

Building Green Requires Diligent Marketing

Earning green home certification is one thing, but unless you market the fact, you are not taking full advantage of a good opportunity.

By Robert Rivinius

Whether you create urgency by pointing out spiraling energy costs or indoor air-related issues like asthma and allergies, successful green builders must tout their environmentally responsible construction and must educate their buyers. Sales people need training to discuss the green benefits and to help potential buyers form emotional attachments to green. Collateral material and green rooms can help tell the builder's green story. Details of the building science can be on the website. Green builders are rewarded through increasing public interest in cutting utility costs and fighting air pollution.

Homebuyers are more in tune with economic and environmental issues than ever before. They are more receptive to learning how the higher upfront costs of green homes can be offset by reduced monthly bills. The power of green is that it can be crafted into a compelling story for every homeowner. To do this, however, a builder needs a commitment to green that starts in the board room and ends in the sales office.

Several examples of green marketing efforts can be found among the member communities of California Green Builder: Pardee Homes, MasterCraft Homes Group LLC, K Street East LLC, Lee Homes/CityView, The Hoffman Company, and Daley Homes.

Pardee Homes introduced their first energy-efficient homes in 1998 and have grown their green and sustainable program. They have done an outstanding job of marketing their homes and the benefits of green through collateral and on-site displays. One of their

new Los Angeles County neighborhoods has recently qualified for the California Green Builder (CGB) designation. They recently won the California Green Builder Gold Nugget Award along with O'Brien Homes at PCBC this year.

MasterCraft Homes' "The Gatsby Hollywood," recently received city and state commendations for its sustainable design, declaring it the City of Angels' first all-green, all-solar community.

O Bel Sole! by K Street East LLC in Lancaster uses CGB signage to tout its green features, and they hosted a grand opening that highlighted

the sustainable features of the community.

"Lofts by Lee Homes/CityView in Los Angeles uses Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube to reach its customers.

The Hoffman Company used their status as the desert region's first California Green Builder community to be featured on a local TV program.

Daley Homes' Palm Ranch Community in Tulare highlighted their green features in a television commercial.

CGB-compliant homes provide many talking points for sales agents. They exceed California's Title 24 energy requirements by at least 15 percent, CGB standards also divert at least 50 percent of construction and job site waste and reduce water usage by at least 20,000 gallons annually – when compared to contemporary, non-green homes. CGB builders utilize lumber and wood products harvested from managed forests at a rate that can be permanently sustained. CGB criteria promote better indoor air quality through advanced HVAC

systems and through filters and the use of low-VOC paints and materials. Independent third-party inspections and diagnostics are performed by CGB trained HERS raters, who verify a builder's CGB compliance and give the home a seal of approval.

California's adoption of a new Green Building Code, the first state to do so, calls for a 20 percent improvement in water use efficiency, a 50 percent increase in water conservation, and a 15 percent reduction in new construction energy consumption. The code is voluntary until 2010, when all new construction must comply.



Robert Rivinius, CAE, is the President and CEO of the California Building Industry Association and may be contacted at rivinius@cbia.org.



A builder needs a commitment to green that starts in the board room and ends in the sales office.

Fast Facts

- Successful green builders must educate their buyers on their environmentally responsible construction.
- California was the first state in the nation to adopt a new Green Building Code.
- The Green Building Code calls for 20 percent improvement in water use efficiency, 50 percent increase in water conservation, and 15 percent reduction in energy consumption.