

APRIL - CHAPTER MEETING RECAP MARKETING ON A SHOESTRING - HOW TO INCREASE SALES

The NKBA Nor. Cal. chapter meeting held on April 16th 2009 was nothing but success! Industry professionals gathered to network, wine, dine and learn a few strategies of “Marketing on a shoestring and how to increase sales”.

The evening began with the Chapter president **Sherry Faure** CKD, CBD thanking **Standards of Excellence** for providing their beautiful showroom and generous co-sponsorship along with **GE Monogram**. She made a few announcements regarding KBIS which begins April 30th until May 3rd 2009. For those who haven't registered, there's still time. Also, the deadline for this year's annual design competition is on September 14th 2009. A large number of entries are expected this year, so contestants are requested to get their spaces ready, photographed and sent by the due date.

Mary Jo Camp CKD, CBD, CID made an announcement regarding the new certification exam – **IDEX** (Interior Design Examination) which sets certified designers apart from decorators. In the past to be a Certified Interior Designer in the state of California exams required to be taken were:

- CCRE + CQRID exams
OR
- CKD+CBD
OR
- NCIDQ

Now to become a CID in the state of California:



Chapter Meeting Attendees



Announcement by Mary Jo Camp

CCIDC (California Council for Interior Design Certification), which is the certification board is offering one bigger exam – IDEX which tests for design knowledge, professional practice and codes, relevant to the state of California. An applicant is eligible to apply if they have a combination of any of the following –

- 2 yrs education in design or related field + 5yrs experience
- 4-5 yrs education in design or related field + 2 yr. experience
- 3yrs education in design or related field + 3yrs experience
- 8yrs or more of combined experience and education.

CLCID (California Legislative Coalition for Interior Design) is offering one day IDEX preparation class on May 16th, San Jose at Radisson. Cost of the study class and the codes manual is approximately \$395. There will be a total of two testing periods (spring and fall)

After the announcement by Mary Jo, ED Linder made a presentation on The **Ron Hernlund Scholarship** and spoke about its importance.



Ron Hernlund Presentation by Ed Linder

" The greatest gift you can give another is not to share your riches with them but to reveal to them the riches they have" – Ron Hernlund

Ron had a great vision, an ability to see things and people beyond what they were but what they could be. Embracing and taking forward Ron's passion Shari Steele VP academic relations awarded the scholarship to Priya Chawla student of West Valley College.

Mike Montgomery highlighted some latest GE products and talked about various functions, finishes and aesthetics. Some top featured appliances were:



GE Presentation by Mike Montgomery

Double oven that fits into single 30" cut - out helping people with limited space without compromising on function. Touch glass control system allows more usable space inside. This oven can fit a 22 pound turkey!

New Monogram Advantium - 4ovens in one – speed cook, European convection and sensor microwave and warming. Ovens can be installed in 30" wall cabinet and can also be installed under counter. Large 1.7-cu.-ft rounded

oven cavity with 16" turntable allows full and continual rotation of a 9" x 13" casserole dish; optional storage drawer keeps extra trays within reach.

Induction cook tops are back and available in Profile and Monogram line. With sophisticated styling, stainless metallic models have a reflective metallic finish that captures light and colors inside the kitchen.

GE works hard not only to improve the performance of the hood but also on the looks. The featured ventilation hood with a glass canopy has sleek elegance. It combines the durability of professional-grade stainless steel with the elegant simplicity of bowed, tempered glass.

The armoire style refrigerator from GE is sure to impress the neighbors! Featuring French-door styling with two refrigerator doors positioned above two pull-out freezer drawers and chamfered edges. Available in Monogram line with thin tubular European handles as well as professional stainless steel.

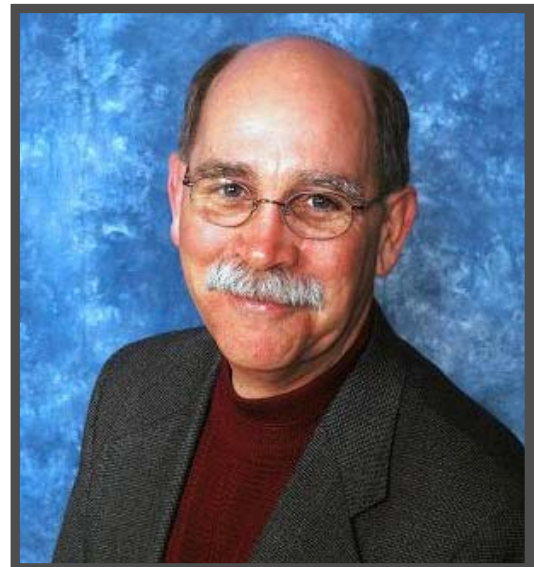
Café is GE's new fast growing line. The product has a very pro look with big handles, pronounced knobs and comparatively higher prices. For now it has a limited select line of appliances.

“MARKETING ON A SHOESTRING . . . HOW TO INCREASE SALES . . .”
BY MAX ISLEY

Max Isley is a licensed general contractor, CKD, CMKBD. Max has designed kitchens all over the United States and the world. Max has been a design judge with the NKBA. He is also an international speaker and consultant to the kitchen and bath industry and is an instructor for kitchen design and remodeling workshops for consumers. He is also a business consultant and coach.

Max says that he is a “*practitioner not a theorist*”. Whatever he has learned has been learnt from real life experiences. What works for him may not for everyone else, but the basic strategies that make it work can be used by everyone by challenging & thinking outside the box.

Max suggested some specific steps –



Max Isley CKD, CMKBD, Guest Speaker

- It's all about **leverage** – try to use the assets you already possess. Leverage image, reputation, longevity in business etc.
- Use your **existing customers** - when you get a job try to get as much out of it as you can. The outside sign needs to go up as soon as work starts. Communicate directly with the neighbors and let them know you'll have people in the neighborhood, get the conversation going on. Use mailers and door hangers which are inexpensive ways to market your business.
- Stay **visible** – Don't stay home and fret especially in this economy. Get involved and network! Get into places where you can network with a lot of people. Clean away junk that you don't need from your workplace by giving donations and getting credit. Involve press releases to advertise your donations.
- Differentiate or **die** - Always be prepared to do things differently and also do several different things. Reinvent yourself and be open to finding a new direction, especially in these times. Promote yourself for the uniqueness you bring and be the best in what you do. Find your niche that distinguishes you from others and make that available to your clients. Solve problems that people will pay for.
- Get **referrals!** Trade referrals! For each one you give out get one! Get testimonials and post them so the clients get the confidence. YouTube is a great way to have testimonials posted on company websites.

Two successful marketing strategies:

Consumer awareness seminar or workshops – Consider offering educational seminars to the community. These are great opportunities to get a consumer into your facility and having them listen to what you do. Take advantage of your own expertise and make people realize how valuable your knowledge and skills are.

Always have a presenter who's knowledgeable, at ease with presenting and has a great sense of humor to help the crowd relax. Be sure there are no sales pitches involved since you are promoting yourself or your firm as an "expert". The attendees must leave the seminars as your "disciples", enthused with the belief that you are the best in the field that they can find.



Workshop by Max Isley

Location to conduct such seminars should always be where the product is. Showroom works the best, but in case of independent designers, they must either collaborate with someone who has a showroom or set up a back drop where their best work is displayed.

Seminars can be held 3-4 times a year with a top headcount of 20-30 people. This gives attendees an opportunity to ask questions and interact. Offer light refreshments, drinks and comfortable seating. Provide inexpensive note pads and pens for people to take notes. Provide your own information along with these. Saturdays are the best days to have a workshop. Always avoid holidays or extended weekends, even to advertise.

Seminars and workshops generate a ripple effect and are an excellent inexpensive way to generate leads. Even if the participants are not immediate customers, they always bring in clients, recommend you to their contacts, increase your visibility and create a word-of-mouth recognition.

Newspaper is still the most read and popular source to promote a business. Advertise your workshops in the free listings offered by the local newspapers as an educational resource for the community. To guarantee a good turn out ask for RSVP's and mention that seating is limited. This creates a greater sense of value and urgency to register immediately. Inevitably the sign ups will be more than can be accommodated in one workshop. Follow up with them and remind them a day before of the event.

Wind up with question and answers. And in the end leave them dancing by giving away a free gift to help boost attendance. The gift may be inexpensive, but the gesture will create a sense of good will. Thank attendees for their time by offering to review any kitchen design proposal they get from another company.

Open house – An open house is all about the product. This is a chance to network with allied professionals. By maintaining relations and partnering with the industry professionals, generate referrals and business for mutual benefit. In a showroom scenario 1:1 ratio works best with one presenter to each attendee. Invite as many professionals as possible to the open house. These are the potential salespeople for your business. An open house can be organized once or twice a year. It could be at a time of launching a new product, or introducing a new brand. Lunch hours on weekdays are convenient for professionals to attend. It's best to send out an announcement or invite two weeks in advance. Call to confirm if they have received the invite. Call again on the morning of event to confirm if they are coming. And in the end leave them dancing by drawing small prizes and gifts like a small appliance or an artwork.

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