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Creating a Livable Home that Attracts Buyers

We believe that many Colorado builders responsibly invest the time and money to properly research their buying demographic. This is such a crucial step in how the house comes together in terms of architecture, atmosphere and the overall design of the finished home. By understanding your buyer's lifestyle, desires and goal requirements for a home, you can create a finished product that speaks directly and clearly to all of their needs.

Part of creating a specialized and uniquely designed home is to consult with an experienced model merchandiser who can fill the house with appealing merchandise. The strategic presentation of familiar and friendly items will go a long way in showcasing the beauty of the architecture and the livability of the space. Some model homes we've seen unfortunately dismiss this point and fail to establish a comfortable, approachable and conversational style. We are left wondering who their target buyer actually is as the visual appeal of the merchandise and its placement were obviously never considered. This is a marketing tool that can easily be accessed and included in the planning stage and will go a long way to connect attracted buyers to your appealing homes.

Innovative Spaces was fortunate enough to be included in the 2005 Parade of Homes at Pradera. We selected, designed and installed all of the interior merchandise for "La Chiripada" a Pinnacle Peak custom home. Some of the feedback we received was how livable and comfortable the home felt and how the interior design arrangement complemented the floor-plan and architecture. "La Chiripada" became a quick favorite among Parade goers. With 9,900 square feet, 5 bedrooms and 7 baths, this sophisticated Colorado retreat is a masterpiece of architecture. It cleanly emanates the kind of livable comfort and style that has become Colorado's signature for livable function and approachable interior design.

In creating this inviting feel for Pinnacle Peak's Parade home, we chose to use the subtle warm, rich, fabric textures, furniture and accessories that naturally and seamlessly blended with an overall earthy color palette. Delectable colors of chocolates, soothing greens and vibrant spices were generously used to create a warm, conversational environment that felt both familiar and distinctive to the viewer.

"Innovative Spaces' approach to the interior design and merchandising of our Parade home was clear from the start," said Michael Powell, owner of Pinnacle Peak Custom Homes. "The design concept definitely felt like Colorado in color and theme, but it also fully represented who we are as a company and the style of buyers that are attracted to our unique homes."

For some builders, the difficulty may lie in just how to demonstrate the delicate harmony between sophisticated design and livable function. The first step is to hire or seek the counsel of an experienced interior merchandise team of designers. This team will fully understand the fine line of how to convey and market the fantasy and practicality of the home versus creating an unattainable illusion of grandeur that no buyer can relate to. When model homes are too cluttered, have no design scheme or spatial continuity, the very important "first impression" mark is left to the competition. In the buyer market of today, it would be unfortunate and unnecessary to miss out on these potential and promising opportunities due to insufficient design planning.

Some key points to consider when creating the livable space that buyers appreciate include the following ideas:

- The architecture and interior design approach should always be “felt” rather than “contrived.”
- The architecture of the home should have an easy, comfortable flow between rooms, i.e., the conversational space between kitchen, nook and living room has a natural gathering quality that is appealing to most buyers in today’s market who enjoy entertaining guests or being with family.
- There should always be a few elements of surprise in a home - some unexpected areas of interest that create character and ambience, i.e., artwork, collections, hidden/quiet corners or nooks, visual community tie-ins, accessories that speak directly to the buyer, modernized antiques, eye-popping color in a kitchen drawer, or fresh scented flowers in the great room.
- Always appeal to the buyers’ imagination and creativity. Buyers want to connect with a home mentally and physically. Strive to include design elements that are space saving and innovative and deter from using items that exclude or disassociate the home from the buyer.
- Create everyday living spaces that are refreshing, comfortable and inviting – a welcome retreat after a hard day of work or play as well as a gathering place for friends and entertaining.
- Create intimate spaces of conversation or reflection, i.e. the dining room table could be set for six, where a quiet reading nook holds a coffee cup and biscotti for one.
- Embrace the unique elements that allow your home to emit a livable and everyday feel. Adopting an unpretentious style to your home will most likely attract the attention and memory of most potential buyers.

Model merchandise design teams understand that you have a quality reputation to maintain. Therefore, finding a qualified and experienced group to implement your vision so that it directly speaks to your target buyer is one of the most important and cost effective marketing tools available. At the end of the day, your new community of homes should reflect the personality of the buyer and the dedication of your company. With upfront and reliable research put into design and model merchandise, buyer demographics and the surrounding local community, the exact look and feel of your home is easily, creatively and affordably attainable; leaving the buyer feeling instantly included, attracted and interested in purchasing one of your new homes.

**Column Note:* Some of our future columns will be specifically written to address your interior design and merchandising questions or dilemmas for either residential or model homes. Please write to us at Innovative Spaces by e-mailing your questions to kristin@innovativespaces.com.

Innovative Spaces – Interior Merchandising and Design: R-L: Kristin Hibler, President; Lori Tice, Designer; and Jamie Rumph, Designer are an experienced professional design team that have been collectively helping design model and residential homes in Colorado and the Western Region for over 15 years. Innovative Spaces is the only Colorado interior design company to have their own merchandise warehouse which further offsets the cost for receiving and installing interior merchandise. Innovative Spaces can easily be reached at 303-721-1400 or visit our website at www.innovativespaces.com.

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