

The 7 visible signs of a company that refuses to participate in the recession:

PROFESSIONAL MERCHANT BUILDER

This is a builder who knows how to merchandise each home, even pre-sold homes. This process starts with an incredibly clean job site. It has excellent, well-managed signage. It shows up in all things being done decently and in order.

RESTRICTED TO "10" RATED MARKETS

A "10" market is a market research-identified market where there are not too many spec homes and the demand for housing is solid.

UNCOVERING PRODUCT NICHEs

Because of frequently-changing household demographics, a builder must constantly watch out for new product needs. For instance: (1) Move-down product, (2) Retirement product, (3) Growing Townhouse product(s), (4) A 2-story, 3 bedroom, 2 car garage, 2 bath, 1180 sq ft. product, (5) a European-style house product. (Etc.)

DEMAND TARGET MARKETING

It is easy to talk about "target marketing" but for most builders it means nothing. True target marketing is knowing who you sell to. (It is hard to find a builder who knows who he sells to in a precise description by various profiles). It is also knowing where these people currently live and a correct way of communicating to them.

EXCEPTIONAL INTEREST RATE AND LENDING PROGRAM

In a recession you have to be in place "in advance" with creative financing and with a way to build without borrowing.

NON-STANDARD MARKETING

Please don't think you can market your way to an image--this is a huge waste of money. Build good homes, treat people right, build the right things, and image will be free. Lifestyle marketing is also, to a large degree, a waste of advertising dollars. Find new, creative ways to market. Remember that you should market to the ladies by incorporating romance and stirring their curiosity.

TEST AGENTS FOR CLOSERS

I would guess that over 70% of agents are poor closers.