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Now that's **Great** Advertising!



This outdoor board created by Barcellona, Inc., for Twelve Bridges, in Lincoln, California visually and verbally captures the essence of this masterplanned community where residents cite nature as their number-one community amenity. The board rotates along a travel corridor from which the majority of Twelve Bridges residents move. Coupled with traffic sponsorships during morning and afternoon drive times, the target audience hears and sees information on Twelve Bridges at the same time, increasing the power of the message.

Photo courtesy of Barcellona, Inc.

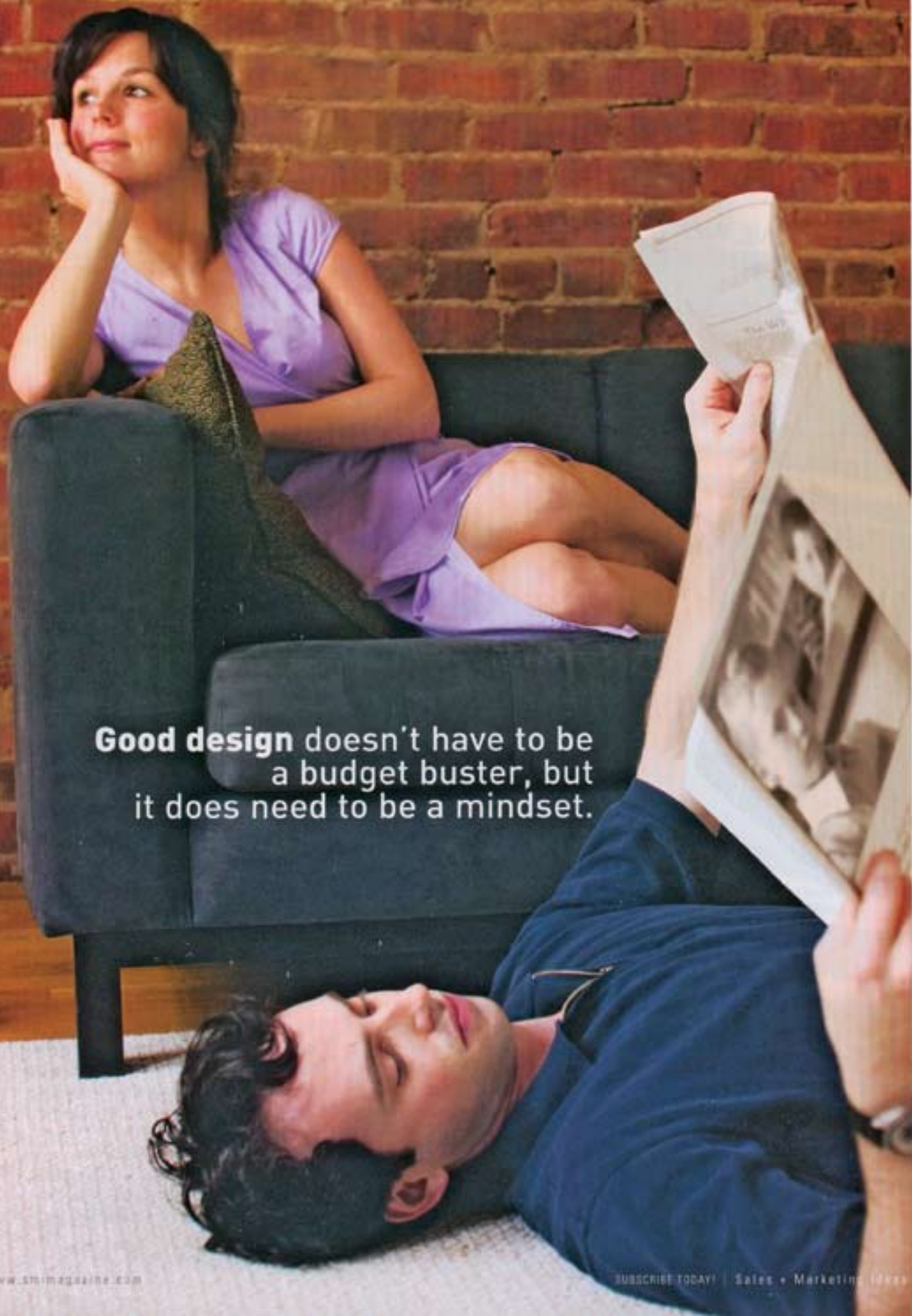
Look through the real estate section of a typical newspaper and you'll notice that most of the ads look alike. The happy family. The dog. The play on the word room or home. They all blend in and become wallpaper. Then one ad will jump off the page. Consumers don't necessarily think, "Now, that's great advertising." Instead they think, "Oh, let's check out this new community." Now that's great advertising!

As an agency that specializes in real estate marketing, we want our clients' advertising to be great, to break through the clutter of ads, and do its job — to bring qualified prospective buyers to their communities.

It takes the proverbial village to get to "that's great advertising": dedicated clients, strategists, creative directors, copywriters, photographers, and more.

Designing Great Advertising

Great real estate advertising isn't an oxymoron. There is great real estate advertising out there, setting builders apart from the rest, surpassing the competition in more ways than can be measured in sales figures. Simply take a look at the winners of "The Nationals" awards competition (www.thenationals.com) and you'll see a fantastic sample of the nation's best real estate advertising. As one of the judges for this year's Nationals, surrounded by all of that great



Good design doesn't have to be
a budget buster, but
it does need to be a mindset.

You may not personally like the ad, but if it speaks strongly to your audience and prompts them to action, then who cares?

Mindy Greene and Aleco Birnbach of Greene & Birnbach Advertising in Denver, Colorado, beautifully executed this print ad for their client, The Landmark. "The Landmark is an authentic and elegant project," said Greene. "The gorgeous editorial-quality photography of the dogs in this ad became the voice for the entire campaign – classic elegance." The developer sold 80% of the 122-unit project the first day of the grand opening.

I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING FOR A WALK.

When you've finally found a way to have someone else take care of life's little necessities, you'll wonder how you could have ever lived without it. Like having my own personal Concierge. One who knows how to get me the best seats in town, to anything. With just a phone call I can get my car detailed, my errands run, plan a party, even get the dogs groomed anytime I need it. It's all at my fingertips. I wouldn't want to have it any other way.

THE LANDMARK

There's a VIP List. Get on it.
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COMING SEPTEMBER 2005 • FOUR STAR CONDOMINIUM LIVING FROM \$200,000 to \$1,000,000
Five Star Dining • Exclusive Shopping • Spa • Fitness • Pool • Business Center • Concierge • Gourmet Market • Theaters

advertising, I wondered why some other builders continue to waste their money on crummy advertising. Could it be because during the boom they sold everything they built no matter how bad their ads were? Maybe they don't know what it takes to create great real estate advertising, or they don't care.

Below are some principles to remember if you want to know what it takes to create great real estate advertising.

1. Great Design Sells. Understand that design sells. Just look at Target. The retail giant is selling the cool design of toilet bowl brushes instead of the function. Good design doesn't have to be a budget buster, but it does need to be a mindset.

2. Great Agency Relationship.

Pick an agency that values great design as well as, not instead of, creative strategy. Find a full-service agency that can craft advertising, promotions, and public relations messages into a cohesive campaign and be a true marketing partner, not just a vendor. Your agency should be able to explain to you the strategy behind the advertising, why it makes sense for your situation, and what they expect the results to be. If they can do this, then trust them. Remember, they are invested in your success as well as in their own.

3. Take Some Time. You wouldn't build a home in a day. You shouldn't expect your agency to develop great advertising in a day either. Great advertising also needs a solid foundation. Give yourself and your agency enough time to thoroughly understand your audience, the product, its market, etc. The agency should write a detailed creative strategy that you approve before any design has begun. The primary ingredient in the great advertising mix is time — the time to sit and think to come up with great ideas and great executions of those ideas. Never underestimate the

With an island location, Coldwell Banker The Condo Store and The Branding Group partnered to create a teaser ad of distinction for Waterside, a condo conversion project in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Betty Harbour, CB's senior vice president, director of marketing, said they intentionally highlighted the water feature instead of showing product to evoke emotion in the prospective buyer. The simple, catchy headline and dolphins that break through the ad border perfectly support Waterside's logo. Two thousand people registered online as a result of this ad and five hundred of them purchase units in the first phase.

power of time (or of thinking!).

4. Take Risks. Out-of-the-box creative ideas make builders nervous. They don't, however, make the buying public nervous.

Again, trust that your advertising experts know what they are doing. Take chances and be the hero when it works. Advertising great Leo Burnett once said, "I am one who believes that one of the greatest dangers of advertising is not that of misleading people, but that of boring them to death." Risk not being boring. You'll reap great rewards.

5. Practice Patience. Have the patience to see the results. Don't just give it one weekend. Successful media plans are layered. With a new campaign, make sure you've had time to evaluate the results when all of the layers have been in place.

6. Stop Marketing to Yourself. One of the most prolific problems we've encountered as an agency is the tendency for builders to market to themselves. Remember, you are not the buyer. Get to know your buyer or you won't be successful. Research shows that young first timers don't read newspapers that often, so they need to be reached by radio, Internet, or outdoor advertising. Recognize that you need to remove your personal preferences from the creative approval process. You may not personally like the ad, but if it speaks strongly to your audience and prompts them to action, then who cares? Legendary ad man David Ogilvy said it best: "If you're trying to persuade people to do something or buy something, it seems to me you should use their language, the language in which they think."

Catch the morning flight...
right outside your door.

Waterfront condominiums from the \$150,000's. Spectacular views, boat club with slips & restaurant

waterside
Register online for the priority buyer's list www.inlootwaterside.com

COLDWELL BANKER

7. Know Everything. Understand your brand and what your company stands for. What promises do you make to your buying public? Know your product. What is unique about it? How does it differ from the builder down the street? Why would someone buy it? Know your competition. You can't sell in a vacuum. Are your selling propositions different from theirs? Only if you know this information like the back of your hand can you share it with your agency and help develop a solid creative strategy.

Now You're Ready to Break Some Rules

You've learned some important principles. Now understand some common pitfalls and misconceptions in our industry.

1. Don't Sell Your Product. Information simply informs, but emotion sells. Sell the lifestyle, not the product. Let people know how it will feel to live in your home or community. Floor plans and elevations won't sell your home. Your advertising should direct potential buyers to the builder's Web site or to the sales office. These are the appropriate places for this information. Let them browse here. You don't have to show a house to sell a house. The best ads don't!

2. Kill the Info. Too often builders try to tell their entire story and give a brochure's

For Mastique, a high-rise community in South Fort Myers, Florida, B2 Advertising created a distinct look for the community that appealed to the second-home buyer between the ages of 44 and 65 by featuring illustrations reminiscent of classic tourism photos that had a "Gatsby-esque" quality to them. Its bright colors and dynamic art direction helped the ads stand out from the crowd. The entire campaign, consisting of newspaper ads, inserts, radio, outdoor, direct mail, and a virtual reality tour had the air of a destination resort to which anyone would long to visit — or live.

Courtesy of B2 Advertising

Courtesy of The Branding Group



4. Don't be Boring.

Advertising isn't all about information. Entertain them, and they will remember you. Cause them to think, to giggle, to smile, to remember "that happened to me," and you've not only entertained, you've engaged.

5. Don't be Married to Print Advertising.

Different buyers have different methods of acquiring their information. Yes, newspaper is still a vital

and viable part of the media mix — if it hits your target audience. Consider email, text messaging, radio, cable, promotions. The list goes on and on.

It's never too late to start creating great advertising. Get out of the rut that you've been in, and try something new — speaking to your audience, in their voice, in a visually engaging way.

How do you get started? Review the award winners from "The Nationals." Take advantage of the "Ask an Expert" service from the National Association of Home Builders, where a member of the Institute of Residential Marketing specializing in advertising will review your ad free of charge. Go to www.nahb.org for details.

In a time when homes aren't selling faster than you can build them, this is a proven way to increase your sales. We'll be looking for your ads at next year's "Nationals." SMI

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worth of information in a print or broadcast ad. Keep the message simple, distinct, and powerful, and then direct prospects to the Web where they can get more information.

3. Pretend you Failed English 101.

Both one-word ads and 1,000-word ads have been equally successful. It all depends upon their strategy and execution. Circumstances will dictate what is best. Don't get caught up with punctuation and verb tenses. Great advertising breaks most rules, including grammar.