

RESH Marketing, founded in 1979, is heavily involved in the sale of new homes, consulting with builder/developers from California to New York.

Hal Von Nessen has served as president of the Columbia American Advertising Federation (AAF) branch which presented him their highest award in 1990, The Silver Medal for contributions to the industry.

Von Nessen has been a member of the adjunct faculty of the University of South Carolina and Webster University of St. Louis, MO. He teaches Business Administration, Marketing Theory and Practice, and Strategic Planning in Business. He has taught Creative Strategy, and Advertising in the School of Journalism at the University of South Carolina.

Von Nessen is a founding principal in New Home Sales Specialists, a real estate firm specializing in sales, sales training and marketing of new homes for builders and developers.

He is involved in seminars and consulting for businesses. He has appeared at The National Association of Home Builders National Convention and presented national IRM programs at the national convention. He has taught in the GRI program and is a member of the faculty of the National Association of Home Builder's Institute of Residential Marketing.

He earned a B.S. in Management and the MBA degree from the University of South Carolina. He is a member of the Institute of Residential Marketing.



**HAL VON NESSEN,
MIRM
President
RESH Marketing**

Finding an ad agency is the easy part. Finding one that speaks the language of the building business is a bit more difficult. Finding the one that understands the relationship of advertising to closings may be the hardest task yet.

Production builder or family owned developer, when you need added insight and experience in the marketing of new homes and communities, we can help. And our help is affordable as well as productive. Call us. There is no charge for our initial consultation.



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*“That’s My
Story and
I’m Sticking
To It.”*

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The Ad Platform

Most builders don't think twice about the foundation for a new home, realizing that this initial work will allow the finished home to withstand years of use. For an advertising program to provide the consistency required for long term success, it too requires a foundation, one that will provide for changing markets and multiple ads. I call this foundation the advertising platform because it provides the base which supports a consistent long term advertising program.

The Advertising Platform, when reduced to writing, standardizes one more variable in the marketing process. Because it addresses the message, it allows media analysis to emphasize delivery systems and forces a focus on problems advertising can solve, always a determinant of success. Each individual ad incorporates the key advantages of our product into the message. And most importantly, our in-depth knowledge of our product is translated into consumer benefits from the perspective of our customer.

There are seven steps to complete in the advertising platform:

1 Step 1-Define the Product

There are two ways in which we describe a new home. First, we see it in terms of size, room and cost. Descriptions of these features generally reveal the tangible product which is offered for sale. But a home is so much more!

It's a way of life, a community, an experience, the realization of a family's dream. We call it lifestyle, and it's the second way to describe a new home. Lifestyle is the long term impact of home ownership on a family, and will result from the purchase of the tangible product we offer.

Define the tangible item for sale and then the lifestyle that results from that purchase. Be sure that lifestyle is defined from the point of view of the

customer. Your research should tell you what the customer expects.

2 Step 2-Define the Problem

One residual benefit to this system is that many problems will be identified by the process. Remember that advertising cannot solve them all. If the houses are too small, that's a production problem; too expensive for the market, a pricing problem; low closing ratio, a sales problem. Use your advertising to solve problems which are suited to advertising: traffic, awareness, advantages.

Most organizations do well at identifying problems. Once you have problems which advertising can address, rank them according to priority. They have to be solved as they occurred, one at a time. One problem, one ad.

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3 Step 3-Specify Objectives

Having order ranked the problems which we can address, take the time to state objectives for your advertising. Specific objectives should be stated in a way that allows them to be evaluated. It is far harder to evaluate advertising effectiveness after the fact than it is to set up objectives early on.

4 Step 4-Define the Target Audience

Who are the people that will buy your product? Be specific. Describe them in demographic terms: age, education, family size, income. Describe their psychographic characteristics: status seeking, family oriented, conservative. Locate their geographic region: a 50 mile radius, new members of the community, move ups from a similar but smaller project.

5 Step 5-Define the Major Consumer Benefit

This is another key. What is the single most important advantage that you give to your customer? And remember, it is from the customer's point of view...not yours. In order to select this benefit, it is important to maintain contact with your customer through follow-up phone calls and research. Your customer will tell you what is important, and what isn't.

6 Step 6-List Other Supporting Benefits

This section contains all the other benefits which you provide to the consumer. It is likely and desirable that this is a long list. This list should be used to give support to the main benefit offered, and may provide the basis for multiple ads promoting the same product.

7 Step 7-The Strategy Statement

This should be a description of how the advertising will go about accomplishing the goals defined for it using the benefits identified in the product. It should talk in terms of “creating a sense of urgency” or “maximizing site traffic”. The creative person preparing advertising for you will use this narrative to develop the specific concepts which will become ads in the newspaper, postings in outdoor, or spots on the radio. Write from the point of view of your consumer, describe advertising which you feel will compel him or her to buy your product rather than that of your competition.

Time spent on the Advertising Platform pays dividends. It ensures that all advertising will speak a consistent message over time and over all media outlets. More importantly, it will allow you to focus your advertising to tell your story and stick with it in such a way as to give your message a competitive advantage providing it the greatest chance for success.