

BUILDING AMERICA'S DREAM: a publication of the Homebuilders' Association of Greater Chicago

**OUTSOURCING TREND CONTINUES:
SMALL BUILDERS MAXIMIZE PROFIT, MAINTAIN
FOCUS**

If you build it they will come.

That idea may have worked for a fictitious baseball park in "Field of Dreams" but homebuilders know there is more to their business than bricks, mortar and functioning utilities. It starts before ground is broken with new housing concepts that will meet with public acceptance while assuring a reasonable return on investment, and continues after the home is complete with marketing and selling the property.

While large builders and developers typically employ a sales staff of licensed real estate professionals who work exclusively to sell the homes they build, this approach can be cost-prohibitive for the smaller builder. Traditionally, small builders have tried to market and sell their homes themselves – a task outside of their primary expertise – or worked with local real estate brokers and agents to sell new homes.

"Essentially, the decision to outsource one's sales and marketing needs comes down to a 'make or buy' decision," said Bridget Bolger of Coldwell Banker, Gladstone Realtors. "We understand most builders have an entrepreneurial spirit that may lead them to try 'do it yourself' marketing and sales.

"However, our small builder clients realize better results, faster, for less money and with less risk by 'making' new homes and 'buying' a proven, experienced marketing and sales team," she said.

In the early to mid-1990s a trend began to emerge as real estate agents began to specialize, many selling exclusively new homes. The logic behind this trend was that a different buyer market seeks new construction versus pre-existing homes, and specialized agents could focus on this sub-market and, thereby, do a better job at reaching those buyers.



**A BUILDER'S GUIDE TO
INTERNET MARKETING**

With an Internet-ready computer in most American homes, affordable domain names and do-it-yourself Web sites, many entrepreneurs mistakenly believe that all they need to do is create a Web site and their product will sell.

But according to Scott Multer, marketing manager for Bridget Bolger's New Homes Team, "build it and they will come thinking" doesn't apply to Web sites any more than it does to new homes. To get the right people to your site, here are five factors to consider:

- 1. Choose keywords and phrases carefully, selecting the words and phrases your target market will use when searching the Web.**

“There’s more to it than that,” said Bolger. “Knowing the target market is a first step but with so much new construction available, small builders need to rise above the clutter aimed at the new home customer with a truly all-encompassing marketing approach.”

Bolger offers builders that opportunity through her New Homes Team composed of professionals and creative staff who have worked extensively in new homes marketing, including with large builders of 200-plus homes per year.

Bridget Bolger’s New Homes Team helps small builders build their brand and sell their homes by optimizing tools such as Internet marketing (*see sidebar*), targeted outreach to buyers’ agents and editorial placement with local news media.

“We have found an integrated marketing approach is the most successful one and can be done affordably and effectively,” Bolger said. “Gladstone Realtors was started by my father in 1958 and joined its five offices with Coldwell Banker in 1994. We developed this specialized service from our years of experience selling homes throughout Chicagoland.”

To learn more about Bridget Bolger’s Builder Services, visit www.bridgetbolger.com/services/builders.

About the author: Starr McCaffery has been a business communications specialist for 20 years and currently operates Sound Solutions, Inc., an editorial services and communications consultancy in the Chicago area. She provides communication counsel and services for organizations in the homebuilding, real estate, hospitality, health care, automotive, professional services and consumer products industries.
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- 2. Make sure every page on your site has a title tag that starts with your keyword phrases and includes words that most accurately describe the page, and that copy on the pages is in text form, which is searchable, not graphics.**
- 3. Make the page “search engine spider friendly” and then make sure you have directory listings such as Yahoo and Google.**
- 4. Try to get appropriate sites to link to you, such as those belonging to interior designers, building suppliers and others with whom you do business.**
- 5. Engage visitors by making your site actionable. “Conversion” is the process in which you persuade visitors to take an action – sign up for a newsletter, submit a form or make a purchase.**