

INSTITUTE *for* LUXURY HOME MARKETING®

Use the power of “magic showing moments”

*By Laurie Moore-Moore, Founder
The Institute for Luxury Home Marketing*

Recently, I had an “Aha! Moment”-- one of those times when the light bulb flashed and my understanding of something clicked to a new level. Here’s what happened, I had an opportunity to interact with the wonderfully outrageous South Florida home builder, Frank McKinney.

Just to set the stage for you, McKinney’s personality is as big as the 60,000+ square foot spec mansions he builds. He bills himself as a real estate "artist," and there is no doubt that he is the force behind some of the Florida’s most interesting mansions priced in the double digit millions.

McKinney, who designs his homes in a tree house office, is a master of creativity. On each property homepage, you’ll find a countdown-to-completion clock ticking away. His new homes have theatrical “unveilings” (rather than grand openings) and draw hundreds of invitees who pay to preview the properties.

Here’s the light bulb that went on for me. We all know the importance of effective staging. But “McKinney’s marketing approach moves past staging and aims at creating a desire to live in the home from the time the prospect pulls up in front. He works to take staging and showing and turn it into a powerful selling experience.

First, he considers when and how the prospect will arrive at the house. He tries to schedule showings at a time when the home will show to best advantage. If sunset is spectacular from the poolside terraces, he wants the prospects to experience those views. Then, with the use of strategically placed cones, he influences exactly where the prospect and agent will park. He blocks the drive so they are forced to approach the home in the most desirable way. The prospect sees the full expanse of the front yard, takes in the dramatic architecture, sees the guest house which appears to be floating in a lagoon, smells the freshly cut grass and feels the marble pavers underfoot. Anticipation heightens with the approach.

When the door opens, a memorable front door experience begins. While McKinney builds-in many of his front door magic moments -- including in one recent home, a “water floor” that curves into an arched aquarium wet bar with exotic fish overhead -- you can stage your own memorable front door openings by being creative. It’s the concept that’s important. McKinney carefully furnishes and stages the home so there is a pleasant surprise or positive feature around every corner. He appeals to multiple senses using music and scent. He has chocolate and

champagne waiting. Prospects are qualified in advance, so McKinney has even been known to hand them the keys and suggest they spend the evening at the house (giving new meaning to the old puppy dog close!).

His goal is to open “the window of desire” for the home and close the deal. What’s sitting by the front door on departure? A contract.

McKinney’s sales track record would indicate that this approach works. He tells the story of meeting buyers after closing to walk them through their new multimillion home and demonstrate all the features. His buyers asked, ‘Can we see the upstairs now, Frank?’ They had purchased based on only seeing (and falling in love with) the main floor.

In short, McKinney’s showings are designed to be memorable experiences that result in sales. How can you do that with your listings? Your homes don’t have to be multimillion dollar extravaganzas for you and your sellers to make every showing a memorable experience. This is turbo-charged staging.

Think about the questions McKinney must ask himself with every property. What times of day does the home show best? How can I take advantage of that? What approach to the house is most favorable? How can I enhance that approach? Where should prospects park? Can you create a WOW the moment the front door opens? How can you keep the positive impressions happening? What about sound and scent? How can you stage to best highlight the lifestyle(s) the home represents?

Then, there’s the question of how you get the buy-in and cooperation of your seller. The reality of today’s market is that some homes are selling. Successful sales are generally the homes which have proper pricing, effective staging, and creative marketing. If your seller understands this and *YOU* can create magic showing moments, the probability of sales success rises.