

The Eyes Have It!

SEEING IS BELIEVING. No matter how good the selling market might be, a community's success ultimately relies on the quality of the sales agents. **Video Profiles** from LeBlanc & Associates capture your agent's entire sales presentation through the eyes of the buyer.

TRAINING. Eliminate the doubt. Use a **Video Profile** from LeBlanc & Associates of your best agent(s) to demonstrate what you expect from the rest of the team. What better way can an agent learn than from the best of their peers? LeBlanc & Associates can provide a self-evaluation guide to reinforce the training aspect of the program.

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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The Home Front

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The Home Front

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The Home Front

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The Front Porch

Greatness. We use this word a lot in our lives. Sometimes its use is appropriate. Other times it just doesn't fly. With apologies to her fans, is Britney Spears really great?

A while back there was a television ad which went: In sports...Greatness is more than *talking* a good game. You must *play* a good game. *Make it happen.* I can't remember who the ad was for, but I remembered the ad! With sports greats and with anyone in life, you need to do more than talk the talk.

So back to our tried and true message for the last several editions of this newsletter. Do you have greatness in your sales centers? If you answered yes, ask yourself is their greatness due to how they sell or due to our feverishly hot demand market? Some agents truly are great. Each edition of *The Home Front* hi-

With current market changes, we will now find out who are the great ones.

lights those agents in the Kudos Korner. However over the last several editions, I did have to struggle to find agents worthy of that column! As I frequently remind people, the total number of units sold is not necessarily the result of a great sales agent. With current market changes, we will now find out who are the great ones.

As my telephone and e-mails have been on overload these past several months, I suspect managers feel they may not have as many great sales people as previously thought. Our reports and video profiles substantiate the fact that most agents, even the best of them, have not been selling. Agents have not been making an easy transition into our normalized mar-



Mary LeBlanc, President
LEBLANC & ASSOCIATES

ket. Most are still stuck in the order taking mode. Show an interest in my buyer? Demonstrate product? Conduct an assessment of buyer's needs? Showcase my product, community and builder? Ask for a purchase commitment? These are mostly nonexistent aspects in what for the most part are highly abbreviated sales presentations.

What I am observing now is agents selling incentive packages vs. their product or community. Here we go again. Buyers start shopping incentives vs. product. How strong a sale is that? Agents need to get their prospective buyer's emotional commitment to their product. If the buyer hesitates, and the agent has laid the proper ground work to ask for the sale, *then* the incentives come into play. Perhaps in your next sales meeting, reading the definition of the word incentive from a dictionary might help agents understand for what and when an incentive is to be used.

Sales agents are now charged with *making it happen.* No longer do they or their companies have the luxury of the "take it or leave it" attitude. So how do they make it happen? Hard work. Getting back to the basics of what constitutes a sales presentation. In short, they must *play* a good game. ♥

Sowing and Reaping

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

What a concept! If you render unique service, your reward will be multiplied. If you're fair and honest and patient with others, your reward will be multiplied. If you give more than you expect to receive, your reward is more than you expect. But remember: the key word here is discipline.

Everything of **value** requires care, attention, and discipline. Our thoughts require discipline. We must consistently determine our inner boundaries and our codes of conduct, or our thoughts will be confused. And if our thoughts are confused, we will become hopelessly lost in the maze of life. Confused thoughts produce confused results.

Remember the law: "For every disciplined effort, there are multiple rewards." Learn the discipline of writing a card or a letter to a friend. Learn the discipline of arriving to appointments on time, or using your time more effectively. Learn the discipline of paying attention, or paying your taxes or paying yourself. Learn the discipline of having regular meetings with your associates, or your spouse, or your child, or your parent. Learn the discipline of learning all you can learn, of teaching all you can teach, of reading all you can read.

For each discipline, multiple rewards. For

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Are Your Sights Set for the Future? . . . by Manny Schatz

Home Front: *Manny, successful sales are more than just the agents in the sales centers. They are of course the result of a full company effort. So what do builders need to ask themselves?*

Manny Schatz: In many markets, it is getting more difficult to locate good buildable sites where you can make a profit. So companies need to determine what steps they need to take to ensure they will be building homes in the future. Do you have sufficient land in those areas to accomplish your business plan?

HF: *How about the construction department?*

MS: Companies must determine how they train, motivate and retain field personnel. This question can also pertain to all employees. There needs to be more emphasis placed on proper recruiting, training, motivating and competitive compensation packages of everyone on your team.

HF: *And marketing?*

MS: Companies must ask what their approach to marketing is. Are you on the cutting edge of your market? Do you understand your market and what is important to your prospects? Do

you know what will excite them? And what do you need to do to get on that cutting edge?

HF: *What questions arise about the shift in our selling market?*

MS: Companies must ask if there has been a slowdown in qualified traffic and sales in their market place. What steps are you undertaking to understand your traffic? What action do you need to take to maintain the numbers of qualified prospects you need to achieve your goals? How are your prospects generated? Is your homeowner referral rate as high as it should be?

HF: *Customer satisfaction and its role in the sales process?*

MS: As this is an ever changing segment in our industry, companies need to ask what recent steps they have taken to increase quality and customer satisfaction. Do you survey your homeowners after they have lived in their homes for a period of time? Are returned surveys directed to the president of the company? What action is taken with the results?

HF: *What about buyers, for whatever reason, who sometimes have unrealistic expectations for their new home purchase?*

MS: Companies need to know how they train your team to include everyone in their company to instill realistic expectations to their home buyers. Most home buyers are disappointed in their builders because they started with unrealistic expectations about what was to occur – and when. Are you training all of your team in the methods of promoting realistic expectations throughout their areas of responsibility?

HF: *And to summarize, what do builders need to do?*

MS: In summary, this exercise of questions and actions is intended to encourage builders to think about their plans for their company's future and to take new directions or implement new approaches as may be necessary to ensure their continued success.

Manny Schatz, principal of Professional Builder Services, Inc. in Danville, has been involved in nearly every aspect of home building. He holds a general contractors license, a brokers license, and MIRM certification. In addition to his professional affiliations, Manny was an associate of The Stone Institute, and worked with the late Dave Stone. For further information, contact Manny Schatz at (925) 837-1937. ♥

Kudos Korner

KATHY SHEPPARD

Pacifica Companies

Kathy demonstrates confidence, solid product knowledge and strong closing skills. She determines her buyer's needs through casual conversation and personalizes her presentation to those stated needs.

ROBYN GREER

Pacifica Companies

Robyn is very professional and approachable. She shows a genuine interest in her buyers through a solid assessment and discovery process. Her product demonstration is thorough and she consistently weaves value and quality into her presentation.

NICOLE BRAYBOY

Fieldstone Communities

Nicole's positive, energetic style is infectious. She creates a natural rapport allowing her to conduct a solid assessment and qualification of her buyer. Her use of benefit selling language painted a picture of an ideal community with beautiful homes.

TONYA ARNOLD

Meritage Homes

Tonya exudes enthusiasm as well as appreciation for her homes and company. From her in-depth needs analysis to her meticulous features driven model demonstration, Tonya demonstrates a true desire to meet and exceed the needs of her prospective buyer.

These agents have demonstrated superstar status during this last quarter of sales agent evaluations conducted by LeBlanc & Associates. Kudos to all!

JIM WHITE

Pacific Communities

Jim demonstrates a natural rapport with people that make the prospective buyer feel welcome and valued. Jim demonstrates strong selling skills including perseverance in asking for the sale.

JULIANNE FABINY

Chaffey Homes

Julianne tailors her presentation around the prospective buyers needs and then interjects ideas that are of special interest to her buyer. Her product demonstration is meticulous and she helps her buyers visualize living in the home.

DAVE CRYDERMAN

Del Webb / Pulte Homes

Dave offers a thorough presentation and is enthusiastic about sharing information about his community. He establishes a good relationship with his buyers and provides his undivided attention offering the highest level of personal service. Overall, Dave creates a reason to buy one of his homes.

LARRY McGLONE

D.R. Horton

Larry excels at product knowledge and connects with his buyer and convinces you that a D.R. Horton home is the only choice to make. Larry uses great discovery questions that enable him to personalize and focus his presentation to the buyer's needs. Larry uses exceptional benefit selling language. He excels in every aspect of the sales presentation.

IVY LANGNER

Dunmore Homes

Ivy excels at discovering the basic needs of her buyer and then probes further to understand the buyer's lifestyle interests to match how the community would meet those interests. Her product presentation is structured with several persuasive benefit statements about the features of the homes.

DAVE GEYER

CHRIS PAPIN / PAUL LAMOTT *Richmond American Homes*

Each of these agents demonstrated a superior sales presentation. They excel at building rapport, demonstrating product, conducting discovery and assessment and asking for the sale.

Congratulations to all!

Try Environmental Design . . . by Roger S. Anderson, Principal, Anderson Marketing

Having recently visited 18 active adult communities in Southern California, I was a little surprised by what I found. Some homebuilders have moved into this market without a lot of market research.

Here is a list of some things I found:

- Builders who brought in single-story homes from other single-family communities that were obviously not designed for active adults.
- Bathtubs that are too deep and too hard to get in and out of, with stoppers that can only be closed by getting into the tub.
- Faucets that are in the way of tub access.
- A shower with a 12-inch deep bench.
- Pantries that are too deep to reach the cans and bottles in the rear.
- A home advertised as Universal Design without wheelchair access to the toilet and several places in the home without enough space to turn a wheelchair around.
- A community without a trail or proper sidewalk to walk their dog, bicycle on or jog.

Where did I get this list of architectural and site plan mistakes? It is from just one of eighteen communities and from just three of their models. I got the list by sitting in the spa with about a hundred homeowners in the active adult community where I live. It has become one continuous, ongoing focus group.

What is an active adult looking for in a home located in an Active Adult Community?

In the Site . . .

- A place to walk the dog, bicycle and jog.
- Gates that roll not swing.
- An adults-only pool with lots of deck space.
- A separate small shallow pool for grandkids.
- A large fitness center in the clubhouse.

In the Product . . .

- Lots of closet storage.
- Lots of garage storage.
- A home office with the latest technology.
- Wide, shallow pantries.
- Grab bars at appropriate places.
- Fewer but bigger rooms.

- A room capable of being a media room.
- A plan with a casita and a courtyard.
- Mostly great rooms over parlors and formal dining rooms.

If you are currently selling homes in an active adult community, check the prices in your design center. Multiply the cost of options and upgrades by one-and-a-half, not by three. Just because the buyer is 65 does not mean they are stupid. Grossly overpriced options still are the number one topic at my spa.

How can you incorporate the basic and least expensive principles of Universal Design into all your homes? Most builders are conservative and cautious. However, consider the following inexpensive features when working with your architects even if you are not building a 55+ community.

- Make all doors three-foot doors.
- Make all hallways a minimum of three foot ten inches wide.
- Electrical outlets 28" above the floor.
- Thermostats 47 inches above the floor.
- Provide high-rise toilet options.
- Provide a shallow bathtub in the master bath with a stopper that is workable without having to get into the tub.
- Provide a five-foot shower with deep seat and hand held shower.
- Provide a vanity in the master bath.
- Provide one access to the home that is wheel chair friendly (optional)

Consider doing these simple improvements for all of your homes. These recommendations are not just age-targeted features; they are logical home improvements for any home. Why not build an all single-story age-targeted project with the above features and a few more and not have to go through the DRE to get approval for a 55+ community. These homes could be the answer to aging-in-place.

Anderson Marketing is a full service marketing company specializing in market studies, product recommendations, pricing, premiums and pro-formas, budgeting and coordination of all outside sales and marketing consultants for land owners, developers, and homebuilders in Riverside, San Bernardino, L.A., Orange and San Diego Counties. Roger can be reached at 951-315-9597 or . . . andersonmarketing@adelphia.net.

Sowing & Reaping . . . from page one

each book, new knowledge. For each success, new ambition. For each challenge, new understanding. For each failure, new determination. Life is like that. Even the bad experiences of life provide their own special contribution.

That's what we call the Law of Familiarity. Without the discipline of paying constant, daily attention, we take things for granted. Be serious. ***Life's not a practice session.***

If you're inclined to toss your clothes onto the chair rather than hanging them in the closet, be careful. It could suggest a lack of discipline. And remember, a lack of discipline in the small areas of life can cost you heavily in the more important areas of life. You cannot clean up your company until you learn the discipline of cleaning your own garage. You cannot be impatient with your children and be patient with your distributors or your employees. You cannot inspire others to sell more when that goal is inconsistent with your own conduct.

The most valuable form of discipline is the one that you impose upon yourself. Don't wait for things to deteriorate so drastically that someone else must impose discipline in your life. How could you explain the fact that someone else thought more of you than you thought of yourself? That they forced you to get up early and out into the marketplace when you would have been content to let success go to someone else who cared more about themselves.

Your life and the life of each one of us serves as either a warning or an example. A warning of the consequences of neglect, self-pity, lack of direction and ambition . . . or an example of talent, of discipline self-imposed, and of objectives clearly perceived and intensely pursued.

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. ♥