burn out." And to another person you have to say, "When are you going to get up out of your chair and out of your office and greet the prospect?" What is the difference? Why doesn't everyone strive to be wealthy and happy?

The answer is HABIT! Habit: "A continual, often unconscious inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition." How many days do you think it takes to make a habit? The answer is 42. 21 to establish it and 21 more to develop it . . . We can give you the tools to become the best at what you do, but if you choose not to use them, you will stay the same! The choice is yours. Doesn't everybody want to have a *better* life?

Focus on the tools that are given to you, turn them into habits and see what transpires . . . Maybe, just maybe you will see a difference.

Randy Tasch is the Lead Educator of The Institute for Professional Sales Careers based in Anaheim, California. In a career of over 25 years, Randy has instilled excellence in sales teams for many of the country's leading builders, including D. R. Horton, Warmington Homes, J. F. Shea Company, Richmond American, Beazer Homes, Standard Pacific Homes, KB Homes, Meritage Homes and Toll Brothers. Randy has been named Salesperson of the Year in major markets, and is the recipient of numerous MAME and ELAN awards. Randy has also been invited to speak at National Association of Homebuilders Conventions across the United States. He continues to be a professional resource for builders throughout the nation. He can be reached at rt@unbs.com or 818.264.9148. IPSC, 1205 N. Tustin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807 (714) 238-1111. ♥